



Universal Service  
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USAC

## Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter

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October 26, 2021

The FCC **announced** that requests for nearly \$1.3 billion in funding to support approximately 2.4 million connected devices and 564,000 broadband connections were received during the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program's second application filing window. The second window, which ran from September 28 to October 13, 2021, attracted applicants from all 50 states, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia - seeking funding for eligible equipment and services received or delivered by June 30, 2022. The Emergency Connectivity Fund Program provides funding to schools and libraries for the reasonable costs of laptop and tablet computers, Wi-Fi hotspots, routers, modems, and broadband Internet connections for use by students, school staff, and library patrons at locations that include locations other than a school or library. Funding is limited to students, school staff, and library patrons who would otherwise lack access to connected devices and broadband Internet services sufficient to engage in remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants have now requested over \$6.4 billion from the \$7.17 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund Program in the first and second application filing windows. Additional information about the demand can be found at <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/ecf-state-demand/>.

### Funding Commitments for the First Application Filing Window

Yesterday, the FCC also **announced** the third wave of funding commitments totaling over \$269 million for the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program. To date, the FCC and USAC have committed over \$2.6 billion in program funding to school and library applicants. With the first three waves, the FCC and USAC are providing support for over 6.1 million connected devices and nearly 2.9 million broadband connections to support 6,028 schools, 512 libraries, and 49 consortia. The FCC and USAC will continue to expeditiously review applications and will be issuing additional funding commitment decisions on a rolling basis in the coming weeks.

## Request for Reimbursement Submission

**Invoicing is available through the ECF Portal.** Service providers and applicants have access to the ECF Portal through their OnePortal dashboard and can view any funding requests that they are associated with through the ECF Portal. Applicants and service providers, who agree to invoice on behalf of applicants, can also use the ECF Portal to submit requests for reimbursement (i.e., ECF FCC Forms 472 or 474) for the ECF Program.

E-learning modules that provide a walkthrough of the reimbursement forms including the **ECF FCC Form 472 (BEAR)** and **ECF FCC Form 474 (SPI)** have been posted in the **Training** section of the Emergency Connectivity Fund website.

**Please note that applicants and service providers, who agree to invoice on behalf of applicants, will not be able to receive program funding until they have completed their SAM.gov registration.** The SAM.gov banking information will be used for issuing payments to applicants and service providers. If you will be submitting ECF requests for reimbursement (i.e., ECF FCC Form 472/ ECF FCC Form 474) and have not completed your SAM.gov registration, please do so now. You may use this link to complete or renew your SAM.gov registration: <https://usfcr.com/sam-registration/> .

**Please be aware that both the DUNS TIN/EIN that was used for SAM.gov registration and the FCC RN TIN/EIN of the entity who will be invoicing must match to ensure that banking information is accurate and can be validated.**

Service providers who agree to invoice on behalf of applicants must also complete the following steps.

### **File the FCC Form 498 (Service Providers Only)**

Service providers must also file the FCC Form 498 in order to gain access to the ECF Portal to request reimbursement. Please note that the form will ask for banking information, however, the Commission will rely upon that which is stored in SAM.gov for disbursement purposes. After you complete this form, USAC will assign a unique nine digit number, known as a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) or 498 ID, and will set up a user name and password for you to access the **E-File system**, a portal that allows you to update your FCC Form 498 online and set up permissions for other users in your company. Some of the contact information on the FCC Form 498 can be searched using the **SPIN Search tool**, so it is helpful to keep your information current in case another program participant needs to contact you.

### **Access the ECF Portal**

Once a service provider receives the 498 ID, they will automatically be granted access to the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC). If you are a new Service Provider, you must log in to EPC and

sign the terms and conditions and wait 10 minutes to be granted access to the ECF Portal.

For additional information regarding the request for reimbursement process for **applicants** and **service providers**, including a walkthrough of the ECF FCC Forms **472 (BEAR)** and **474 (SPI)**, please visit the Emergency Connectivity Fund website.

