Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)

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Introduction

- March 11, 2021. Section 7402 of the American Rescue Plan or Act. Established a $7.171 Billion Emergency Connectivity Fund in the U.S. Treasury.

https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text

- May 11, 2021, the FCC released their final rules related to the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)

https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-21-58A1.pdf.

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Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)

Why	**Purpose and Goals**
Who	**Eligible Entities and Users**
What	**Eligible products & Services; funding $**
When	**Summer 2021**
Where	**USAC Administrator E-Rate Forms**
How	**Application Process** **Get Started - Needs Assessment to K&S**
Other	**Certifications and Audits**

Learn More

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Why - Purpose

Allows eligible schools and libraries to first seek funding for purchases during the coming school year of eligible equipment and advanced telecommunications and information services to meet the needs of students, school staff, and library patrons who would otherwise lack access to basic educational opportunities and library services.

Funding is 100% Reimbursement (not adjusted by E-Rate discount)

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

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Why - Program Goals

(1) connecting and facilitating remote learning for students, school staff, and library patrons who would otherwise lack adequate access to connected devices and broadband Internet access connectivity during the pandemic;

(2) ensuring that USAC efficiently and effectively administers the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program; and

(3) providing pricing transparency for eligible equipment and services to inform future policy and purchasing decisions.

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Why - Educational Purpose Required

- Must be used primarily for educational purposes.

- Limited to activities that are integral, immediate, and proximate to the education of students in the case of a school, and activities that are integral, immediate, and proximate to the provision of library services to library patrons in the case of a library.

- School staff is limited to school staff that will be providing (or provided) educational services during the relevant time periods.

- May use for other purposes when not needed for primary educational purpose.

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Who – Eligible Entities and Locations

Eligible Entities:
- Schools and libraries eligible for E-rate will be eligible for ECF funding. Entities do not need to be currently participating in E-rate to apply for ECF.

Eligible Locations:
- Any off-campus location where education is occurring, such as community centers, churches, etc. (not just the home).

- Wireless service for school buses and   bookmobiles to bring Internet to students and library patrons that lack sufficient broadband will be eligible in 2nd window.

- Equipment/services may not be purchased for use solely at the school or library, but students, staff, patrons are permitted to bring such devices to the school or library.

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Who – Eligible Users

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Eligible Users:

- Students, staff or library patrons with appropriate credentials

Unmet Need:

- would otherwise lack access to connected devices or broadband connections sufficient to facilitate remote learning during the pandemic.

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What – Eligible Equipment

- Wi-Fi hotspots
- Modems (e.g., air cards)
- Routers
- Devices that combine a modem and router
- Connected devices (laptop computers and tablet computers)

(1) Any components included by the manufacturer with eligible equipment, and necessary for the equipment to operate, for example cords and chargers, do not require cost allocation.

(2) Smartphones and desktop computers are ineligible for support under this Program.

(3) A manufacturer's multi-year warranty for a period of up to three years that is provided as an integral part of an eligible component, without a separately identifiable cost, is also eligible.

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What – Eligible Services

- Cable Modem
- Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)
- Leased Lit Fiber (e.g., fiber to the home or to the premises)
- Satellite
- Wireless (e.g., fixed wireless, microwave, or mobile broadband)

In general, eligible advanced telecommunications and information services include commercially available fixed or mobile broadband Internet access services.

Installation, activation, and initial configuration costs, taxes, shipping charges, and other reasonable fees incurred with the purchase of the eligible equipment and services are eligible for support under the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program

Wi-Fi on buses or bookmobiles - eligible support in SECOND filing window.

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Limitations and Caps

$400 per connected device
    (laptops/ tablets)
       Waiver for disability use if costs more

$250 per Wi-Fi hot spots

Other equipment and services reasonable costs

Internet expected to be $10-$25 per month

No more than 1 fixed broadband Internet connection per location is permitted

No more than one connected device (laptop/tablet) per authorized user

Schools and libraries must make this certification as part of their application for funding and must retain documentation of reasonable measures taken to determine who needed laptops/tablets and Internet.

