**Summary of the E-rate *Emergency Connectivity Fund*
Included in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021**

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Below is a summary of the E-rate *Emergency Connectivity Fund* (ECF) legislation that is part of the American Rescue Plan Act signed by President Biden on March 11, 2021.[[1]](#footnote-1) The ECF language in the Act is less than two pages in length and contains no details on how the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is to actually implement a program allowing libraries and schools to apply for the emergency funds. In part to address the lack of specificity in the law, on March 16 the FCC released a Public Notice[[2]](#footnote-2) seeking comments on how it should craft its rules and regulations to enable libraries and schools to apply for the funds.

**Regulations Required**

* No later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications Commission shall release regulations allowing schools and libraries to apply for the *Emergency Connectivity Funds* to purchase eligible equipment and services.

**Eligible Locations**

* The eligible equipment and services can be used in locations other than the school or library (i.e., off-campus).

**Support Amount**

* The FCC shall reimburse 100 percent of the costs associated with the purchase of eligible equipment and services by schools or libraries. However, the FCC has the authority to adjust reimbursements for costs deemed unreasonable.

**Emergency Connectivity Fund**

* There is established in the U.S. Treasury—not the Universal Service Fund—an *Emergency Connectivity Fund*. From this fund there shall be appropriated for fiscal year 2021, $7.171 billion to remain available for the length of the pandemic or until September 30, 2030. Of this funding, $1 million shall be available to the FCC’s Inspector General to conduct oversight of the fund and not more than 2% of the fund may be used by USAC for program administration.

**Eligible Equipment and Services**

* Eligible equipment includes: Wi-fi hotspots, modems, routers, devices that combine a modem and router and end user connected devices (e.g., laptops, tablets). Eligible services include advanced telecommunications (i.e., broadband) and information (i.e., internet) services.

This summary can be forwarded to other interested parties. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Bocher (robert.bocher@gmail.com).

1. Text of the Act (PL-117-2) is linked at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text>. The E-rate language is in section 7402. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Notice is at: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-21-317A1.pdf>. Comments are due April 5 and reply comments are due April 23. The Notice also includes the Emergency Connectivity Fund language in the ARP Act. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)