

Emergency Connectivity Fund: Introduction and Q&A

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Massachusetts Libraries

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

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What is the Emergency Connectivity Fund?

- Bridge the “Homework Gap” for students and Connectivity Gap for Library Patrons
 - Connectivity for those who are not connected
 - For educational or library purposes
 - Extending broadband/internet & end-user devices
- Section 7402 of the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) (ARPA), Public Law 117-2
 - \$7.17 billion of the \$1.9 trillion Act

What ECF is Not

- ARPA funding funneled through IMLS to state library agencies
 - Source of the MBLC Hotspot Lending Program
- The [Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) Program (EBB)
 - Passed December 27th. (ARPA signed on March 11)
 - For those with limited income
 - Direct internet and laptop/device discounts through the internet service provider (e.g., [Comcast](#)/[Charter-Spectrum](#)/[Verizon](#))

Who is Eligible?

- Schools, Public Libraries, and Tribal Libraries
 - Tribal Library definition expanded to match current IMLS definition
- The “Billed Entity” can also be
 - Library network / consortium
 - A city or town – an entity that officially pays the bills for your library
- Friends groups are not billed entities [*clarification from presentation*]

What Will it Fund?

- Equipment

- Laptops, Chromebooks, and Tablets
 - For lending only, not in-library use
- Wi-Fi Hotspots for Lending
- Shared Bookmobile Hotspots
- Equipment for “fixed” remote connectivity (routers and modems)

- Services

- Hotspot Data Plans
- Fixed broadband bandwidth (monthly cost of circuit)

Eligible Uses

- Primarily for Educational Purposes
 - *activities that are integral, immediate, and proximate to the provision of library services to library patrons*
- Anything that falls within the libraries acceptable use policy is fine

When: Application Windows

Window 1	Late June / Early July – 45 days. Prospective for Purchase between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022
Possible Window 2	Timing? – FCC reserves the right to open a second prospective window if Window 1 hasn't met need
Window 2	Timing? – Retrospective Purchases from March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

Duration

- Begins
 - March 1, 2020 (retrospective reimbursements)
- Ends
 - June 30 after one year after Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that a [public health emergency](#) no longer exists. (renewed approx. quarterly)

Emergency ends Labor Day => June 30, 2023

Emergency ends next month => June 30, 2022

- Appropriated funding stays available through 2030


Where: E-rate Productivity Center (EPC)

- EFC will leverage as much of the E-rate infrastructure as possible.
- Interested libraries => check your current EPC profiles

DUNS and SAMs to do business with the US

- Register / check your DUNS # and registration in SAM.gov

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DUNS Unique Entity ID 084387344	<i>Expiration Date</i> Oct 14, 2021	<i>Registration Status</i>  Active
SAM Unique Entity ID PVJ8Z39UZAN5	<i>Purpose of Registration</i> Federal Assistance Awards Only	
CAGE/NCAGE 576G2		
Physical Address 90 Canal ST STE 500 Boston, Massachusetts 02114-2033, United States	Mailing Address 90 Canal ST STE 500 Boston, Massachusetts 02114-2033, United States	

*The DUNS number is currently the official Unique Entity ID

Demonstrable Patron Need

- *The library or library consortium listed on the FCC Form 471 application is only seeking support for eligible equipment and/or services provided to library patrons who have signed and returned a statement that the library patron would otherwise lack access to equipment or services sufficient to meet the patron's educational needs if not for the use of the equipment or service being provided by the library*

The Three Certifications of Need

- Library certification on application (Form 471)
- Acceptable Use Policy given to patrons
- Patron sign-off (¶82)

Assessing Need

- Very vague – ALA is asking for help
- Internet connectivity / broadband penetration
- Poverty / Population ratio
- Some Data IMLS has collected / American Community Survey (Census)
- School Data – e.g., virtual classroom attendance
- Better guidance to come.

Record Keeping and Audits

- Procurement Docs (e.g., Form 471, quotes, and invoices)
- Signed patron forms
- Inventory of Equipment
 - What is it? (device type, make/model, serial number)
 - Where is it? (circ record, when loaned and returned)
 - Last circ only or all circs?
- Keep records for at least 10 years

Schools and Libraries: Strange Bedfellows

Schools

- A single user
- Level of need known by school
- Long Term Loans
- Educational purposes
- FERPA / State Regs (605 CMR 23)

Libraries

- Many Users
- Level of need unknown
- Short Term Loans
 - ILS Purges / Anonymization
- Purposes unknown
- M.G.L. c. 78 § 7

ECF vs E-rate at the Program Level

Emergency Connectivity Fund	E-rate
\$7.17 billion, one-time	\$4.9 billion every year
Appropriated by Congress	Funded through Universal Service surcharges

Minimal program overlap - if it's ECF eligible, it is probably not E-rate-eligible, and vice versa

ECF vs E-rate at the Ground Level

	Emergency Connectivity Fund	E-rate
Where	Out of the Library: Patron's homes, parks, low-income housing, senior and rec. centers	In the Library and on Library Property
Hotspots	Yes	No (ex. bookmobiles)
Laptops and Tablets	Yes	No
Discount	100%	20-90%
Procurement Process	State and Local Rules, followed by a Form 471	Form 470, 28-day waiting period, and State and Local Rules
Reimbursement	Primarily reimbursement to Library, some Pre-Invoice payments	Service Provider Discounts and Applicant Reimbursements. No payments before service delivered.

ECF and the Children's Internet Protection Act

Library purchases laptops only with ECF	CIPA does not apply – “if the purchasing entity <i>does not also</i> receive Emergency Connectivity Fund or E-rate discounted Internet access or Internet services, or E-rate discounted internal connections—or network equipment for Internet access, Internet service, or internal connections” (¶112)
Library purchases hotspots with data plan	CIPA applies - “receives Emergency Connectivity Fund or E-rate support for <i>Internet access</i> ”... (¶111) Library must filter “its” computers
Patron-owned devices. In library or out	CIPA compliance does not cover patron-owned computers. Period. Ever. (¶113)

MBLC, Hands Down

Hotspots Through ECF or MBLC?

Just want Hotspots? Which is better?

Coming Soon & Related Links

- ALA Website
 - New [ECF](#) landing page (not live quite yet) and current [EBB](#) page
 - Will include “Choose your own Adventure” Scenarios: “Wi-Fi Bookmobile”, “Long-Term Hotspot Lending” and others
- MBLC Website –
 - <https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/arpa-cares/ecf.php>
 - <https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/arpa-cares/files/SAM.gov%20Registration%20Guide.pdf>
 - <https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/arpa-cares/hotspots.php>

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Email is better right now.