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USAC

Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletter

May 24, 2022

Last week, the FCC [announced](#) that it committed over \$50 million in the 15th wave of Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) Program support. This latest round of funding is supporting 46 schools, 7 libraries, and 2 consortia across the country, including for students in American Samoa, Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Ohio, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. To date, nearly \$4.9 billion in ECF Program funding has been committed to schools and libraries to help close the Homework Gap. Additionally, the FCC is expected to announce the results of the third application filing window that closed on May 13, 2022 in the coming days.

SAM.gov Transition From DUNS to UEI

On April 6, 2022, the FCC released [Public Notice DA 22-371](#) which announces the transition from the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). At this time, only entities that receive direct payments or disbursements from the FCC must obtain a UEI and complete full entity registration in SAM.gov, including for the ECF Program. Most organizations who participate and receive payments in the ECF Program should have already registered with SAM.gov. If you are submitting requests for reimbursement for the ECF Program, you are required to register in SAM.gov and already have a UEI. No further action is required; USAC will reach out directly to these ECF participants if needed. If you will be submitting requests for reimbursement for the ECF Program and have not completed your registration in SAM.gov, you should do so now.

If you need help obtaining a UEI or have additional questions, please visit the [Contact USAC](#) page to contact USAC's Customer Service Center (CSC) for the ECF Program.

Frequently Asked Questions

If demand in the third application filing window exceeds available funding, how will funding requests be prioritized?

In the event that demand exceeds available funding during any ECF application filing window, ECF funding requests will be prioritized based on an applicant's E-Rate discount rate for Category One services, adjusted to provide a five percent increase for rural schools and libraries. This means that those schools and libraries entitled to a higher E-Rate discount rate will receive funding ahead of those entitled to a lower discount rate, as reflected in the discount matrix provided in section 54.1708(c) of the ECF rules.

As such, if prioritization is required, for ECF applicants applying in the third window that have a validated E-Rate discount, USAC will rely on the applicant's current Category One E-Rate discount rate (adjusted for rurality, if applicable) based on the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to prioritize the review and processing of ECF applications received in the third application filing window. Applicants were permitted to provide updated information regarding their Category One E-Rate discount rate in the narrative box on their third window application. (This information will be validated as part of the application PIA review process). For ECF applicants applying in the third window that have not participated in the E-Rate program (and, therefore, do not have a validated E-Rate discount rate), USAC will validate their discount rate during the PIA review process.

What if my school or library does not have a validated E-Rate discount because I don't participate in the E-Rate program?

If your school or library does not have a validated E-Rate discount, please be prepared to respond quickly to requests to validate a discount rate, including providing documentation to support the discount rate. Failure to respond promptly could result in your ECF application not being reviewed.

What information should we use to answer the fourth unmet needs survey question?

In response to the fourth unmet needs survey question about how many students will be provided a connected device, a broadband connection, or both a connected device and a broadband connection with the ECF Program funding requested, schools that applied during the third window needed to provide the number of students that they will provide connected devices, broadband connections, or both with the ECF funding requested during the third application filing window. There was no need to report the number of students that were or will be provided equipment and/or services through a first or second window committed funding request on a third window application. If you already responded with information that includes all three application windows, you may request to modify your unmet needs survey responses in the ECF Portal during the PIA review process or through a Post-Commitment Request if the funding request has been committed.

Our school's summer break is coming up. Will there be a "Summer Deferral" Period for PIA inquiries in the ECF Program like there is in the E-Rate Program?

No. In the E-Rate Program, USAC provides applicants additional time to respond to requests for information about their FCC Form 471 or other program forms during the summer and winter holiday seasons when schools are not in session. USAC will place forms and requests in a deferred status for E-Rate applicants that do not respond during these times. However, given the emergency purpose of the Emergency Connectivity Fund, there are no seasonal deferral periods in the ECF Program. Applicants should continue checking the ECF Portal for requests for information and respond by the deadline provided. Failure to respond to requests for information may lead to the denial of an application. Updates to holiday and summer contact information can be requested in the ECF Portal at

any time by using the “Contact Reviewer” button under the Communications or Related Actions tab.

ECF Requests for Reimbursement Reminders of the Week

Check out our [Request for Reimbursement ECF FCC Form 472 \(BEAR\) Checklist](#) and [Request for Reimbursement ECF FCC Form 474 \(SPI\) Checklist](#) for step by step guidance on what to do after you receive a Funding Commitment Decision Letter.

Check SAM.gov Registration – We remind applicants and service providers, who agree to invoice on behalf of the applicant, to ensure your SAM.gov information and registration is updated and active. If you will be submitting ECF requests for reimbursement (i.e., ECF FCC Form 472 or ECF FCC Form 474) and have not completed or updated your SAM.gov registration, please do so now. Visit the [SAM.gov website](#) to complete or renew your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registrations must be renewed on annual basis. If not renewed, the account will be deactivated.

Following these reminders and tips will help streamline the review and processing of your ECF request(s) for reimbursement and can help you receive the funds more quickly. Requests for reimbursement will be reviewed and processed on a rolling basis. For more reminders and tips regarding requests for reimbursement, please visit the [Reminders and Tips](#) page on the ECF Program website.

For More Information

Please review the [FCC’s Emergency Connectivity Fund FAQs](#), which it continues to update as new questions come in.

More detail on the ECF 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](#) .

Applicants and service providers can also contact the ECF Customer Service Center (CSC) 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 ECF 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.