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Ineligible Costs

- Administrative costs
- Charges for termination liability, penalty surcharges, and other charges not associated with purchase of the eligible equipment and services.
- Software, user licenses, filtering and firewall services that are purchased separately and are not included in the base price for the equipment.
- Back-up power equipment, e.g., back-up batteries, redundant power cords, uninterruptible power supply (UPS), generators, and surge protectors, etc.
- Cybersecurity tools (including, for example, virtual private network (VPN) licenses, firewall software, network monitoring, and filtering services).
- Dark fiber.
- Eligible equipment or services purchased before March 1, 2020.

- Filtering services needed for Children's Internet Protection Act compliance.
- Headsets.
- Learning management systems.
- Separate costs for non-connected accessories, e.g., cases, mouse pads, cable clips, laptop bags, tablet stands, wall mounts, and charging stations, etc.
- Mobile phones, including smartphones.
- Standalone microphones.
- Standalone cameras.
- Technical support, maintenance costs, separate costs for warranties and protection plans.
- Video conferencing equipment and related software subscriptions (e.g., Zoom subscriptions

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Construction of New Networks

Where applicants can prove there is no commercially available Internet access available, funding to build such networks is permitted.

- Provide clear evidence demonstrating how they determined that an existing fixed or mobile broadband network was not available
- That they sought service from existing providers, and
- Those providers were unable or unwilling to provide services sufficient to meet the remote learning needs.

ELIGIBLE COSTS ARE:

- Monthly charges, special construction, installation and activation charges, modulating electronics and other equipment necessary to make a broadband Internet access service functional ("Network Equipment") and maintenance and operation charges.
- Special construction is defined as construction of network facilities, design and engineering, and project management.
- Customer premises or end-user equipment to receive datacasting services.

Dark fiber and electronics to light dark fiber are NOT eligible.

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When

- First Window – expected June 2021 – 45 days – Close August 2021

- May request 100% reimbursement for eligible equipment or services purchased during the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

- Additional windows if funding is still available
  - 2nd window may be for reimbursement March 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021
  - OR 2nd window may be for another prospective filing based on how much requested in 1st window

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How

Utilize E-Rate Forms 471, 472 and 474
Must register in the federal Sam.gov system

USAC is program administrator

Filing window – all applications filed during the 45 day period are treated as if filed at the same time

100% reimbursement

- If more funding requested than the $7.17 billion available, will use prioritization based on E-Rate discounts to determine who will receive funding

