



Universal Service  
Administrative Co.

USAC

# Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter

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July 6, 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.

## 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 the second general office hours session being held this Wednesday, July 7, 2021 and office hours session for tribal applicants being held this Thursday, July 8, 2021.

- Wednesday, July 7 @ 3 p.m. ET: Emergency Connectivity Fund Overview Office Hours – [Register](#)
- Thursday, July 8 @ 4 p.m. ET: Emergency Connectivity Fund Overview Office Hours for Tribal Applicants - [Register](#)

## 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, and register for office hour sessions.

Applicants can also find more information regarding the ECF FCC Form 471 on the [Program](#)

[website](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is eligible to receive support through the ECF Program?

Schools, libraries and consortia of schools and libraries that are eligible for support under the E-Rate Program are eligible to request and receive support through the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program. In addition, the Order clarifies that Tribal libraries, which are eligible for support under the Library Services and Technology Act, are also eligible for the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

More information about eligible entities can be found on the [Emergency Connectivity Fund Program website](#).

### What types of equipment and services are eligible for reimbursement?

- **Eligible Equipment.** The following types of equipment purchased for off-campus use by students, school staff, and library patrons who would otherwise lack sufficient devices or connectivity to engage in remote learning are eligible for support: laptop and tablet computers, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems (including air cards), routers, and devices that combine a modem and router.
- Desktops and smartphones are not eligible for ECF Program funding.
- **Eligible services** include commercially available Internet access services providing a fixed or mobile broadband Internet access connection for off-campus use by students, school staff, or library patrons who would otherwise lack access to connectivity sufficient to engage in remote learning. For more information visit [emergencyconnectivityfund.org](https://emergencyconnectivityfund.org).
- In limited circumstances where a school or library can demonstrate that there are no available service options sufficient to support remote learning for its students, school staff, or library patrons, the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program may support the construction of new networks and the customer premises equipment needed for datacasting services.

### What Are the Reasonable Support Amounts for Eligible Equipment?

- The program will reimburse eligible schools and libraries a maximum of \$400 for each laptop or tablet, and a maximum of \$250 for Wi-Fi hotspots provided to a student, school staff member, or library patron.
- Schools and libraries may buy more expensive laptops, tablets, or Wi-Fi-hotspots, but they can only be reimbursed up to \$400/\$250.
- For other eligible equipment and services, USAC & the FCC will review costs to ensure they are reasonable.

### **How should applicants determine their unmet needs?**

- The FCC has not prescribed a specific way for applicants to go about estimating what they will need to address unmet needs.
- In the case of schools, applicants should provide their best estimates about the number of students who did not have access to adequate connected devices, broadband connections, or both when the pandemic began; the number of students who do not currently have adequate access; and how the applicant expects those numbers to change with the requested ECF Program support.
- While the FCC has not dictated specific data collection requirements for estimating the unmet for students, schools must describe how and when they collected the information that they use for the estimates provided in their responses.
- There is no such data collection requirement for libraries to estimate the unmet need for library patrons. However, both schools and libraries must certify that they are seeking support for eligible equipment and/or services for students, school staff, and/or library patrons that would otherwise lack adequate access.
- We encourage applicants to make their best efforts to estimate what they will need and apply for ECF funding in a timely manner, just as they do for the E-Rate Program.
- Applicants may seek funding for only one fixed broadband connection per location and only one connected device and/or Wi-Fi hotspot per student, school staff member or library patron.

### **Do I need a SAM.gov account if I am an annual E-Rate applicant?**

- SAM.gov registration is necessary for all entities that receive funds from the U.S. government. Because this is not currently required to participate in the E-Rate program, applicants that may not have registered before should begin the process now. Service providers that agree to invoice on behalf of applicants also need to be registered with SAM.gov. Applicants who are already registered with SAM.gov do not need to re-register but do need to make sure that their renewal is current.
- Please note that SAM.gov registration is not required in order to submit an ECF FCC Form 471 application.

Additional FAQs are available at: [www.fcc.gov/emergency-connectivity-fund-faqs](http://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](http://EmergencyConnectivityFund.org) and sign up for [Emergency Connectivity Fund Program emails](#).

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.

#### 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.