

Emergency Connectivity Fund Applying for Window 3

... July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023



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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 when they are off campus
 - 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*



ECF Windows 1 & 2

- Application Windows 1 & 2 originally covered unmet needs from July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022
 - Equipment/services had to be received on/after July 1, 2021
 - Orders were permitted to be *placed* prior to July 1, 2021
- FCC extended this cycle through June 30, 2023
 - New FY 2021 eligible dates: 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2023
 - Only 12 months of Internet access permitted during this 24 month period
- Reimbursement deadline for Windows 1 & 2 is August 29, 2023
- \$5.8B requested --> \$4.7B committed --> \$558M disbursed
- At least \$1B remains and will be available in ECF Window 3



ECF Window 3

- Window 3 Application Window:
April 28, 2022 – May 13, 2022
- Application Window 3 will cover unmet needs from:
July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023
 - Equipment/services must be received on/after July 1, 2022
 - Orders may be placed prior to July 1, 2022
- Only 12 months of Internet access permitted during this 18 month period
 - Cannot overlap service months from Windows 1 & 2
- Applicants that received funding in Windows 1 & 2 can apply for additional funding if unmet needs remain
- Reimbursement deadline for Window 3 is February 29, 2024
- All other eligibility/rules remain the same as Windows 1 & 2
- Will likely be last ECF application window unless Congress appropriates more \$



What Happens if \$1B Isn't Enough?

- If demand exceeds funding available (estimated to be at least \$1B), highest poverty schools and libraries will receive priority until funds are exhausted
- Higher priority given to rural schools and libraries within each band
- ECF Prioritization Matrix:

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

- *Note: Discounts and pro-ration will not apply*
- *If your enrollment/NSLP has increased, you can explain this in the narrative and USAC will then reach out for you to present proof*



Competitive Bidding

Bidding:

- No separate federal competitive bidding requirements imposed
 - UGG procurement rules do not apply
- Must comply with state and local procurements requirements
 - For laptops/tablets, most schools purchase from COSTARs or PEPPM
- Additional requirements if seeking funding to install internet in currently unserved areas *



What's Eligible: Equipment

- Connected Devices = laptops/tablets
 - Maximum reimbursement/device = \$400 (can be higher for students with disabilities)
- Wi-Fi hotspots / Cellular aircards
 - Maximum reimbursement/device = \$250
 - Cap does not include monthly internet service costs
 - Cap does not apply if the hot spot is serving multiple users, such as a school bus location. Explain in FRN narrative that X number of users are being served
- Modems, routers (and devices that combined these)
- Chromebook licenses and manufacturer warranties are eligible but only if they are bundled with the cost of the laptop (cannot be a separate cost)
- 12 months of lease charges
 - Window 3 will cover another year's equipment lease charges
- Shipping, configuration charges, but are not in addition to \$ caps
 - Taxes are eligible, above the cap, but highly unlikely for PA applicants
 - Shipping should not be charged when purchasing from PEPPM or COSTARS contracts
- Restrictions:
 - No more than 1 laptop/tablet per person (student, teacher, library patron)
 - Schools must restrict device access to only students/teachers/patrons with appropriate credentials (can't be used by everyone in the home)
 - Must be used "primarily" for educational purposes
 - Credentialed person may use for other purposes when not needed for educational activities



Replacing School-Owned Devices

1:1 Initiatives do not automatically qualify for ECF funding

- 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 – *regardless of whether a student has their own device at home*.
- 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.





