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## Funding Status – FY 2021

Wave 14 for FY 2021 was released on Thursday, July 15th, for a total of $60.9 million including $3.72 million for 11 North Carolina applicants.  Cumulative commitments are $1.62 billion including $59.2 million for North Carolina.  Nationwide, USAC has now funded 84% of the FY 2021 applications representing 55% of the requested funding.

The 2021-2022 application window for the Emergency Connectivity Fund ("ECF") opened June 29th and will close August 13th.

## ECF Newsletters and FAQs

For many years, USAC has routinely published Schools and Libraries News Briefs on Fridays covering a variety of E-rate matters.  The new Emergency Connectivity Fund ("ECF") uses aspects of the traditional E-rate process but is considered a semi-autonomous program by USAC and is generally not covered in Friday's News Briefs.  As an alternative, USAC began issuing weekly Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Newsletters on Tuesdays.  For those interested in ECF, separate subscriptions to these ECF newsletters are required.  So far, USAC has issued the following three newsletters:

| Release Date | Primary Subject Matter |
|---|---|
| June 28th | ECF Portal Information |
| July 6th | ECF FAQs |
| July 13th | ECF FAQs, cont. |

To date, when USAC's ECF newsletter covers program FAQs, the information is derived directly from the FAQs published and updated online in the form of a master ECF FAQ list by the FCC. This list is updated on an ad hoc basis with new or edited FAQs designated with an asterisk.

Two of the more interesting ECF FAQs added by the FCC (as of July 2nd), and reported in last Tuesday's USAC newsletter are:

**\*4.6 Q: Can schools request ECF support for a small number of replacement devices that may be needed during the school year?**

>A: No.  Applicants are limited to reimbursement of one connected device per student and cannot request additional connected devices or other equipment to account for anticipated loss or breakage.

**\*5.7 Q: What is the process for seeking a waiver of the $400 limit if the reasonable cost to purchase connected devices for students, school staff, or patrons with disabilities is higher than $400 and the public interest warrants deviation from the general rule?**

>A: Waivers must be requested from the Federal Communications Commission by filing in WC Docket No. 21-93.  We encourage applicants to file their request for waiver as soon as they are aware of the need, although applicants will have 30 days from the date of the funding commitment decision letter.

>Applicants may file a request for waiver of ECF rules before filing an application, however, we remind applicants that applications must be filed by August 13, 2021, even if requests for waiver have not been resolved by that date. Applicants may still be approved for funding for up to $400 per device even if the applicant has or will submit a waiver to request additional funding for the connected devices for use by students, school staff or library patrons with disabilities.

The other FAQs covered in USAC's July 13th ECF newsletter are:

- Do you need to participate in E-rate to participate in the ECF program?  Short answer: No, but you must be an E-rate eligible entity.

- Can applicants pay upfront and seek support for multiyear contracts in the first application window?  Short answer: No.

- What if an applicant previously signed a multiyear contract (that included this coming school year)?  Can they apply for service for this coming year from the preexisting contract?  Short answer: Yes.

- Are fees for unreturned leased equipment eligible for ECF support?  Short answer: No.

- If a school district provides personal Wi-Fi hotspots and broadband service to a percentage of unserved students for home use, and if the school district also applies for Wi-Fi hotspots on school buses, is this considered to be a duplicative service?  Short answer: No.

- If a school reopens, and students and school staff are attending school in person, is off-campus equipment or service for that student or teacher still eligible for ECF support?  Short answer: Yes.

## E-Rate Updates and Reminders

*Upcoming E-Rate Dates:*

| | |
|---|---|
| July 21 | USAC's "Office Hours" ECF webinar at 3:00 p.m. EDT ([Register](#)).  These webinars are held weekly to provide program updates and answer participant questions. |
| July 26 | Form 486 deadline for FY 2020 covering funding committed in Wave 48.  More generally, the Form 486 deadline is 120 days from the FCDL date or the service start date (typically July 1st), whichever is later.  Upcoming Form 486 deadlines are: |

|          |              |            |
|----------|--------------|------------|
|          | Wave 49      | 07/29/2021 |
|          | Wave 50      | 08/06/2021 |
|          | Wave 51      | 08/13/2021 |

| July 27 | USAC webinar on E-rate equipment transfers **(2:00 p.m. ET)** ([Register](#))**.** |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 13 | Closing date for the initial Emergency Connectivity Fund ("ECF") window. The window will close at 11:59 p.m. EDT. |

## USAC News Brief Dated July 16 – Troubleshooting One Portal Access Issues

[USAC's Schools and Libraries News Brief of July 16, 2021](#), reviews the process for gaining access into USAC's One Portal system so as to use the E-Rate Productivity Center ("EPC"), the BEAR Form system, or the new Emergency Connectivity Fund ("ECF") portal.  It discusses the following steps a first-time user must take to:

- Set up your credentials in One Portal.
- Verify that you can receive a USAC email.
- Review the requirements for your password.
- Act quickly when you receive your verification code.
- Check your entitlements.
- Accept your EPC user terms and conditions.
- Ask for assistance if you need it by calling the Client Service Bureau at 888-203-8100.