



NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact:
Scott Weston
Funds For Learning, LLC
405-471-0953
sweston@fundsforlearning.com

For immediate release:
Emily Embury
C. Blohm & Associates, Inc.
608-839-9806
emily@cblohm.com

Funds For Learning Announces Findings from National E-rate Survey

Survey Assesses Applicants' Attitudes and Opinions to Help Improve the E-rate Program

EDMOND, OKLA. (June 29, 2009) – Funds For Learning, the nation's leading E-rate funding compliance services firm, announces the results of the Second Annual National E-rate Survey. Funds For Learning conducted a nationwide survey of E-rate applicants to assess their opinions of the E-rate program. Hundreds of applicants took part in the survey, which consisted of a short questionnaire and a group discussion open to all participants.

To provide a valid year-over-year comparison of responses, Funds For Learning asked many of the same questions as last year. The company covered topics such as: Program Management, Program Outcomes and Learning & Managing the E-rate process. Funds For Learning also included a new section of questions addressing the Beneficiary Audit program, which has received a lot of attention from E-rate stakeholders over the past year.

Program Management

Opinions of E-rate program management have improved dramatically over the last year. Nearly 73 percent of people who expressed an opinion about the management of the E-rate program gave positive marks to the Federal Communications Commission and the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company, an increase over last year's 65.5 percent. Those who strongly agree that the E-rate program is well-managed increased from 14 percent to 20 percent in the same time period, while those who strongly disagree dropped from 10 percent to 7 percent.

Program Outcomes

The E-rate program is meeting its goal of connecting schools and libraries to the Internet. The majority of survey respondents, 71 percent, believe that their organization has more classrooms connected to the Internet than would be the case if the E-rate program did not exist. In last year's survey, only 59 percent of respondents expressed this belief. Significantly, more than half of those surveyed thought that their organization would not be able to maintain their level of classroom connectivity without E-rate funding.

MORE

Learning & Managing the E-rate Process

The survey revealed that 57 percent of participating organizations have just one person managing the E-rate process. Applicants agree that all phases of the E-rate process are equally cumbersome to learn, and also concede to spending more time on E-rate issues than they did a year ago. The number of hours increases proportionally with the amount of funding requested each year. To cope with the administrative overhead, applicants enlist outside resources to help manage the E-rate process. Forty-six percent of applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in E-rate discounts each year use a professional E-rate consultant.

Audits

Fifteen percent of survey respondents indicate that they have undergone an audit within the last two years. Of these audited applicants, 72.5 percent had no findings as a result of their audit. For the remaining group, failure to properly retain E-rate related documentation was the most common audit finding. Most applicants feel that the amount of effort required to respond to an audit is disproportionate to the E-rate funding received, but agree that auditors conduct themselves professionally and communicate well with applicants.

Survey results are available on the Funds For Learning Web site, and will be sent to members of Congress, the Federal Communications Commission and the Universal Service Administrative Company's Schools and Libraries Division. As with last year's survey, the feedback garnered will help shape the future of the program, and will lead to changes and improvements that will benefit the entire E-rate community.

In return for completing the survey, Funds For Learning offered participants three months of free access to its *E-rate Manager for Applicants*. The online suite of tools enables applicants to stay on top of fluctuating deadlines and paperwork, track remaining E-rate funding, monitor sites where funding is used, and respond to E-rate program auditors.

To download a full copy of the survey results, visit www.FundsForLearning.com.

About Funds For Learning

Funds For Learning, LLC, is an E-rate compliance firm specializing in guiding E-rate applicants and service providers through the complex and ever-changing E-rate regulatory process. With more than 10 years of experience in providing professional advice and assistance relating to the E-rate program, Funds For Learning exists to provide high-quality solutions for the needs of E-rate stakeholders. The company was established in 1997 and is headquartered in Edmond, Okla. For more information, visit www.FundsForLearning.com or phone 405-341-4140.

###