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For Immediate Release

FCC FIXES E-RATE RULES TO FACILITATE PARTICIPATION OF TRIBAL LIBRARIES

Allows Tribal Libraries to Apply in the Current E-Rate Filing Window

WASHINGTON, January 27, 2022—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted an order updating rules in the E-Rate program to clarify that Tribal libraries can access funding to provide affordable internet access in their communities. The Order updates the definition of “library” in the E-Rate program rules to make clear that it includes Tribal libraries, resolving a longstanding issue that limited their access to affordable broadband connectivity through the program. Today’s adoption of the order paves the way for Tribal libraries to apply for the E-Rate program application filing window that opened on January 12, 2022 and closes on March 22, 2022.

To promote awareness of the rule change, the Order directs the Commission’s Office of Native Affairs and Policy and the Wireline Competition Bureau, in coordination with the Universal Service Administrative Company, to develop targeted outreach efforts and program training for Tribal libraries. The Order also adopts new metrics to gauge the participation of Tribal libraries in the E-Rate program.

The E-Rate program was established in 1996 as a universal service support mechanism to ensure that schools and libraries can obtain affordable broadband service. Discounts for support depend on the level of poverty and whether the school or library is in an urban or rural area. The discounts range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of eligible equipment and services.

Action by the Commission January 27, 2022 by Report and Order (FCC 22-8). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr and Starks issuing separate statements.

CC Docket No. 02-6

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).