

## Responses to Michlib-I Question re: E-Rate Consultants (Nov. 2014)

Your co-op should have the expertise you need to start - I wouldn't pay anyone (speaking as a former co-op director!). State Library has great training too! Maybe a same class library mentor? Good luck!

-Gail Powers-Schaub

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[from Melissa Huisman at Hudsonville] This firm is great. We've used them for several years. Our fee is only \$200 but I'm pretty sure it is based on the amount you get for USF.

*Janelle Morgan*

Elite Fund, Inc.

P: 800.705.9703

F: 815.717.9761

406 N. State St.

PO Box 125

Stanton, MI 48888

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RMS Associates, LLC

<http://www.phonerms.com/erate.shtml>

We have not used this firm, but I know the owner personally and know that they have been doing erate consulting for many years for school systems.

The owner is Mary Stegner.

*Judi Rudisill*

Head of IT

Orion Township Public Library

248-287-8019

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We use the same service as Melissa Huisman. Janelle Morgan is great to work with. Our fee is \$300. Not sure why Melissa's is just \$200 because we are a small library.

Diane Greiner, Director

Croton Township Library

231-652-1615

[crodg@llcoop.org](mailto:crodg@llcoop.org)

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The price will vary depending upon the service. Elite tries to stay around 10% collection on their end.

Diane Greiner, Director  
Croton Township Library  
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We use Michon Wiesen from Elite Fund. She is awesome. We have using them for almost 10 years now. Wouldn't do it any other way. Sheila Bissonnette [Clare]

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I know that some people in my area (Houghton Lake) use Starr & Larry Gartner. I will look around to get contact info for you tomorrow. They have been doing it for many, many years, and many people use them.  
Kim Frazho  
MMLL Board of Member Region 6

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Marian,  
We use Janelle (see below). Very happy with her work and the price is right for us - \$300 per year. Well worth it for all the time involved.  
Nancy Harper

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I recommend Janelle at Elite Fund.

Her email is [Janelle@elitefund.com](mailto:Janelle@elitefund.com)

I work at Marcellus and have been filing myself since the beginning of erate but just turned it over to her. What a huge relief to have that monkey off my back. It's getting more and more

complicated. We only file for phone and fax service and only have to pay her a couple of hundred dollars per hear. Well worth it.

Good luck!

Chris

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Elite Fund does this according to a neighboring librarian. Her contact is Janell. [Janelle@elitefund.com](mailto:Janelle@elitefund.com)

I don't know if they have different reps for different parts of the state.

Good luck Marian!

Ann

Eau Claire District Library

Greetings,

How a library is charged for E-rate consulting is negotiable and there are several popular methods.

One method is where the consultant takes a percentage of the discount received. On the up-side, you know that you won't spend your entire discount on consulting services. On the down-side, this method is sometimes frowned upon. Look at it this way. If your discount is one million and the consultant takes a percentage that's going to result in a much higher fee than if your discount is one thousand. And certainly a larger library with more complicated and expensive services to discount will take more time to work with. But is it a proportionally equitable system in the end? Many consultants have weighed in that it is not.

Another method is to charge by the hour. On the up-side, you only get charged for the time that you use. On the down-side, the clock is always ticking. If what you need is access to a consultant as you navigate E-rate, you want to be able to talk to them without worrying about billing in 15-minute increments. Especially, if as Marian suggested, you're considering a consultant on a short-term basis. You want every bit of knowledge you can glean from them in the time you plan to have them.

A third method is to be charged by the project. In other words, you work with the consultant to come to a price based on the complexity of your filing situation. On the up-side, you know what you're paying going in. But you'll also need to do some research so you can enter into the negotiations with a good sense of what's reasonable for your library to pay.

Where do you get more information about what's reasonable to pay for E-rate consulting? From your colleagues in the Michigan library world, of course! Michlib-l is a great resource for seeking out other libraries in situations similar to your own and asking about their experiences. And don't forget about your co-ops. Michigan co-op directors are either personally responsible

for answering E-rate questions from member libraries or they have designated someone within the co-op to do this.

Sonya Schryer Norris

Library Consultant and Plinkit Coordinator

Library of Michigan

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