What's Eligible: Services

- Mobile wireless, cable modem, DSL, FIOS Internet (most common)
 - Less common: fixed wireless, microwave, satellite, leased lit fiber
- Installation, activation, taxes
- No monthly \$ caps
- Restrictions:
 - No more than 1 fixed internet connection per location (cable, FIOS, DSL)
 - No more than 1 Wi-Fi hotspot per person
- Recipients of Windows 1 & 2 ECF can apply for continuation of internet services in Window 3
 - Cannot overlap months
 - ECF Windows 1 & 2 will pay for 12 months of service between 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2023
 - Window 3 will pay for 12 months of service between 7/1/2022 – 12/31/2023

*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**
- “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



Continuing Internet Examples



- **Example 1:** School originally applied for 12 months of Internet service that began on July 1, 2021. Funding for that service ends June 30, 2022. School can now apply for another 12 months of Internet service any time within the new 18-month period, but likely they will seek funding in Window 3 for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.
- **Example 2:** Library originally applied for 12 months of Internet service but did not begin using that service until October 1, 2021. Thanks to FCC's recent service delivery extension for FY 2021, library can receive 12 months of ECF funding from October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022. Library can also apply for Internet in Window 3, likely from October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023.
- **Example 3:** Library originally applied for 12 months of Internet service but did not begin using that service until February 1, 2022. Library can use 12 months of Window 1 or 2 funding through January 31, 2023. Library may apply for **11 months** of Window 3 funding from February 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023.

Keep in mind that no funding is guaranteed in Window 3



Continuing Services for FY 2022

If you received ECF funding for services in Windows 1 or 2, and are seeking ECF Window 3 funding for those services, you must provide the following information in the FRN Narrative Box to prove you are not seeking overlapping services:

- **First or Second Window Recurring Service Request:**
 - ECF FCC Form 471 #
 - FRN #
 - Service Start Date and Service End Date
- **Continuing Third Window Recurring Service Request:**
 - ECF FCC Form 471 #
 - FRN #
 - Service Start Date and Service End Date

What's *Not* Eligible

- Desktops
- Smartphones
- Spare equipment/parts
- Software
- Filtering
- Firewalls/services
- Backup power equipment
- VPN licenses
- White Glove installation
- Microphones (stand-alone)
- Cameras (stand-alone)
- Accessories (bags, headsets, etc.)
- Technical support
- Accidental device protection or insurance-type warranties
 - Warranties up to 3 years that are bundled at no cost are eligible
- Remote learning subscriptions (Zoom)

Duplicate funding prohibition: Applicants cannot seek ECF funding for equipment or service that have already been or will be purchased with other targeted pandemic funding





Tracking Usage

- **ECF will only fund devices/internet that are being used**
- **ECF Reimbursement Certification:** Cannot willfully or knowingly requesting reimbursement for services and equipment that are not being used.
 - Exception would be during school's summer break
- **USAC Recent Guidance:**
 - ECF participants should take reasonable actions to monitor and track the usage of equipment and services that are purchased and used through the ECF program
 - For example:
 - Applicants could ask their service providers to provide monthly reports or data use
 - Ensure a hotspot device is activated
 - ECF participants should be prepared to explain what actions were taken, if asked how they complied with the non-usage certification during an audit or other post-commitment review



Restrictions/Conditions

- **Not eligible:** desktops, smartphones, spare equipment, filtering, stand-alone cameras/microphones, cases, Zoom licenses, on-campus equipment, sharing of E-rate-funded Internet bandwidth
- 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 that will be using BEAR reimbursement method 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
- Applicants must determine “**unmet need**” how many students/teachers/library patrons would otherwise lack sufficient connectivity or devices to engage in remote learning
 - Can be based on “reasonable estimate” at 471 stage, but must be exact at invoicing stage

ECF Form 471 Do's/Don'ts



- Licenses must be bundled with device cost
 - Cannot have separate cost for license on quote or invoice
- Manufacturer warranties (up to 3 years) are ok, but only if bundled with the device cost
 - Cannot have separate cost on quote or invoice
 - Insurance, repair/replacement plans are not eligible
- If device costs > \$400, just list \$400 on Form 471
 - Do not list \$431 because PIA will just have to reach out and make you change it to \$400
- Internet on buses cost > \$250 – explain in narrative that it is serving multiple (x number) of students

