CAROLINE MUELLER
So, I suppose we'll go ahead and get started. Welcome to this webinar for the California State Library High Speed Broadband Program, as you may have known it in the past. It is now the California Library Connect program. You can see the little logo in the bottom right-hand corner of the slide there, and this is our Year 10 RFP webinar for libraries who are interested in joining the program. If I could go ahead and get the next slide.

So just a brief introduction here. I'm Caroline Mueller and the Project Coordinator for this program. You may also see Heather Mills. She's our Program Administrator. Rachel Stogner is operating the slide deck right now. She's our Grants Coordinator. Kayleigh Pears is our Communications Coordinator, and we also have Jim Zimmerman here on our team, he is our Network Engineer, and we are all from CTC. And then we have other people with us today. Go ahead, Rachel. Stella, if you'd like to introduce yourself.

STELLA KWON
Hi everyone. My name is Stella Kwon, I'm the Project Manager for libraries at CENIC.

CAROLINE MUELLER
And Josh?

JOSH CHISOM
Hello, Josh Chisom. I'm the Broadband Programs Manager at the California State Library.

CAROLINE MUELLER
Wonderful! Next slide. So, the presentation that we're going to go through today, we're going to talk about, a little bit about the program itself and an introduction to the E-rate program for library. How the California Library Connect program helps you navigate that E-rate program, what the RFP cycle is, what we mean when we say RFP, sort of what the pieces of information that are needed are for getting involved in this program and the sort of timeline of steps for all of that. And then we'll have time for questions at the end. So, let's go ahead to the next slide.

So first, we have a little introduction to the E-rate process here so, Rachel, next slide.
So, the E-rate program is a federal subsidy program for services, Internet services to schools and libraries that offers 20 to 90% subsidies to libraries and has an annual program cap of over $4 billion. Has several different eligible providers, including localities and nonprofits, and the primary goal of the E-rate program is to create a competitive marketplace that helps to drive down costs for schools and libraries. This is a federal program that involves, you know, filling out a lot of forms. It is very useful, and it provides a great deal of help to schools and libraries and paying for broadband connections. The program is also, there are a lot of steps to it. One of the main benefits of the California Library Connect program is that by joining the program, you are essentially joining a consortium of which CENIC is the lead organization, and on your behalf, CENIC navigates this process. So, we sort of act as an intermediary here between the E-rate program and the library as the California Library Connect program. We could go ahead and get the next slide.

Within E-rate, there are two general categories that you’ll hear of different types of discounts. We mainly work with Category 1 discounts for this program because the CLC program works to provide libraries connection to the California Research and Education Network, which is a network throughout California that is run by CENIC, and Stella, if you want to interrupt me with more information about the CALREN and go ahead. But, you know, otherwise Category 2 is generally for services that are within libraries exclusively. So, Category 1 funding is the funding that is associated with this program. Next slide.

So, we took this graphic from USAC, which is the Universal Service Administrative Company that runs the E-rate program. There are a lot of different forms you’ll see on the top row that the applicant is responsible for. Again, one of the main benefits of the CLC program is that all of these forms are handled through CENIC and the CLC program, staff will ask you questions about services, you know, initially and then guide you through the process of all the forms that need to get filled out. It is simplified greatly and in my opinion, this is one of the main advantages of the program here. And we could get into detail on each step here with the Form 470 and 471, but instead we’re going to keep going through the deck and we’re going to go through the timeline from the perspective of being within the CLC program, because otherwise I think it gets overwhelming very quickly. So, if we could go ahead and get the next slide.

We're connecting to CALREN, the California Research and Education network. We do have, sort of, the simplified timeline to begin with. Here we're currently in #1 there, that's the enrollment period where we have these sorts of program overview webinars and we work with you, the libraries, to figure out what types of services you are interested in. You know, which branches you're looking to connect, what bandwidth you are looking for those connections to be, etc. And we sort of plan that out, and then the next step after that is CENIC going out to bid for providers to create those connections, and then once they receive winning bids, CENIC then comes back to the libraries and we all discuss, you know, whether you would like to proceed with those bids. And then at that point in time, we go through a contracting process and, up until that point, you know if anything is not really what you want at this time, or you maybe want to wait until next year and see if better bids are received, that's fine. There's no commitment until a contract is actually signed for service, right. So, and then at that point in time, we'd also be looking at, you know, what equipment your library needs for these connections. And we'd be quoting that as well. And then once the contract is signed, the circuit connecting you to CALREN would be ordered and then connected, hand off to you, and you'd
have an orientation meeting with the CENIC NOC, which is the Network Operations Center. They are 24/7/365 support for these circuits, which is quite nice. And then yeah, you're up and running essentially.

So now we're going to get into what all is needed to go ahead and start looking for bids here. If we could get the next slide, requests for proposals, right, next slide.

So, when you're trying to figure out what services are needed at your libraries, it's good to go ahead and include all relevant stakeholders in these discussions. You know, your procurement team, county, city, your library IT team and relevant library staff. And if there are any specific demands for service or for amount of bids where you're looking for specifically like a dark fiber connection, or if you're looking to do self-construction procurements or anything like that, that's good to figure out early. And then also, when you're looking for, to see what you can do as far as contracting for new service, it's important to look at what services you already have in place, what the cancellation or termination considerations are for those contracts currently in place. Also, if you have any other requests for service already in place, that is all relevant information when you're looking to begin this process. And once you have all of that, we could go on to the next slide.

