

Emergency Connectivity Fund Applying for Window 2



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ECF Overview

- \$7.17 billion passed by Congress in March 2021 as part of the American Rescue Plan
- Provides funding to public and nonpublic schools and public libraries for students, teachers and library patrons who lack sufficient internet access and devices
 - Connected Devices = Laptops/Tablets/Chromebooks – up to \$400/device
 - One per person
 - Internet Access = Aircards/Jetpacks/MiFi's – up to \$250/device
 - Can request more for devices providing service to multiple students (buses)
 - Also, modems and routers are eligible
 - For remote learning and homework (not just when classes are virtual)
 - Schools – students, teachers, paraprofessionals
 - Libraries – any library patron for any purpose (not just educational purpose)
 - Off-campus means any location where education is occurring (homes, community centers, churches, school buses)
 - Devices may be brought to campus but can't be purchased solely for use at S/L
- Funded at 100%; not partial (discounted) funding like E-rate
- ECF will fund construction of new networks or datacasting equipment if it can be proven that no commercial internet access service is available*



Eligible Funding Period – FY 2021

- Two application windows for same funding period:
 - Equipment/services must be received and paid for on/after July 1, 2021
 - Orders *placed* prior to July 1, 2021 are eligible; cannot be paid for until after July 1
- “Window 1” closed Aug 13, 2021
 - Demand = \$5.1 billion
- “Window 2” will open Sept 28 – Oct 13, 2021
- If demand exceeds remaining \$2 billion, highest poverty (with ruralness factor) S/L will receive priority until funds are exhausted

Emergency Connectivity Fund Prioritization Matrix		
% of students eligible for National School Lunch Program	Urban Discount	Rural Discount
< 1.....	20	30
1-19.....	40	55
20-34.....	50	65
35-49.....	60	75
50-74.....	80	85
75-100.....	90	95



Should You Apply in Window 2?

Yes!

- \$2 billion is likely enough to cover all Window 2 applications
- If demand is higher than \$2 billion, Congress could provide supplemental appropriations to fund all applications



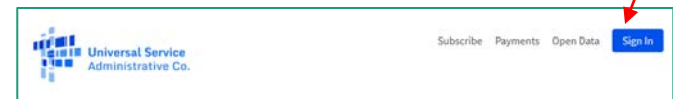


Restrictions/Conditions

- Applicants must determine “**unmet need**” how many students/teachers/library patrons would otherwise lack sufficient connectivity or devices to engage in remote learning
- **Not eligible:** desktops, smartphones, spare equipment, filtering, stand-alone cameras/microphones, cases, Zoom licenses, on-campus equipment, sharing of E-rate-funded Internet bandwidth
- No separate federal competitive **bidding** requirements imposed but S/L must comply with state and local procurements requirements
- Must be used “primarily” for **educational purposes**
 - May be used for other purposes when not needed for educational activities
 - Must restrict internet access to only students/teachers/patrons with appropriate credentials
- No **double-dipping:** Applicants cannot seek ECF funding for equipment or service that will be purchased with other pandemic-relief funding
- 10-year **record retention** requirement
 - Make/model/serial #/name of person loaned to/loan dates, etc.
- Applicants seeking reimbursements must have updated **SAM.gov** account before getting reimbursed
 - Vendors must have E-rate SPIN if they will be seeking reimbursement from ECF instead of applicant
- **CIPA** now applies to the use of any S/L library-owned computer if S/L receives ECF or E-rate funding for internet access or E-rate internal connections

Application Process

- Applicants determine “unmet need” and obtain vendor quotes
- Applications submitted in USAC’s EPC Portal by October 13 deadline



- USAC will review all applications submitted in “window” and size demand
 - Applicants may receive PIA inquiries, similar like E-rate
- Funding Commitment Letters issued to applicants
- Applicants purchase equipment or service and then seek ECF reimbursement by August 29, 2022
 - If applicants cannot afford to upfront the funds before seeking reimbursement, they can either:
 - Request a “prospective disbursement” from ECF
 - Request that vendor invoice ECF (vendors not required to agree)
- Funds deposited directly into school/library/vendor bank accounts





Determining Unmet Need

- Only “reasonable estimate” of unmet need required at *471 stage*. Must have documentation to support unmet needs at *reimbursement stage*
 - Before seeking reimbursement, obtain a signed statement from student or family attesting to unmet need at home, including EBB certification
 - Can seek ECF “commitment” for X number, but then only invoice for less, based on actual student data
 - Examples of student/teacher/library Unmet Needs Certification at: <http://e-ratepa.org/?p=33555>

- Ways to determine “reasonable estimates” for 471 stage:

- Survey of students/families and/or teachers
- NSLP eligibility
- U.S. Census data or other publicly available data
- See http://e-ratepa.org/?page_id=32310

**Form 471
Stage**

**Form 472 BEAR
Reimbursement
Stage**

Only “reasonable estimates” needed

Explain in 471 survey narrative how those estimates were obtained (source data, quantities, etc.)