- Extra 5% for rural discount bands

- If not enough funding for a specific band, then prioritize based on low income% of district
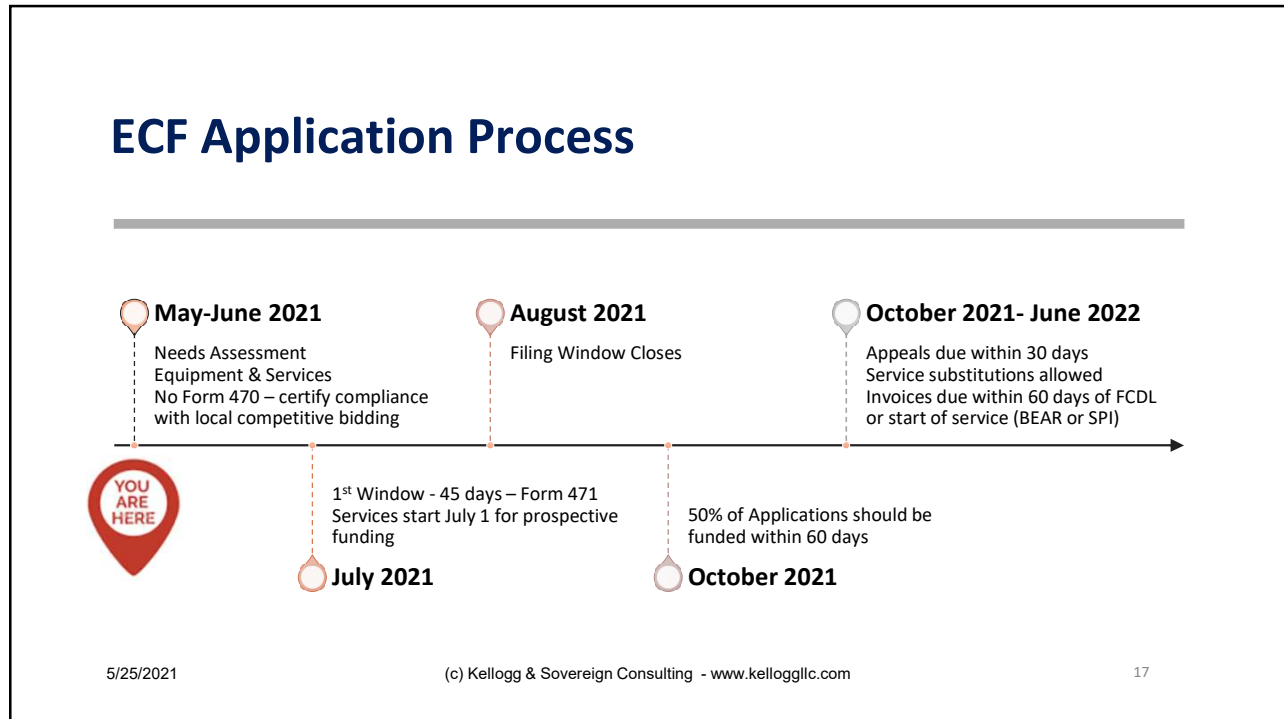
	Emergency Connectivity Fund Prioritization Matrix	
	Discount Level	
% of students eligible for National School Lunch Program	Urban	Rural
< 1	20	30
1-19	40	55
20-34	50	65
35-49	60	75
50-74	80	85
75-100	90	95

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ECF Application Process

May-June 2021
Needs Assessment
Equipment & Services
No Form 470 – certify compliance
with local competitive bidding

August 2021
Filing Window Closes

October 2021- June 2022
Appeals due within 30 days
Service substitutions allowed
Invoices due within 60 days of FCDL
or start of service (BEAR or SPI)

YOU ARE HERE

1st Window - 45 days – Form 471
Services start July 1 for prospective
funding

50% of Applications should be
funded within 60 days

July 2021

October 2021

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CIPA REQUIRED – Regardless of Location on or off campus

- CIPA applies to the use of any computers owned by a school or library, including those purchased with Emergency Connectivity Fund support if the school or library receives Emergency Connectivity Fund or E-Rate support for Internet access or Internet services, or E-Rate support for internal connections.

  Regardless of where used – on or off school or library locations

- This is true even if the student or library patron does not use Internet access services provided by the school or library.

- CIPA does not apply to computers not owned by the school/library, even if they receive ECF or E-rate funding for Internet or internal connections.

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CERTIFICATIONS REQUIRED

- Certify compliance with local, state and tribal procurement requirements
- Certify equipment and services are being primarily used for educational purpose by students, school staff or library patrons and not willfully or knowingly requesting reimbursement for equipment or services not being used
- Certify that are not planning to not use the equipment or services
- Schools - Certify seeking funds only for eligible equipment and services provided to students and school staff who would otherwise lack access to connected devices or broadband services sufficient to engage in remote learning

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CERTIFICATIONS REQUIRED

- Libraries – On a going forward basis, library must provide the patron a copy of an eligible use policy, which explains that the equipment or service is intended for library patrons who do not otherwise have access to equipment or services sufficient to meet the patron's educational needs. Require that the library patron sign and return a statement that the library patron would otherwise lack access to equipment or services sufficient to meet the patron's educational needs if not for the use of the equipment or service being provided by the library.
- Certify will maintain an asset inventory, an inventory of services provided, and data regarding fixed broadband services

