



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

USAC

Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter

July 13, 2021

The **Emergency Connectivity Fund Program application filing window is open!**

This application filing window opened on Tuesday, June 29, 2021 and will close on August 13, 2021. During this window, applicants may submit requests for funds for the purchase of eligible equipment and services made between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 to meet the remote learning needs of students, school staff, and library patrons who would otherwise lack access to connected devices and broadband connections sufficient to engage in remote learning.

For more information about the Program, please visit the [FCC website](#) for a set of FAQs that cover a number of topics, including eligible entities, eligible equipment and services, eligible locations, reasonable support amounts, and unmet needs. New questions and responses are being added to FAQs, so be sure to check back periodically for more updates.

Need Help?

USAC will continue to host [weekly office hours](#) where applicants and service providers can ask questions and get information about the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program application process. Register for this week's office hours session being held this Wednesday, July 14, 2021.

- Wednesday, July 14 @ 3 p.m. ET: Emergency Connectivity Fund Overview Office Hours – [Register](#)

Applicants and service providers can also contact the Emergency Connectivity Fund Customer Support Center (CSC) with questions at (800) 234-9781 Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Training

USAC offers E-learning modules, including a Program Overview video and an ECF FCC Form 471 Walkthrough video, to help applicants successfully participate in the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program.

Visit the [Training](#) section of the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program website to view trainings, access E-learning modules, register for office hour sessions, and view recordings of past trainings and office hours sessions.

Applicants can also find more information regarding the ECF FCC Form 471 here on the Program website.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you need to participate in E-Rate to participate in the ECF Program?

No, you do not need to be a current (or future) E-rate participant to be eligible for the ECF Program.

Can applicants pay upfront and seek support for multiyear contracts (e.g. the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years) in the first application window?

No. Applicants may only seek support for the monthly costs of services delivered between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. Approved applicants may not seek reimbursement until after the services have been delivered.

What if an applicant previously signed a multiyear contract (that includes this coming school year)? Can they apply for the services for this coming school year from the preexisting contract?

Applicants may seek reimbursement for the services that will be delivered between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 on a preexisting contract if they are being provided to students, school staff, or library patrons with unmet needs.

Are fees for unreturned leased equipment eligible for ECF support?

No. Charges for unreturned leased equipment are ineligible for Emergency Connectivity Fund support. Charges for termination liability (early termination), penalty surcharges and other charges not associated with the purchase of equipment or services are ineligible.

If a school district provides a personal Wi-Fi hotspot and broadband service to a

percentage of unserved students for use at home, and if the school district also applies for Wi-Fi hotspots on school buses, is this considered to be a duplicative service?

No, it would not be considered a duplicative service. A school may obtain funding for student hotspots and internet service, as well as hotspots for use on school buses. Schools must certify that they are serving an unmet need at the time they submit their application and be able to provide additional information, if requested.

Can schools request ECF support for a small number of replacement devices that may be needed during the school year?

No. Applicants are limited to reimbursement of one connected device per student and cannot request additional connected devices or other equipment to account for anticipated loss or breakage.

What is the process for seeking a waiver of the \$400 limit if the reasonable cost to purchase connected devices for students, school staff, or patrons with disabilities is higher than \$400 and the public interest warrants deviation from the general rule?

- Waivers must be requested from the Federal Communications Commission by filing in WC Docket No. 21-93. We encourage applicants to file their request for waiver as soon as they are aware of the need, although applicants will have 30 days from the date of the funding commitment decision letter.
- Applicants may file a request for waiver of ECF rules before filing an application, however, we remind applicants that applications must be filed by August 13, 2021, even if requests for waiver have not been resolved by that date. Applicants may still be approved for funding for up to \$400 per device even if the applicant has or will submit a waiver to request additional funding for the connected devices for use by students, school staff or library patrons with disabilities.

If a school reopens, and students and school staff are attending school in person, is off-campus equipment or service for that student or teacher still eligible for ECF support?

Yes. Such equipment and services are eligible if needed to meet the remote learning needs of students, such as homework, or school staff who would otherwise lack

sufficient access to connected devices and/or a broadband internet access connection while off campus.

The FCC continues to update its FAQs as new questions come in. Additional FAQs are available at: www.fcc.gov/emergency-connectivity-fund-faqs.

For More Information

More detail on the Program is available in the FCC [Order](#) that established the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program. To learn more, please visit EmergencyConnectivityFund.org and sign up for [Emergency Connectivity Fund Program emails](#). The FCC's announcement of the application filing window is available on their [website](#).

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Need Help? Contact Us!

Please contact the Emergency Connectivity Fund Customer Support Center (CSC) at (800) 234-9781 or create a case in the ECF Portal.