NUSF-117, Progression Order #1
Reply Comments
Due 6-16-2023

Nebraska Libraries	Alphabetical table listing all Nebraska Libraries and their comments

Brenizer Public Library	Being a small library, our concerns center around ongoing maintenance of the equipment, and the amount and increases of recurring charges. We also have a need in the future for updated filters and costs associated with that could be a issue, with filling out forms concerning this or other different projects being out of our comfort zone. Help filling out the forms we usually do every year isn't necessarily needed unless they feel the need to change the way in which you apply. I do feel it is harder to get assistance from the PSC, so If I have questions I will generally just contact Krista at the Library Commission.
Clarkson Public Library	What would be an awesome help is if the internet fees were paid by an outside entity. That would really help our budget since most times we go over our allotted amount. Our bill isn't super bad but getting rid of it would help. We are also due for a couple new computers and that is definitely not in the budget. As far as the e-rate program goes, it is really tough! Not tough as in hard....maybe monotonous and over the top!! The questions are asked but it seems like they are asked again in a different way. I know you have to be thorough but good grief...it is a real pain and for as many years as I have done it...I completely understand when librarians say, no way, I'm not doing that! Maybe, it could be worded differently and better...after all, we are librarians, not technicians or masters of the internet. We are all just pleased as punch when it works properly. Thank you for asking my opinion...you got it.
Clay Center Public Library	We have fiber due to grants from the nusf and other entities. Without the help of the staff of the library commission, it would not have happened. I think one of the biggest barriers for libraries to have fiber is all the paperwork to finish. Having the library commission's help actually made the process very doable. It always helps to have good guidance. Thank you!

Emerson Public Library	SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:
	1. What opportunities can the PSC pursue to increase participation and cover costs incurred by schools, libraries, and Consortiums ("participating entities") in installing fiber networks? Examples may be initial fiber builds to the library (cost or other challenges), ongoing maintenance of equipment and infrastructure, payment of the monthly recurring costs for service, cybersecurity support, and filters for CIPA compliance.
	       Answer: I believe cost would be the biggest struggle upfront. Also, what would the monthly costs be after, because some small libraries are on really tight budgets!
	
	2. What barriers do participating entities currently face in relation to participation in the E-rate program? Examples may be help with the E-rate forms/filing, filtering support, lack of or cost of tech support, knowledge or help with what are eligible reimbursements/costs (e.g. project planning).
	       Answer: Although our library receives the internet free right now, but when we did apply for E-rate I had found the process a little challenging at time, BUT I will say we had great help to walk us through the process!
	
	3. Are there any partnerships or outreach opportunities which the PSC should pursue?
	       Answer: Drawing a blank on this one!

Faith Memorial Library-Wallace	I am a volunteer at the Faith Memorial Library at Wallace Nebraska. We are a village library, totally staffed by volunteers. The village pays for our utilities and we basically have no other budget. I estimate that 98% of our books are donated to the library. Our collection exceeds 12,000 items. Our volunteers are mostly retired women and we lack high technology skills. It would be nice to have the latest and greatest but we do not have the tools to acquire it or utilize it.
Fullerton Public Library	I read the results of the initial comments and I can say that they adequately represent what I am facing at the Fullerton Public Library. I simply do not have the funding to cover the costs of not only the installation of fiber networks, but upgrading the equipment, monthly expenses for the service and - mostly - CIPA compliance. I have only worked as a librarian for about a year and the paperwork alone is daunting for not only the E-rate program but the CIPA compliance. We struggle with internet connectivity and as you know, when the internet isn't working, we are at a standstill at the library. It has been quite frustrating. We have even had the internet out for a couple of days by the time a service technician can get to us. I would appreciate any help that can come my way to assist in getting any and all of these programs in the works so that we can better serve our patrons and community.
Gothenburg Public Library	I have read all of the comments and would agree with many of them. Gothenburg Public Library does not apply for e-rate because Spectrum provides our internet service at no cost to us. Pinpoint Fiber is available in Gothenburg and the library is the only city entity which does not have it. We have been told that they cannot run a line into our building. Much like Wahoo, we have had few problems with Spectrum and have good speed and connectivity. I am not sure I want Pinpoint fiber as satisfaction with it seems to vary greatly. It appears to be much more reliable and have fewer issues in some areas of town. If fiber were to become available to the library we would have to upgrade portions of our infrastructure and help with those costs would be beneficial. GOOD tech support is an issue for us just as it is for many libraries. It is hard to get them to come and, oftentimes, the job is not fully completed. It would be wonderful to have a person or persons who fully understand the library environment and who could come onsite to evaluate and assist us in technology planning and implementation. Although we do not currently have a great need for it, I believe e-rate should be renewed automatically so that it's available for libraries who truly need it.
Kilgore Memorial Library – York	I am writing to submit reply comments to the comments submitted by my peers on NUSF-117 Progression Order No. 1. I am the director of Kilgore Memorial Library in York, Nebraska. Our library has participated in the e-rate program since it began in the 1990's, I have been in this role for 10 years. With this experience, I **concur with the comments submitted earlier that a support system with experts who understand the technical needs of public libraries.** I have attended annual training offered by Nebraska Library Commission (NLC) staff to learn of updates to the process for the current year. Yet, 10 years later, I still need these workshops. The technical knowledge required to complete Category two is beyond my capability. I am fortunate to have a staff member who manages our IT infrastructure, without this staff and the support of the NLC I would not know what is needed to maintain our services. **The original comments support this need with many comments expressing the lack**