ECF Form 471 Do's/Don'ts

- Different FRNs for Equipment/Internet
 - Aircards and monthly internet costs must be on separate FRNs (one is equipment, and the other is service)
- Installation and configuration are eligible if provided by same equipment vendor
 - List “installation” or “configuration” on same FRN, but separate FRN Line Item under “taxes/reasonable charges”
 - “White glove” installation is not eligible
 - Asset tagging, inventory enrollment, for example
- 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
- Can use default service delivery dates of 7/1/2022 – 12/31/2023 if unsure what dates services will be delivered
 - Explain in narrative
- If you indicate that vendor will be seeking ECF reimbursement (called the SPI method), 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
- More 471 Do's/Don'ts available at: <http://e-ratepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ECF-Window-3-Insights-Form-471-Dos-and-Donts.pdf>



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

[Let's File an ECF Form 471!](#)





Application Process

- 1) Determine “unmet needs”
- 2) Obtain vendor quotes (contracts not required)
- 3) Submit ECF Form 471 in the One Portal system between **April 28 – May 13, 2022**
<https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login>
- 4) USAC will review all applications submitted “in-window” and size demand to determine which applications can be funded
 - Applicants may receive PIA inquiries, just like E-rate
- 5) Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDL) will be issued in bi-weekly waves
 - No Form 486 required
- 6) Obtain signed Unmet Needs Statements
- 7) Deliver/loan equipment/services
- 8) Applicants or vendors seek reimbursement from ECF Fund *
- 9) Funds deposited into school/library/vendor bank accounts connected to SAM.gov

ECF Form 471 Demo Example

- **Equipment:**
 - 250 Dell Chromebooks 3110 2-in-1
 - Vendor: Dell
 - SPIN: 143004340
 - BEAR Reimbursement
 - \$431.82 each (only seeking reimbursement for \$400)

- **Equipment:**
 - 100 Hotspots Franklin T10
 - Vendor: Tmobile
 - SPIN: 143026181
 - SPI Reimbursement
 - \$90 each

- **Services:**
 - 100 Mobile Broadband Plans
 - Vendor: Tmobile
 - SPIN: 143026181
 - SPI Reimbursement
 - \$20 each/month
 - Taxes: \$310/month

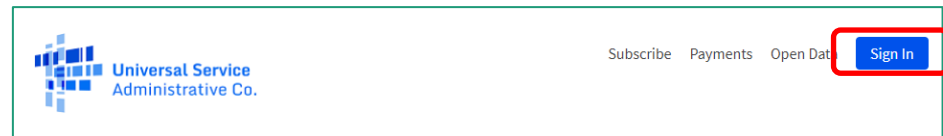
Same vendor quote





Form 471 Application

Log into One Portal

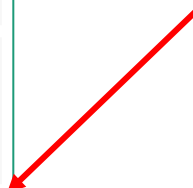


E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) - E-rate Program participants use the E-rate Productivity Center to manage program processes, receive notifications and to contact customer service.

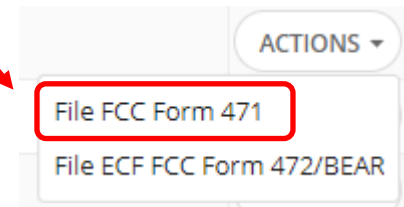
FCC Form 472 (BEAR) - Applicants file an FCC Form 472 (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) Form) to request reimbursement from USAC for the discount amount of the eligible products or services that the applicant has received and paid for in full.

Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) - Emergency Connectivity Fund participants use the ECF Portal to submit applications and review notifications regarding their program activities. Using this link, schools and libraries can also access the FCC Form 472 (BEAR) and service providers can access the FCC Form 474 (SPI) to request ECF reimbursement.

Select Emergency Connectivity Fund



Under 'Actions', Select File FCC Form 471



Page 1: Complete Nickname/Contact Info:

Application Nickname

Please enter an application nickname here. ?*

Contact Information

Are you the main contact person?

