

Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter

July 20, 2021

ECF Application Window Countdown: 24 Days to Window Close

The Emergency Connectivity Fund Program application filing window is open! **This application filing window remains open for 24 more days 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.

Coming Soon

Reimbursement request forms for the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program will be available in the ECF Portal. Applicants and service providers will use the ECF Portal to submit requests for reimbursement. Additional information regarding the invoicing process for the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program will be coming soon.

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:

- Wednesday, July 21 @ 3 p.m. ET: Emergency Connectivity Fund Overview Office Hours – [Register](#)
- Thursday, July 22 @ 4 p.m. ET: Emergency Connectivity Fund Overview Office Hours for Tribal Applicants - [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 schools and libraries need to keep documentation of the specific students, school staff, or library patrons who receive Emergency Connectivity Fund-supported service or equipment?

Applicants do need to document the students, school staff, and library patrons served at each location and must retain that information for at least 10 years from the last date of service or delivery of equipment. To the extent the FCC or USAC staff needs access to this information, for example, for audit purposes, they will request and safeguard this information in accordance with the applicable privacy laws and guidance, including using de-identified and anonymized information whenever possible.

What does it mean for a household to lack access to broadband? For example, what if the school paid for a student's broadband service using other sources of funding, including federal funding, last year?

The FCC requires applicants to certify on the FCC Form 471 application that they are only seeking support for eligible services provided to students, school staff and library patrons who would otherwise lack broadband services and/or devices sufficient to engage in remote learning. In doing so, the FCC provided schools the discretion to determine whether their students or staff do not have access to adequate broadband connections. Schools and libraries should make a reasonable effort to make such a determination and retain documentation about the basis for doing so.

Will USAC wait to approve applications until the application filing window closes?

Yes. In order to assess the demand for funds, USAC will wait until the application filing window is closed before issuing funding commitment decision notifications.

Do schools need to identify the names of specific students who lack access to a connected device or broadband connectivity on the application?

Only best estimates about the number of students who did not have access to adequate connected devices, broadband connections, or both when the pandemic began, as well as the number of students who do not currently have access, are required for schools at the time they submit their application. No personally identifiable information (such as the names of students) should be provided to USAC during the application process.

Is there a minimum number of days that hotspots or connected devices must be in use – that is, loaned out to library patrons – to justify reimbursement for the services or equipment?

The FCC did not adopt a hard and fast test, but imposed an obligation on applicants not to seek support for services or equipment that are not being used. Our goal is to avoid having applicants seek support for devices that are being warehoused, but there is not a set minimum number of days that Emergency Connectivity Fund-supported devices and services must be in use.

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](https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-connectivity-fund) 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.