We have our, sort of, grand yearly cycle here. So, as you're in your mind trying to figure out, you know, what is what is needed and everything, it's helpful to have this, sort of, your lead timeline also in your mind. It's August now, we just hit August here. So, we're getting the cycle opening reminder notifications, you know. We're going to be going out to bid for circuits, and CENIC intends to release the RFP in late fall, right, and then receive bids over winter, generally and then in early 2024 is when we would expect to have received all bids and then be able to discuss them with you. And then, once that bid review process has taken place, you know, you would be able to select your services and then we would go into the contracting process beginning in you know, late winter, early spring 2024 for services that would begin no earlier than July 1st, 2024, because that is how the E-rate program structures that. If we could go to the next slide.

So, getting started for the RFP, we'll go over what information we need in order to go out to bid for a circuit. Next slide.

For new circuits. Oh, this is a little distracting. I don't know what happened with the subtitles there, but I can ignore it. No worries.

OK, information needed for new circuits. The A location and Z location here. One of these locations, as a hint, is your library branch location. Wherever the service location is specifically, which may be different than the library's mailing address in certain situations. So, consult with your IT team there, and then the Z location is generally going to be for new libraries, CALREN hub site. If you are connecting multiple branches at once, you may have a few branches connecting back to your main library location, connecting that location and then that main library location connecting back to CALREN. We can help you figure out what exactly that is going to look like, if you have your service location. And then the bandwidth that you are looking for, per location, you're looking for, you know, Gigabit connections symmetrical, more or less. And then also, you know, your library jurisdiction is helpful to know. And then a couple of things that are good
to keep in mind before you can go through this process. Essentially library locations, you know, all your library locations should be registered with the CPUC, and if that hasn't been done, you can talk with Josh about that at the State Library, and then all new locations must also be listed on your LOA's. And let's go to the next slide because I explain about LOA's there.

LOA's are letters of authorization which allow CENIC to apply for E-rate and CTF discounts on your behalf. I did not mention CTF earlier. CTF is the California Teleconnect Fund. It is an additional state fund that on top of E-rate, covers 50% of whatever is left, after the E-rate discount is applied. And CENIC, as implied here, does also apply for that discount on your behalf, but they can only do so if they have an active letter of authorization from your library, allowing them to do this. And, you know, as you're getting started with new circuits here, you can e-mail admin@californialibraryconnect.org for fresh LOA forms to fill out. We're also looking to get those on our website, and we should have them up there by the time that this recording is posted. So, if you're watching this as a recording, we will probably have a link with this video for that information. Next slide.

So, after we have all that RFP information, there's more of a process, right. that happens after that, so let's talk about, kind of an overview of what that looks like here. Next slide.

So, once CENIC has all of the information to go on the RFP, the request for proposals, they plan to release that RFP either late this month or early next month, and we would love to know as soon as possible if you would like to be included on that RFP so that we can go ahead and get all of that rolling here and then, next slide.

After the RFP is released, based on the information that you provided, carriers will have the opportunity to bid on those circuits, and then once that bidding is concluded, like we saw in that circular graphic earlier, CENIC will present the best option or options to you around February or March of next year, late winter next year and then the first... So, we have this split into two, sort of, points where you have to say yes, right. The non-binding decision is the first yes, that is mentioned here where we need you to say, yep, please continue in order for CENIC to go ahead and file an E-rate application for the services that were on the bid that you decide to go with here. And again, that yes, please proceed with the E-rate application that yes is not necessarily binding, but we do need you to say it before that process is done. That's just how it works, technically. The binding, yes, is the contracting process, right. So, let's go to the next slide.

So, a new contract, since you are all new libraries, it would be a new contract document, is needed sometime between that first non-binding decision, yes, and the beginning of services, you know, July 1st, 2024 We realize that this is, kind of, depending on the jurisdiction, a short window for contracting. Maybe it's a long one for you. Fingers crossed. But if you are anticipating a more involved contracting process, let us know, and we can see if there are ways to get you template documents before for, you know, people to look over. And then it's important to note that, you know, work on new circuits will only begin once that contract document is executed. CENIC will not place the order with the carrier that made that winning bid for that circuit until that contract document is executed and that is the binding yes, right. So, let's go to the next slide.
We made it. Any questions? And also, Stella and Josh, if you would like to add anything about the process or the CALREN network or anything that we didn't really touch on in this presentation, now is also a great time for that. We'll see if anybody has any questions here.

JOSH CHISOM
Thanks, Caroline. I didn't, you know, I thought we covered everything really well. Just wanted to reinforce that, you know, there's several points of contact if you have questions, anything specific to E-rate... you can reach out to me at the State Library, and then for questions around joining the consortium and signing up and getting connected to CENIC, then you'd want to contact Caroline and Rachel and the CTC team, and we're here to help. So, if any questions come up, please don't hesitate to reach out.

CAROLINE MUELLER
Guys, next slide, just put up the admin e-mail address, just so people have it there and then go ahead, Stella, sorry.

STELLA KWON
No, but I just wanted to give a quick introduction about CENIC as well, in case there's questions. We're a nonprofit who is working to advance education and research in the state of California, and so some of our associates include the K-12 system and then we also have County Offices of Education, CSU, UT's and other private institutions and the libraries are one of our charter associates and CALREN is the network that we run and manage and, you know, help our working to get libraries connected to.

CAROLINE MUELLER
Yeah. Well, thank you for coming, and if you have any questions that come up, please feel free to e-mail them and we'd love to talk with you about getting connected. Thank you everyone.

JOSH CHISOM
Thank you.

STELLA KWON
Thank you.