

Washington State Library  
6880 Capitol Blvd. S.  
Olympia, WA 98501

April 30, 2012

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**RE: Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization - WC Docket No. 11-42  
Lifeline and Link Up - WC Docket No. 03-109  
Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service - CC Docket No. 96-45  
Advancing Broadband Availability Through Digital Literacy Training - WC  
Docket No. 12-23**

Dear Secretary Dortch:

The Washington State Library respectfully writes in supports the comments submitted in this proceeding by the American Library Association (ALA) to increase the capacity of libraries across the nation to support the digital literacy needs of their communities.

The Washington State Library works with 62 municipal and district public libraries with a mission purpose of providing leadership and coordination of services to all libraries of the state of Washington. Improving digital literacy is within our mission, and we believe providing digital literacy training, whether through formal classes or informal means, is a critical service our libraries should and want to offer. We believe savings from the Lifeline program could be effectively leveraged by our state's public libraries to expand our reach to more people, including those in rural areas and to the marginalized segments of our population. Funding would support new training in libraries that have lacked trainers and other resources to meet the digital literacy needs of their residents. For example, the Washington State Library is a leader in providing training to public libraries. Funding from Lifeline savings would allow us to implement a train-the-trainer program to train local library staff in digital literacy skills so that they, in turn, would train individualized members of their communities. This is a well established and proven method.

I would also add that it is my opinion that tribal libraries should be included as recipients of such funding.

The comments of ALA articulate the concerns the Washington State Library has in considering how to increase the capacity of local libraries, as well as strategies for implementing the program that we believe will result in a successful, scalable, and sustainable digital literacy program.

In particular, we wish to focus on several points made by ALA that we support and would ask the Commission to consider. The Washington State Library:

- Is opposed to adding a digital literacy component to the E-rate program. E-rate discounts are a critical for our libraries' connectivity and infrastructure needs. We believe the program should not be altered to include digital literacy.
- Is opposed to a match requirement. We believe such a requirement would discourage many libraries from applying.
- Supports funding libraries that currently offer digital literacy training, in addition to those that do not offer training.
- Supports a minimum funding level of \$25,000 per entity per year and a two-year application cycle.
- Supports a flexible program design that includes statewide consortium applications, including state library applications, to maximize the number of libraries that could benefit from the initiative and minimize the burden on smaller libraries. We also believe consortium applications would likely support the most cost-effective implementation of the program.
- Suggests that the Commission build on the experience of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in developing the digital literacy program.

The Washington State Library thanks the Commission for its acknowledgement of the important role U.S. public libraries already play in supporting and advancing digital literacy. Washington State's libraries stand ready to help the Commission achieve its goal of increasing opportunities for the public to improve their digital literacy skills so that the benefits of broadband can truly be realized.

Respectfully submitted,



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Acting State Librarian