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For Immediate Release

FCC OPENS CYBERSECURITY PILOT PROGRAM APPLICATION WINDOW

\$200 Million Pilot Program Will Help Pay for the Costs of Eligible Cybersecurity Services and Equipment for Schools and Libraries

WASHINGTON, September 17, 2024 —The Federal Communications Commission today announced the opening of the application window for the Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program. During the 45-day application filing window, which will run from September 17, 2024 to November 1, 2024, eligible schools and libraries can apply to participate in the three-year, \$200 million pilot program. Participants selected for the pilot program will receive support to defray the costs of eligible cybersecurity services and equipment, while providing the Commission with data to better understand whether and how universal service funds could be used to improve school and library defenses against increasing cyberattacks.

“School districts and libraries across the country have proven to be prime targets for cyber criminals. The vulnerabilities in the networks are real—and growing,” **said Chairwoman Rosenworcel**. “Through this pilot program, we’ll have a chance to better understand what equipment, services, and tools will help protect school and library broadband networks from cyberthreats.”

Modeled after the FCC’s successful Connected Care Pilot, the Cybersecurity Pilot Program will allow the FCC to collect data and evaluate the effectiveness of using universal service funds for cybersecurity services and equipment to protect school and library broadband networks and data. The \$200 million budget will use general universal service funds to ensure that gains in enhanced cybersecurity do not come at the cost of undermining E-Rate success in promoting digital equity and basic connectivity. The pilot program will also allow the FCC to share actionable data with federal, state, and local government partners to jointly address this growing problem.

Interested schools and libraries can apply for the pilot program by providing basic information about their cybersecurity needs, experience, and plans to use the funding if selected in Part 1 of the application. Then, selected pilot program participants will be required to provide more detailed information in Part 2 of the application to help the Commission determine whether and how to best use limited universal service funds to support the long-term cybersecurity needs of schools and libraries.

The pilot program is part of Chairwoman Rosenworcel’s [Learn Without Limits](#) initiative to address the Homework Gap by ensuring connectivity to and within schools and libraries. This initiative includes Wi-Fi on school buses, the Wi-Fi hotspot lending program, and E-Rate support for libraries in Tribal communities.

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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).