Emergency Connectivity Fund

June 29, 2021

The **Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)** is a $7.17 billion program designed to "provide the tools and services [school] communities need for remote learning during the COVID-19 emergency period." The ECF is similar to the E-Rate program, which began in 2014 to help schools with funding for broadband networking. The ECF provides additional funding for schools to add off-campus or remote learning tools for students, school staff, and library patrons.

KEY DATES

June 25, 2021—Webinar at 2:00 p.m. ET for a program overview by the FCC.
June 29, 2021—Application window opens

BENEFITS OF ECF

Schools that do not participate in the E-Rate program are eligible for the ECF. Under the ECF, schools can receive up to $400 for computers per student or staff member and $250 for hotspots per location. In order to qualify, private and religious schools cannot be for-profit and may not have an endowment of $50 million or more. With the ECF, schools will be able to receive the following:

- Wi-Fi hotspots
- Modems
- Routers
- Laptop computers
- Tablet computers

APPLYING FOR ECF

The first application window will be open for 45 days. During this window, schools can submit requests for purchases between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022 (a second application window will be opened for schools to seek retroactive reimbursements for purchases made between March 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021). Schools wishing to participate should look for and follow participation guidelines that allow for the government to pay the vendor for these products without sending payments directly to schools. E-Rate consultants are also good resources for making sure the application is completed correctly.

As always, our office recommends that schools use caution when participating in federally funded programs. Christian schools taking part in any federal program always face some amount of risk, and the ECF is no exception. School will have to decide if this program is right for its teachers and students; but for those who choose to participate, we strongly recommend that they use the application and payment process which sends payments to a vendor and not directly to the school.

HELPFUL LINKS

Emergency Connectivity Fund
FCC Emergency Connectivity Fact Sheet
Application Process