Must have documentation of “unmet need” required before invoicing
Carefully consider this if your vendor is invoicing ECF

Replacing School-Owned Devices

STUDENTS:

- If a school provides a laptop to each student and has a technical reason why a school-owned device is required to access their curriculum or Internet, and if that device is no longer sufficient to engage in remote learning, the district can request ECF support for a new connected device.
- If a school provides a laptop to each student but it is not required as part of the curriculum, and if the student does not have access to their own device while off campus that is sufficient to engage in remote learning, the district can request ECF support for a connected device for that student.

TEACHERS:

- If a teacher uses a school-provided laptop for remote learning, and that laptop is not sufficient to conduct remote learning, and if the teacher does not have access to their own adequate connected device at home, the district can seek ECF support for a connected device for that teacher.
- Obtain signed statement before seeking reimbursement from ECF



*Options for Areas with No Service

- Where no commercial internet access service is available in an area that is sufficient to meet remote learning needs, applicants have 2 options:
 - ECF will pay for **construction of new networks** to serve students, teachers or library patrons **OR**
 - ECF will also pay for **customer premises equipment to receive datacasting services**
 - IP data transmitted over public television airwaves to a computer and provides access to remote learning in homes without internet access
- “Clear evidence” of no commercial internet options is required
 - Applicants will be required to prove that they requested service from all existing providers serving the area (both wired and wireline) & that the providers were unwilling or unable to provide service sufficient to meet remote learning needs
 - See full details and sample vendor survey/cover letter at: <http://e-ratepa.org/?p=33382>
- Construction/installation must be completed, and service must begin, within 1 year of FCDL



ECF Form 471 Do's/Don'ts



- Licenses must be bundled with device cost
- Manufacturer warranties (up to 3 years) must be bundled with the device cost
- Laptop/tablet leases are eligible, but only for amount paid for in FY 2021
- Internet on buses cost > \$250 – explain in narrative that it is serving multiple (x number) of students
- If device costs > \$400, just list \$400

ECF Form 471 Do's/Don'ts

- Different FRNs for Equipment/Internet
 - Aircards and monthly internet costs must be on separate FRNs
- List “installation” on separate FRN Line Item under “taxes/reasonable charges” – don’t have to use separate FRN for “services”
 - Must be with same vendor
 - “White glove” installation is not eligible
- If a school is filing multiple 471s, their Unmet Needs survey should list identical data on each 471
- Vendor quotes required – despite not being mandatory on 471
 - Quote must include make and model or service type, quantity, unit cost, service dates
 - Signed contracts not required



ECF Form 471 Do's/Don'ts

- If # of devices on FRN exceeds 471 survey #, explain in narrative
- Use default service delivery dates of 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022
 - Detailed cost section will ask you to enter the # of months that service is being provided and doesn't automatically calculate using the calendar dates like the E-rate Form 471 does
- If you indicate that vendor will be seeking ECF reimbursement, you must upload proof from vendor that they've agreed to this
- If you get logged out before submitting, go to "My Pending Tasks" to see your draft application
 - As with the E-rate EPC portal, there's a very short timeout setting
- If you submit the form and realize you've made a mistake, there's a Modification feature to ask your PIA reviewer to make changes
- Form 471 Checklists (schools and libraries) available at:
http://e-ratepa.org/?page_id=32310
- More 471 Do's/Don'ts available at: <http://e-ratepa.org/?p=33512>



ECF Resources

- ❖ **ECF Form 471 Application** (in One Portal): <https://ecfportal.usac.org/suite/sites/ECF>
- ❖ **USAC ECF Information Page:** www.emergencyconnectivityfund.org
- ❖ **USAC ECF Form 471 Guide:** <https://www.emergencyconnectivityfund.org/ecf-fcc-form-471/>
- ❖ **USAC Training Modules:** <https://www.emergencyconnectivityfund.org/training/>
- ❖ **USAC ECF Customer Service Support Center:**
1-800-234-9781 Monday – Friday 8 am – 8 pm Eastern Time
- ❖ **FCC ECF Page:** <https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-connectivity-fund>
- ❖ **FCC FAQ/Summary:** <https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-connectivity-fund-faqs>
- ❖ **PA ECF Resource Page:** http://e-ratepa.org/?page_id=32310

