



PRESS RELEASE
July 12, 2010

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jessica Gonzalez
(626) 792-6462

NHMC Advocates for Greater Internet Access at Schools and Libraries

Urges the FCC to Expand Opportunities for People of Color and the Poor

Pasadena, CA. - On Friday, June 9th, NHMC submitted comments to the Federal Communications Commission about the "E-rate" program, recommending ways in which the program could be modified to expand broadband Internet access to better serve students and library patrons.

Since 1996 E-rate has provided subsidies that have significantly bolstered Internet access for schools and libraries across the country, especially in poor neighborhoods and in communities of color. However, there are still a number of schools and libraries that do not have any Internet access whatsoever, as well as many that have very slow Internet connections. Even in schools and libraries that have high speed Internet, those connections are not always utilized to their full potential. In addition, many schools and libraries qualify for E-rate funding but do not apply for it because the process is unduly tedious.

"I think that many would be shocked to learn that nearly 1/3 of U.S. households do not have any connection to the Internet whatsoever," stated Jessica J. Gonzalez, NHMC's Vice President of Policy and Legal Affairs. Gonzalez added, "Studies demonstrate that lack of home Internet access is directly tied to income level. Because the Internet is not merely a vehicle for communication and entertainment, but also for education and occupational opportunities, it is vital that poor communities have access. For these reasons NHMC urges the FCC to adopt policies that will expand Internet access in schools and libraries in poor neighborhoods, because those are the places where people without home Internet connections can connect online without paying the expensive fees."

NHMC's central policy proposals focus on maximizing opportunities for digital learning experiences for students and library patrons, simplifying the E-rate application process, and urging the FCC to refrain from enacting policies that may unintentionally exclude the poorest communities. The comment can be read [here](#).

###

The National Hispanic Media Coalition is a non-profit, media advocacy organization established in 1986 in Los Angeles, California. Our mission is to improve the image of American Latinos as portrayed by the media, increase the number of American Latinos employed in all facets of the media industry, and advocate for media and telecommunications policies that benefit the Latino community.