	of support to build and then maintain the IT services required in a 21-century library. I would also like to second the comments in the first round of input **supporting a statewide support that enhances what the NLC staff are providing with limited staff.** As a librarian who worked with the Network Nebraska staff to apply for the Special Construction funding through the state bidding process I was impressed with the level of support I received in this application process. I could not wait to work with this team but unfortunately the bids received for my library were not acceptable to the RFP. Fortunately, I also had an open RFP for my library that I had filed and could use for that year. I would have been completely lost without the support from the NLC and Network Nebraska staff. **Having a full support team that understands the specific IT infrastructure needs of public libraries would fit the needs of many public libraries who commented earlier.** Thank you for supporting public libraries with the goal of delivering fiber to each library in our state. Once this goal is met libraries will have the capability to support their community with digital literacy initiatives to support economic growth and stainability of the community it serves.
<u>**Lexington Public Library**</u>	To whom it may concern, Up-to-date technologies are extremely important in Nebraska libraries. The PSC could help libraries by helping to fund initial fiber networking to libraries and schools. Additionally, costs of replacement computers and updating filtering systems are often cost-prohibitive for many public libraries in Nebraska. Help with maintenance and replacement costs would be extremely helpful. E-rate forms and schedules can be overwhelming for many libraries. Help with filling out forms, especially in one-person libraries, would be appreciated. High-speed internet access is vitally important to NE libraries. Making sure that ALL libraries, regardless of geographic location, have fast, reliable internet access should be a priority of the PSC.
<u>**North Loup Public Library**</u>	I have had the new fiber at my house for the last 3 years and I love it. My whole home (in the country) is wireless including tv, cell phones, security and etc and etc. It has saved me a lot of money. So, I am more than enthusiastic - I am also anxious to have it at our library. I don't think most libraries understand the mechanics of applying for this via e-rate. How a partnership is formed and they will fill out e-rate forms, offer support to problems with service filters and etc, and give you costs up front and updates. They will tell you how long you have to sign up for, in case you just don't like it. I have read most of the info and it is terrifying. You need to simplify the whole process. This is what we can do for you and how we do it. And when it will happen. And what it will cost you. Sort of a step one, step two thing. Many think it will be years before it comes to their town and how it gets there. But they have no clue what it will do for them.
<u>**O'Neill Library**</u>	What opportunities can the PSC pursue to increase participation and cover costs incurred by schools, libraries, and Consortiums ("participating entities") in installing fiber networks? **Have companies that are readily available to do the initial installs for the libraries to turn to - be willing to give us a discounted price. Most of the libraries in Nebraska are rural – they do not always have someone capable to take on such a task. Manual labor is a major issue. You have to also factor in the library's budget – If a library wants to get something done that is going to cost money – they have to plan for it in their yearly**

	budget – also factoring in installation, labor, formatting, etc. Plus, once those installs are done - can our slow computers keep up? Examples may be initial fiber builds to the library (cost or other challenges), ongoing maintenance of equipment and infrastructure, payment of the monthly recurring costs for service, cybersecurity support, and filters for CIPA compliance. What barriers do participating entities currently face in relation to participation in the E-rate program? **ERate is VERY confusing. One may attend the meeting but when you get back to your library and have to do it yourself – It feels like a mountain that you cannot climb. Plus, it does not apply to everything. For us, our internet rate has not gone up that much in the last 7 years and we do not have e-rate with our current company. It is nice that the Library Commission has people available to help but one sometimes feels a bit overwhelmed to fill out all of the different forms. It is not a simple task.** Examples may be help with the E-rate forms/filing, filtering support, lack of or cost of tech support, knowledge or help with what are eligible reimbursements/costs (e.g. project planning). **Not much changes for a library each year, why not prefill the forms and if there are any changes, the library has the option to change the prewritten answers.** Are there any partnerships or outreach opportunities which the PSC should pursue? **Find local businesses that are willing to form a partnership and help service local rural libraries and show them how to trouble shoot when there is no tech service available. Have 1 company that can pan out throughout the state. OPTK (formally Nebraska Link)?**
Stella Community Library	The Stella Community Library has internet service. Not in need at this time. Thank you though.
Valparaiso Public Library	To whom it may concern, I feel many small libraries like ours do not understand the benefit this program offers and need more knowledge on how to apply or if they are even eligible. From what little I know about the program it should continue. Technology continues to move at a fast pace and many rural areas are often left behind because of limited resources. Valparaiso Library does not have any technical support, and this hinders our growth in many ways. Any resources available for tech support would be a tremendous help. I do not possess the knowledge to do anything but basic technological processes/interaction online. Our library operates solely on donations, therefore upgrading anything related to technology here is just not possible. We have wireless service in Valparaiso.