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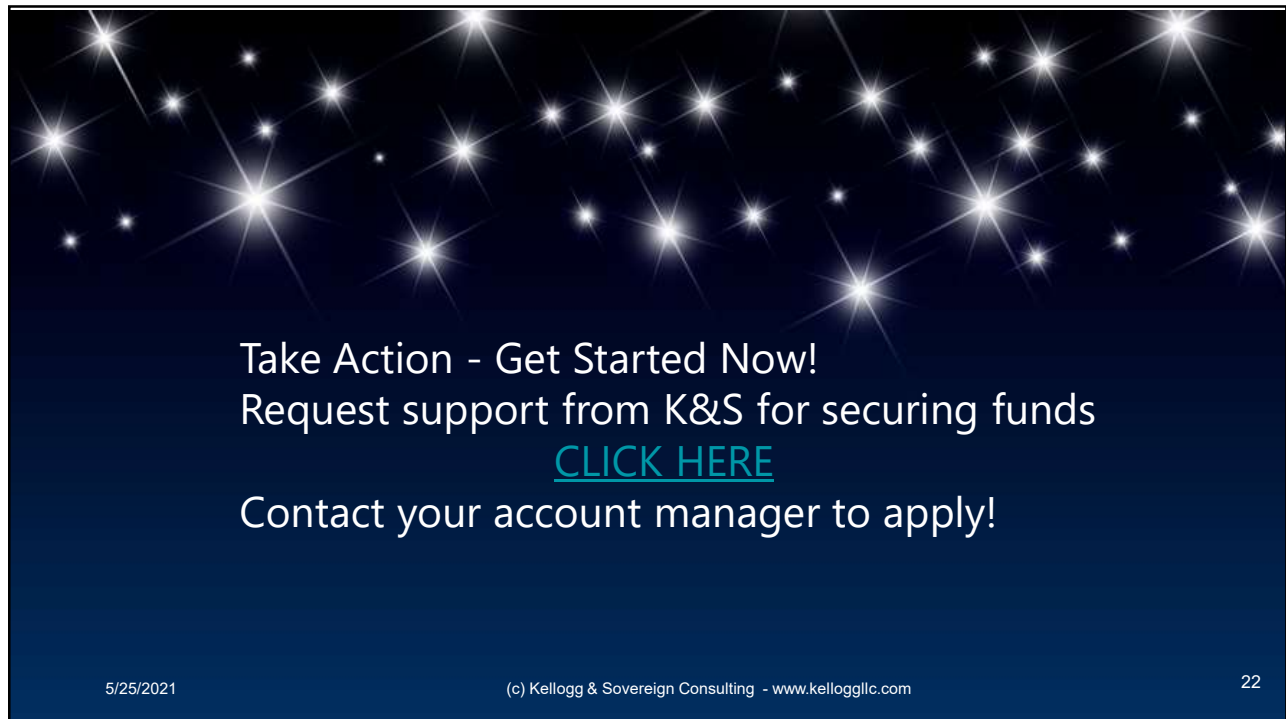
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OTHER ISSUES

- Applicant can request pre-payment through BEAR process; pay provider within 30 days of reimbursement

- Service provider can invoice on behalf of applicant. Must specify on the original application and SP must agree in writing

- Survey required when application is filed – estimates of unmet need (number of students or patrons) when pandemic began, current and future

- Inventory and record-keeping requirements

- Keep equipment 3 years

- E-Rate gift rules adopted

- National supply chain prohibited companies

- USAC performance measures – fund 50% of workable applications within first 60 days after filing window close; 70% within first 100 days after filing window close

- **Audits will be conducted!**

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Take Action - Get Started Now!
Request support from K&S for securing funds
CLICK HERE
Contact your account manager to apply!

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