

Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) Information for Libraries & Schools



College and Career Ready

That's our goal.

The Department of Public Instruction is the state agency that advances public education and libraries in Wisconsin. Our goal is to ensure **every child** graduates ready for further education and the workplace.

June 30, 2021

<https://dpi.wi.gov/broadband/ecf>

5:00



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

Topics

- Brief review of the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)
- Initial application window & funding period
- Certifying unmet need
- Eligible equipment & services
- CIPA clarification
- Bus hotspots, prepaid contracts, and leases
- Recordkeeping requirements

<https://dpi.wi.gov/broadband/ecf>



Emergency Connectivity Fund

- \$7.1 billion [Emergency Connectivity Fund \(ECF\)](#)
- Libraries and schools can apply to the ECF to request reimbursement for devices and internet services for students, staff, and patrons that lack sufficient access to engage in remote learning during the upcoming school year.
- Any off-campus location where remote learning takes place (i.e. home, book mobiles, community centers, buses)
- Laptops purchased for patron use can be used in libraries as they reopen but the priority is for use off-campus.



Initial 45 Day Application Window

- June 29 - Aug. 13, 2021
- No competitive bidding required; thus no Form 470, but applicants must follow any local procurement requirements
- If money remains in the fund after all requests have been committed, the FCC will either
 - Open 2nd window to cover future purchases; or
 - Open 2nd window to cover retroactive purchases made between March 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021.



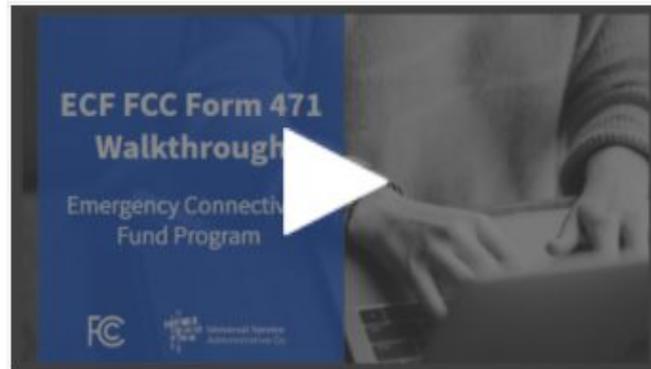
Initial Application Window

- Use existing credentials to log into the [One Portal](#) platform
 - Select ECF or EPC
- USAC copied E-rate entity information from EPC Portal into ECF Portal
- Schools, libraries, and consortia eligible for the E-Rate program are eligible for the ECF program.
- All tribal libraries are eligible for ECF funding even if they are not currently eligible for the E-rate program.



USAC Application Training

- ECF Application Portal and Assistance
 - <https://dpi.wi.gov/broadband/ecf>
- USAC E-learning Modules
 - <https://www.emergencyconnectivityfund.org/training/>
- **[New: ECF Form 471 E-Learning Module](#)**



FCC Form 471

15 minutes



Preparing to Apply

- Plan to upload vendor quotes or contracts with the ECF Form 471
 - Decide on BEAR or SPI billing
 - Vendors must agree to SPI and need a www.sam.gov account for SPI
- You must file a separate FRN for each vendor
 - If the vendor will bill services and equipment separately, you must file two FRNs for that vendor.
- Know the vendor's SPIN number to auto-fill information or enter the provider's address and other details into required fields.



What is the funding period?

- July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022
- Applicants will be reimbursed 100% of costs for eligible services & devices.
- There is no maximum funding amount a library or school can apply for. There is no set budget, like E-rate C2.
- Equipment reimbursement caps are: \$250/hotspot, \$400/connected device.
- No cap for internet service or data plans, but costs must be reasonable.



Details for Libraries

- Order doesn't require libraries to determine in advance what their patrons need (e.g., hotspot, tablet). But when checking out devices to patrons, libraries must:
 - provide them with a copy of its “eligible use policy” that states ECF funded devices are only to be used by patrons who lack such devices.
 - require them to sign a statement indicating that they have need for the device ([Example Patron Sign-Off Form](#))
- Libraries can leverage statewide discounted purchasing through the [Digital Learning Bridge](#):
 - contact other libraries to learn about their hotspot programs to determine need/quantities
 - use [NTIA interactive map](#) to make an estimate for need/quantities



Details for Libraries

- Unmet need questions on the ECF Form 471 apply *only* to schools, school districts, and school district consortia.
- They do *not* apply to libraries.
- The Order specifically does not “provide metrics” to determine need for libraries.



Details for Schools

- Schools providing face-to-face instruction are eligible for ECF to close the digital equity gap. (homework gap)
- Use [Digital Equity Gap Data](#) to verify need for the ECF Program, view digital equity data securely in WISEdash and with the [Secure Mapping Tool](#).
- Leverage statewide discounted purchasing for devices and internet service through the [Digital Learning Bridge](#).
- New: [FCC Frequently Asked Questions Page](#)



Schools Certifying Unmet Needs

- Required, schools must answer four sets of questions about unmet needs and provide a narrative about steps taken to collect the data and the timing of any data collections/needs assessments.
- 4 sets of questions:
 1. At the start of the pandemic, how many students in your school lacked access to: connected device, broadband, both connected device & broadband
 2. During the 2020-21 school year, how many students did you provide: connected device, broadband, both connected device & broadband
 3. With the ECF funding requested, how many students will you provide: connected device, broadband, both connected device & broadband
 4. After this ECF request, how many students will still lack access to: connected device, broadband, both connected device & broadband