#### **Request for Reimbursement Decision Notification**

Once USAC has completed its review of a request for reimbursement, USAC will send a notification through the ECF Portal via email to all users with access to the request for reimbursement, which are set by the account administrator. USAC issues this notification when it has sent the payment batch to the FCC for processing. It can take up to 5 business days for the FCC to process the payment with Treasury, and for the funds to be disbursed into the bank account on file with SAM.gov. The Treasury will then issue a notification to the contacts in SAM.gov when amounts are deposited.

## **Appeals and Post-Commitment Requests**

To find more information regarding how to file **Appeals** and Post-Commitment requests for **applicants** and **service providers**, please visit [EmergencyConnectivityFund.org](https://EmergencyConnectivityFund.org).

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **How can I change the service provider or the make or model of equipment after I've received a funding commitment decision letter (FCDL)?**

After an FCDL has been issued, you will need to submit a request to change the service provider or the equipment and/or service through a Post-Commitment Request Form in the ECF Portal. USAC will review your request and notify you of its decision and/or whether more information is needed via email. Please visit USAC's Emergency Connectivity Fund website for additional information regarding the Post-Commitment Request process for **applicants** and **service providers**.

#### **Can I submit an invoice for a partial FRN and a partial Line Item within one FRN?**

Yes, invoices for a partial FRN and also a partial Line Item within one FRN are acceptable. Please ensure that all requests for reimbursement are submitted by the Invoice Deadline Date listed on the FCDL, and ensure that requested amounts are within the approved amount on the FCDL.

#### **For equipment and non-recurring services, what is the deadline for filing requests for reimbursement?**

For equipment or other non-recurring services that have not been received at the time the application was submitted, applicants may use June 30, 2022 as the service end date and the invoice filing deadline will be 60 days from the date of the funding commitment decision letter;

a revised funding commitment decision letter approving a post-commitment change or a successful appeal of previously denied or reduced funding; or August 29, 2022 (i.e., 60 days after June 30, 2022), whichever is later. FCDLs include the Invoice Deadline Date.

Please see the [FCC's Public Notice DA 21-881](#) for more information about the deadline submitting invoices for non-recurring services and equipment purchases.

**When will information about applications filed during the second application filing window be made available on Open Data?**

Data from ECF funding applications submitted during the second application filing window are now available on [USAC's Open Data platform](#).

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

SAM.gov registration is necessary for all applicants and service providers that are submitting requests for reimbursement (ECF FCC Forms 472/474) and receiving funds from the U.S. government. Because this is not currently required to participate in the E-Rate program, applicants, who are planning to submit requests for reimbursement (ECF FCC Form 472) and have not 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. ECF applicants whose service providers will file ECF requests for reimbursement on their behalf (SPI invoicing) are not required to register in SAM.gov.

**Can a school or library submit a reimbursement request after it has received the ECF-supported equipment but before it distributes the equipment to their students, school staff, or library patrons?**

Yes. While the school or library must have received the equipment or services prior to submitting their request for reimbursement and must certify to this on the ECF FCC Form 472, they can seek reimbursement before distributing the equipment or services to students, school staff members, or library patrons with an unmet need.

Applicants and service providers are also reminded of the need to certify on their reimbursement requests (ECF FCC Forms 472/474) that they are not willfully or knowingly requesting reimbursement for equipment or services that are not being used.

**I'm still waiting to hear back about my application. Is there anything else I should be doing now?**

Double check that you have completed all of the registrations necessary for applying for and/or receiving ECF support, including:

- Obtaining a DUNS Number,
- Obtaining an FCC Registration Number,
- Obtaining a Billed Entity Number, and

- Registering with SAM.gov.

Be sure that the information provided in these registrations match the information included on your application. For more information about these registrations, review the **Getting Started** webpage.

Also, please be sure to respond to all information requests in a timely manner.

**I can access the ECF Portal, but can't file any forms – what can I do?**

Users that have view-only permissions will only be able to see forms created by others but cannot create forms themselves. The account administrator must upgrade your permissions in order to create forms. Please contact the account administrator for your organization.

Please review the FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund FAQs, which it continues to update as new questions come in: [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** . Visit the **Training** section of the Emergency Connectivity Fund website to view trainings, access E-learning modules and view recordings of past trainings and office hour sessions.

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

We appreciate your interest in the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program and look forward to your ongoing engagement as we work together to close the Homework Gap!

### 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.