

# Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)

## Overview and FAQs

July 15, 2021



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

# Emergency Connectivity Fund Overview

- Established as part of the American Rescue Plan, passed in March, 2021
- Provides \$7.171 billion for emergency off-campus connectivity
- Intended for students and staff who lack sufficient connectivity & devices to fully participate in remote learning
- First application window open now through August 13, 2021
  - For purchases made, and services received, between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022
  - Future funding window will be opened to reimburse purchases and services received between March 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 (pending availability of funding)

# Who is Eligible for ECF?

- All entities eligible for the E-rate program are eligible for ECF support
- Applicants do not need to be current E-rate participants in order to receive ECF support
- Applicants will need the following in order to apply:
  - Active E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) Account
  - FCC Registration Number
  - SAM.gov registration (needed before funds are distributed)

# What is Eligible for ECF?

- Equipment and Services for students and staff who would otherwise lack the connectivity to fully participate in remote learning
- Equipment includes:
  - Laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, routers, modems, and router/modem combinations
  - \$400 cap per laptop or tablet, \$250 cap per hotspot
- Services include:
  - Commercially available Internet Access (fixed or mobile) for off-campus use by eligible students and staff
  - Limited Exception for New Construction and Datacasting

# Are There Limits To What Can Be Purchased?

- Laptops or tablets
  - Limit of one per eligible student or staff member
- Hotspots
  - Limit of one per eligible student or staff member
- Modems/routers
  - Limit of one per household
- Fixed broadband connections
  - Limit of one per household
  - Home cannot receive connectivity from any other relief program, such as EBB
    - If home was previously part of OSPI's Internet Access Program, and did not transition to Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, they may well be eligible for ECF

# Top 8 Most Frequently Asked Questions

1. If we'll be on campus full time next year, do we still qualify for ECF?
2. If we don't apply for E-rate, can we apply for ECF?
3. Are there special procurement rules, like E-rate's Form 470?
4. Do I need to have signed contracts in order to apply?
5. Do I have to pay the Service Provider in full, before receiving ECF reimbursement?
6. How do I determine 'Unmet Need'?
7. Can I replace aging 1:1 devices with ECF purchases?
8. How can OSPI help us?!?!?!?

# 1. If we'll be on campus full time next year, do we still qualify for ECF?

**YES**

- Equipment and services are eligible if needed to meet the remote learning needs of students, such as homework, or school staff who would otherwise lack sufficient access to connected devices and/or a broadband internet access connection while off campus.
- ECF won't pay for devices that are to be used solely on campus, but as long as the eligible equipment is purchased 'primarily to provide off-campus access' it can be eligible

## 2. If we don't apply for E-rate, can we apply for ECF?

**YES**

- As long as you have access to the E-rate Productivity Center, you have access to the ECF Application Portal
- You will need an FCC Registration Number
  - For most districts this is already entered into your EPC profile
- You will need to register with SAM.gov
  - New registrations will take a while to have processed, but you only need this before you can receive ECF funds
  - If you don't already have a SAM.gov registration, submit your information now so that the process can begin



### 3. Are there special procurement rules, like E-rate's Form 470?

**NO**

- There are no ECF-specific procurement requirements.
- All State and Local rules must be followed.
- It is up to the district to determine the best procurement strategy to meet their needs
- In many cases, districts may choose to use existing State Master Contracts, available via a Master Contract Usage Agreement with DES (look up status [here](#))
- Master Contracts are available for [Wireless Data, Voice, and Accessories](#) and [Computer Equipment](#)

## 4. Do I need to have signed contracts in order to apply?

**NO**

- Contracts are not required in order to apply for ECF
- A contract, or otherwise legally binding obligation to purchase items will be required before funds can be disbursed
- Submitting applications based on estimates is acceptable, but USAC may ask for supporting documentation
- Vendor will need to be identified as part of the application, but providers can be changed later if necessary

## 5. Do I have to pay the Service Provider in full, before receiving ECF reimbursement?

**NO**

- If the applicant has entered into contractual arrangements or is otherwise legally obligated to purchase eligible equipment and services from their service provider, they can submit request for ECF payment.
- Applicants must pay their service provider within 30 days after receipt of funds and will be required to certify compliance and provide verification of payment to the service provider.
- Service Providers aren't required to offer the Service Provider Invoicing (SPI) option, but some will
  - If you are interested in having your Service Provider invoice the fund directly, you will need to have that agreement in writing before applying for ECF

## 6. How do I determine 'Unmet Need'?

Eligible students and school staff would otherwise lack access to connected devices and/or broadband services sufficient to engage in remote learning

- Best estimates of the unmet need are required for schools on their application. It is up to the school to determine how to estimate need.
- Surveys can be used to estimate needs, including information gathered last year.
- The application requires an estimate, and rationale behind it. Detailed recipient lists aren't required until after equipment has been received.

## 7. Can I replace aging 1:1 devices with ECF purchases?

### **MAYBE**

- ECF is not intended to be a 1:1 program, and funds are available only to meet the needs of students and staff who would otherwise lack sufficient connectivity
- If aging devices are no longer able to meet the remote learning needs of identified students and staff, then they could be considered as having an 'unmet need' and ECF could fund devices for them
- Each district has to certify that they are applying only for devices to serve this eligible population, and must document that they have complied with this requirement

## 8. Can OSPI Help Us?

**YES!!**

- If you plan to apply for ECF, we're here to help.
- We will be offering Q&A Sessions and providing updated FAQs throughout the application window
- You can add OSPI as a 'consultant' in your EPC/ECF Portal and we can assist with form creation and submissions (see next page)

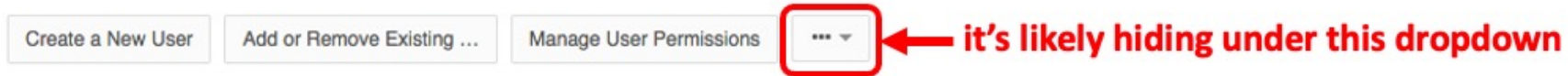
- You can call or email with any questions:

Susan Tenkhoff 360.878.4701

[susan.tenkhoff@k12.wa.us](mailto:susan.tenkhoff@k12.wa.us)

# How to Add OSPI as a Consultant in EPC

- From landing page, select your district name under My Entities
- Select Manage Organization Relationships from the top of the page



- Select Add a Consulting Firm, enter 'OSPI' in Name Search.
- Consultant Registration Number (CRN) 17005926 = Washington State E-rate Coordinator (OSPI)
- Select the CRN and click Submit
- Then select Add or Remove Existing Users, search for 'Tenkhoff' then select Susan Tenkhoff from results and add as a user
- Then select Manage User Permissions to assign permission levels to Susan
  - Partial Rights will allow OSPI to assist with profiles and forms