Eligible Equipment

- ECF eligible: Connected devices to ensure full participation in remote learning
 - Chromebooks
 - Laptops
 - Tablets
- ECF eligible: Warranties. E.g., manufacturer's multi-year warranty for up to 3 years is covered, **but only** if it is not a separately identifiable cost.
- ECF ineligible: Desktop PCs, smartphones, cybersecurity tools, external cameras, microphones, headphones, break-fix costs, spares, and insurance

[ECF Eligible Services](#)
[List - Appendix B](#)



Eligible Services

Internet access purchased from commercial providers, including purchases from the [Digital Learning Bridge](#):

- a. Cable modems
- b. DSL
- c. Fiber
- d. Satellite
- e. Fixed wireless
- f. Hotspots with data plans
- g. Modems, routers, and installation costs, taxes, & fees are included

[ECF Eligible Services List -
Appendix B](#)



Important CIPA Clarification

- CIPA applies to any school or library owned computer if the school or library receives ECF or E-rate funding for internet access; or E-rate for internal connections.
- This new rule applies to all school or library owned computers regardless of where they are used off-campus or on-campus.
- [CIPA flow chart](#)



Major Limit on Constructing New Networks

In most cases, schools and libraries **cannot** build out their own networks.

See ECF Order, Para. 40: Construction of new school or library networks, regardless of technology, is ***only eligible*** where the district or library documents that **no commercial internet service is available**. It will be difficult for most WI schools and libraries to document this and providers will likely challenge any claim of no service.



What About Hotspots on Buses?

- \$250 hotspot equipment cap does not apply to the hotspots for buses (ECF modem & router category costs must be reasonable)
- Get clear & itemized quotes:
 - Hotspot cost
 - Monthly data plan cost
 - Other/Ineligible components (i.e. video surveillance, GPS tracking, etc.)
- No cap for internet services/data, but costs must be reasonable.



What about pre-paid multi-year contracts?

- Applicants may seek reimbursement for services between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, that were prepaid prior to the ECF Order adoption on May 10, 2021. **But only** if they can demonstrate that the services were purchased to meet unmet needs of students or patrons.
- Prepaid **equipment** is ineligible for ECF support during the first application filing window.



What about leases?

- Payments for all eligible equipment and services made between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 will be reimbursed at 100%.
 - This includes purchases made under a lease or contract agreement signed before July 1, 2021.
- USAC will carefully review requests for leased devices.



Funding Availability

- Yes, assuming enough funding to cover total demand
- No, if ECF funding is insufficient to cover demand, applications with highest regular E-rate discount rates will be funded first, thus some applicants may receive no funding
- Rural schools and libraries will get a 5% bump in their discount band for ECF funding prioritization



Reimbursement Process

- As with E-rate, recipients will file a ECF revised Form 472 (BEAR)
- If provider agrees, SPI method is also allowed (ECF Form 474)
- Schools and libraries that do not have sufficient funds to make purchases before being reimbursed will have the option of receiving reimbursement before making approved purchases.
- Applicants are required to register with the gov't System for Award Management (SAM). Register for FREE at www.sam.gov
 - Register now, because it may take 20 days for your registration to become active.



Funding Commitments

- Order says USAC's "target" is to approve/deny "workable" applications:
 - 50% decided within 60 days of window close (Oct. 13)
 - 70% decided within 100 days (Nov. 23)
 - Remaining 30% likely not funded before Dec. 2021
- Like the regular E-rate program, you may be contacted by a reviewer with questions about your application.



Record Keeping Requirements

| Devices for Individuals | Devices for multiple eligible users (i.e. Bus Wi-Fi Hotspot) | Services for Individuals | Services to multiple eligible users (i.e. Bus Wi-Fi Hotspot) |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>a) device type (i.e., laptop, tablet, mobile hotspot, modem/router);</p> <p>(b) device make/model;</p> <p>(c) equipment serial number;</p> <p>(d) the name of the person to whom the device was provided;</p> <p>(e) the dates the device was loaned out and returned to the school or library</p> | <p>(a) device type (i.e., laptop, tablet, mobile hotspot, modem/router);</p> <p>(b) device make/model;</p> <p>(c) equipment serial number;</p> <p>(d) the name of the school or library employee responsible for that device;</p> <p>(e) the dates the device was in service</p> | <p>(a) type of service provided (i.e., DSL, cable, fiber, fixed wireless, satellite, mobile wireless);</p> <p>(b) broadband plan details, including: upload and download speeds and monthly data cap;</p> <p>(c) the name(s) of the person(s) to whom the service was provided;</p> <p>and for fixed broadband service;</p> <p>(d) the service address,</p> <p>(e) the installation date of service;</p> <p>(f) the last date of service (as applicable)</p> | <p>(a) type of service provided (i.e., DSL, cable, fiber, fixed wireless, satellite, mobile wireless);</p> <p>(b) broadband plan details, including: upload and download speeds and monthly data cap</p> <p>(c) the name of the school or library employee responsible for the service;</p> <p>(d) a description of the intended service area;</p> <p>and for fixed broadband service;</p> <p>(e) the service address;</p> <p>(f) the installation date of service</p> <p>(g) the last date of service (as applicable)</p> |



Will I be required to provide my ECF records to the FCC or USAC?

- Yes, if requested as part of an audit or requested by PIA or the FCC.
- Wisconsin law protects library patron privacy, so public libraries will be allowed to provide anonymized data.
- If a school has a question about whether they must turn over student PII in the case of a federal audit, they can ask the auditor for the FERPA exception the auditor believes may apply and should seek legal advice.
- Required retention period is 10 years
- School/library equipment must be retained for at least 3 years.



Thank You

- Update Summer Contact Information in One Portal
 - We strongly recommend that you provide information on one or more people who will be able to answer any PIA questions
- Questions
- Slideshow & Recording will be posted at <https://dpi.wi.gov/broadband/ecf>

