

E-Rate Funding Summary 1998-2004

Year	# Libs W/Fund Commitments	Internal Connections	Internet Access	Telecommunications	Total Funds Committed	Total Funds Disbursed
1998	37	0	26,027	71,814	97,841	82,119
1999	66	2,664	50,805	75,097	128,566	100,091
2000	61	0	51,729	82,572	134,301	88,664
2001	60	0	75,074	63,453	138,527	75,924
2002	59	0	48,914	77,082	125,996	83,152
2003	60	0	33,738	74,946	108,684	65,494
2004	58	0	12,614	73,627	86,241	58,440
AVG/TOT	57.29	\$2,664	\$298,900	\$518,592	\$820,156	\$553,884

Explanations of Column Entries:

Libraries w/Fund Commitments – indicates the number of public libraries in Montana that applied and had at least one funding request approved for that year by the Schools and Libraries Division. It does not include those that applied but had their entire applications rejected. The number of libraries participating has gone down since the peak in 1999, but has been remarkably steady considering the complexity of the program and forms, and the relatively small funds received by many of our public libraries.

Internal Connections – funds discounts for hardware and wiring. Over the past several years, internal connections discounts have only gone to schools and libraries with an 80% discount rate or higher. Very few Montana public libraries are eligible at this rate. A few have tried to apply for internal connections discounts since 1999 but none has been funded.

Internet Access – monthly internet service charges. This number has decreased for several reasons. First, the overall cost of high-speed internet access has decreased significantly since telephone companies began to offer DSL to rural libraries. Before that, the only options other than dial-up for most of our libraries were dedicated lines and frame relays. The other big change in this category came about as a result of CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act). When this law took effect for public libraries in 2003, many decided to opt out of discounts on internal connections and internet access and accept only telecommunications discounts. Discounts on telecommunications services are not subject to CIPA. This encouraged librarians to have their service providers unbundle internet bills that frequently combined charges for internet access lines (DSL, T1, etc.) with monthly internet service charges. DSL charges are considered telecommunications and can and should be claimed under that category. The remaining discount for monthly internet service has been forfeited by many libraries.

Telecommunications – includes basic phone service, fax lines, data lines (including DSL, T1, etc.), long distance, cellular. Since 2003, many Montana public libraries have chosen to claim discounts solely on telecommunications services.

Funds Committed vs. Funds Disbursed – Funds committed is the amount allocated to libraries based on their requests. Funds disbursed is the amount actually paid out to service providers for discounts and/or libraries as reimbursements for bills paid. Part of the discrepancy can be explained by libraries' changes in plans between the time Form 471 is due and the commitments are made. This year, 10 libraries are still waiting for funding commitments 9 months after they submitted their 471s. A lot can change in that time. For example, in 2004, several libraries decided not to accept Internet Access funds after they had been allocated to them. Still, the discrepancy may be a cause for concern. Apparently there are some communication problems between libraries and their service providers whereby libraries are not receiving the discounts for which they are eligible.

Prepared 12/01/05 by Suzanne Reymer.