



## Highlighted Project *Louisiana*

### Louisiana E-Rate Program

**Need:** Louisiana districts and schools are relying more heavily on online accessibility for high-quality instructional strategies, course offerings, and state and local assessments. Technology infrastructure needs have over-burdened many districts' and schools' budgets. E-Rate, the Federal Communications Commission's program for libraries and schools, is designed to provide discounted rates on connectivity services and devices to support online instruction, assessment, and communication. E-Rate is constantly updated with new rules, requirements, and procedures implemented each year. Districts and schools often do not have staff members dedicated to learning the requirements and processes; therefore, they rely heavily on the E-Rate State Contact for assistance with applying for discounts and filing for reimbursements. Without support, districts and schools may leave discounts unused or may apply/file inappropriately and be fined or required to pay back the discounted rates. With ever-increasing budget cuts, districts and schools need support for the E-Rate program.

**Support Strategy:** Over the last two years, the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3) at the University of Oklahoma has provided technical assistance to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the Louisiana Division of Administration (LDOA) Office of Technology Services in support of E-Rate implementation. SC3 collaborated with national experts from E-Rate Central to deliver professional learning opportunities for LDOE employees and state agency partners on E-Rate assistance that included help desk service and training materials to better serve districts and schools. SC3 is currently providing additional layers of technical assistance to support LDOE/LDOA through needs-sensing and strategic action planning.

*"SC3 helped us be able to build some additional capacity at the SEA level, while also ensuring the services we were providing to our districts were accurate and relevant. ... I think it has been really good how they have come in and how they have brought in knowledge of other states and how they have dealt and looked at these issues," said an LDOE/LDOA Office of Technology Services staff member.*

**Next Steps:** SC3 has proposed initiatives to implement best practices for state support of the E-Rate program, including potential resources for districts and schools to measure their effectiveness and efficiency with E-Rate. The short-term outcome is that LDOE staff members and their state agency partners have a better understanding of E-Rate policies, procedures, and guidance and are able to provide more comprehensive support to school applicants. The expected intermediate outcome is that districts in Louisiana will build more efficient and effective technology infrastructure to support instruction and assessment of students' knowledge and skills. The expected long-term outcome is that teaching and learning will improve as a result of access to online resources, including instructional strategies, courses, assessments, and communication tools, as measured by student achievement gains.

For more information and resources, visit the South Central Comprehensive Center website at [www.sc3ta.org](http://www.sc3ta.org).



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