

SUPPORT THE EXTENSION OF THE EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY FUND (ECF)

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge your Members of Congress to support additional appropriations for the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF), a program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which provides device and high-speed internet support to students and library patrons who are of need across the country. The ECF has entered its final round of direct funding support for schools and libraries, and funds for the program are expected to be exhausted in 2023.

BACKGROUND:

The Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) was originally authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to allow schools and libraries to provide the resources necessary to serve their communities via remote learning during the COVID-19 emergency. To date, the ECF has provided assistance to nearly 15 million students for the reasonable costs of eligible equipment and services for off-campus use by students, school staff and library patrons. Eligible equipment and services include tablets and laptop computers, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers and broadband connectivity purchases.

The ECF has enjoyed high demand throughout the duration of the program. With current appropriation levels of \$7.17 billion, approximately \$6 billion in funds have been expended to date. The current applications period includes requests for over \$2.8 billion in funding, which is more than double the amount that remains available for the ECF. As a result, the absence of additional appropriations means that many requests will not be met by the FCC. This will potentially leave students disconnected at a time when learning loss and teacher shortages are leading concerns.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY FUND HAS PROVIDED ASSISTANCE AND ACCESS TO INTERNET-RELATED EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES FOR NEARLY 15 MILLION STUDENTS. AS EXISTING FUNDING RUNS OUT, COMMUNITIES NEED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO CONTINUE TO CONNECT STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS IN NEED.

AS A KEY PARTNER IN THIS MISSION, COUNTIES PLAY A KEY ROLE IN OUR NATION'S MISSION OF CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND TACKLING THE HOMEWORK GAP IN UNDERSERVED AND UNSERVED COMMUNITIES.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO
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KEY TALKING POINTS:

- The Emergency Connectivity Fund is a critical lifeline to supporting county anchor institutions that interface daily with our community members and provide the tools and resources that keep them online.
- Additional appropriations for the Emergency Connectivity Fund will help continue to bolster the efficacy of remote learning and telehealth services for unconnected residents who rely on public resources for connecting to high-speed internet.

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