YES ✓ NO

Form 471: 'Unmet Needs' Survey

- ECF Form 471 includes a series of questions regarding the unmet needs of their students and/or teachers – libraries don't receive these questions

Information for Unmet Student Needs

- **Survey Questions:**

- 1) # of students who did not have access to adequate laptops/tablets, Internet access, or both when the pandemic began
- 2) # of students to whom you provided laptops/tablets, Internet access, or both during the 2020-2021 school year
- 3) # of students to whom you provided laptops/tablets, Internet access, or both during the 2021 – 2022 school year
- 4) # of students to whom you will be using ECF to provide laptops/tablets, Internet access, or both during Window 3
- 5) Even after ECF funding, how many students will lack laptops/tablets, Internet access, or both
- 6) **Narrative:** Applicants will be required to describe how and when they collected the information that they use for the estimates provided in their responses

* Explain in narrative if answer includes teachers





Form 471 Funding Requests

- **FRN Key Information**
 - Vendor (SPIN or vendor info if no SPIN)
 - Delivery dates (more guidance on this coming)
 - New construction for areas with no service questions
 - Narrative with option to upload vendor documentation – **UPLOAD VENDOR QUOTE and EXPLAIN INTERNET SERVICE DATES/FRNS FROM FY 2021**
- **FRN Line Item Information: *Services***
 - Type of connection (cable modem, mobile broadband, etc.)
 - Bandwidth (upload/download)
 - Monthly/One-time costs – quantities
- **FRN Line Item Information: *Equipment***
 - Type of product (tablets/laptops, wi-fi hot-spots, modems, routers, etc.)
 - Make/model
 - One-time costs - quantities
- **Invoicing Mode Question**
 - Will applicant or vendor be submitting reimbursement forms? – **UPLOAD VENDOR AGREEMENT LETTER FOR SPI REIMBURSEMENTS**



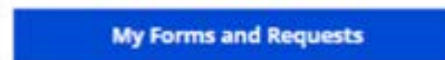
Modifications – Pre-FCDL

- Can request changes to your 471 during PIA review
- Modification “post commitment requests” are submitted in ECF portal

➤ Log into ECF Portal



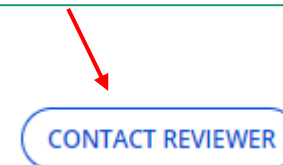
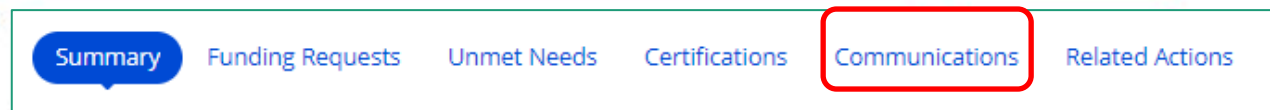
➤ Form 471 (My Forms and Requests)



➤ Click on relevant Form 471



➤ Related Actions





Modifications – Post FCDL

- Can change these after application is funded:
 - Make/model of equipment
 - Services
 - Service provider
 - Invoice mode
- Cannot increase costs
- Modification “post commitment requests” are submitted in ECF portal

The screenshot displays the ECF Portal interface with the following elements:

- Log into ECF Portal:** A green arrow points to the top left. The header includes the logo for Universal Service Administrative Co. and links for [Subscribe](#), [Payments](#), [Open Data](#), and a [Sign In](#) button.
- Form 471 (My Forms and Requests):** A green arrow points to the left. A blue button labeled [My Forms and Requests](#) is visible.
- Click on relevant Form 471:** A green arrow points to the left. The page shows "CENTRAL DAUPHIN SCHOOL DIST" and a red-bordered box containing the ID "ECF202107046".
- Related Actions:** A green arrow points to the left. A horizontal menu contains tabs for [Summary](#), [Funding Requests](#), [Unmet Needs](#), [Certifications](#), [Communications](#), and a red-bordered [Related Actions](#) button.
- Create a Post-Commitment Request:** A green arrow points to the left. A blue lightning bolt icon is next to the heading [Create a Post-Commitment Request](#). Below it, text reads: "This function allows you to create a Post-Commitment request."