

COVID Relief Funding

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CARES Act

- **Passed March 2020**
- **Funds must be obligated by Sept 30, 2022**
- **Funding Breakdown**
 - Governor's Emergency Ed Relief Fund - \$3.01 billion
 - K-12 - \$13.5 billion
 - Higher Ed - \$14.23 billion
- **DISTRIBUTION STATUS:** Nearly all GEER and ESSER funds awarded to states, funding largely spent by districts

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COVID Response and Relief Act

- **Passed December 2020**
- **Fund must be obligated by Sept 30, 2023**
- **Funding Breakdown**
 - GEER -- \$4.1 billion (\$2.75 billion for private schools)
 - K-12 -- \$54.3 billion
 - Higher Ed -- \$22.7 billion
- **DISTRIBUTION STATUS:** Nearly all ESSER funds and 30% of GEERS funds awarded to states

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American Rescue Plan Act

- **Passed March 2021**
- **Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2024**
- **Funding Distribution**
 - K-12 -- \$122.7 billion
 - Private schools (through GEER) -- \$2.75 billion
 - Higher Ed -- \$39.584 billion
 - Homework Gap through E-Rate -- \$7.172 billion
- **DISTRIBUTION STATUS:** Nearly all ESSER funds distributed, very little spent.

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American Rescue Plan Specifics

- **Funding**
 - K-12: \$121.974 Billion
 - K-12 Private Schools: \$2.75 Billion
 - IDEA: \$3.03 Billion
 - Homeless Youth: \$800 Million
 - Higher Education: \$39.584 Billion
 - Homework Gap: \$7.172 Billion

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ARP K-12 Money Flow

- Distributed to states on a Title I poverty formula
- SEAs reserve 10% for own use
- Remaining 90% allocated to districts based on Title I poverty formula
- Funds remain available until September 30, 2024
- Two-thirds or \$81 billion released to states immediately.
- Remaining one-third or \$41 billion released to states when USDE approved in-person school reopening plans.

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ARP K-12 Use of 10% State Set Aside

- States Constrained by Required Reservations
 - 5% (\$6 B) for learning loss
 - No less than 1% (\$1.2 B) for summer enrichment programs
 - No less than 1% (\$1.2 B) for after school programs
 - No more than ¼% for administrative costs
- Leaves States with \$3.04 Billion Unencumbered
- How are states using set aside?
 - Example: Many states are using set asides for technology and remote access: CT, DE, KY, ME, MS, NE, NH, NJ, OR, PA, SC, TN, VT, VA, WV, WI
 - NCSL Resource: <https://www.ncsl.org/ncsl-in-dc/standing-committees/education/cares-act-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief-fund-tracker.aspx>

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ARP K-12 Use of Funds for LEAs

- 20% Reserved for Learning Loss -- \$22 Billion
 - *ARP Section 2001 (d)(1): "implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on the students [in Title I subgroups], students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care."*
- Remaining 80% Unencumbered -- \$90 Billion
 - May spend on any activity permitted under ESEA, IDEA, Adult Education and Perkins CTE
 - May spend on other items listed in law

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Emergency Connectivity Fund Background

- The Numbers:
 - Pre-2020, 17M students/400,000 educators lacked access/devices/both.
 - As of January 2021, 12M students lacked access
- Lack of access hit particular groups hardest
 - 37% of rural Americans
 - 35% of students from households with annual incomes below \$30,000
 - 25% of African-American households with school-age children
 - 23% of Hispanic households with school-age children
- Reasons for lack of access
 - 9M cannot afford home Internet access
 - 4M (mainly rural and Native American) lack access to broadband service

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ECF Timeline

- March 2021: \$7.17 billion ECF enacted as part of the American Rescue Plan Act.
- May 2021: FCC unanimously approves ECF implantation rules.
- August 2021: First application window closed.
- October 2021: Second application window closed.

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ECF Applications

- First two waves:
 - \$6.4 billion in applications
 - Approximately \$700 billion uncommitted
 - \$4.6 billion already processed
- Commitments will pay for:
 - 5.4 million broadband connections
 - 9.1 million connected devices

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The ECF Rules

- Funds will flow through the E-Rate
- Eligible entities: public and private K-12 schools and public libraries
- Eligible equipment:
 - Laptop computers
 - Tablet computers
 - Wi-Fi hotspots
 - Modems
 - Routers
 - Devices that combine modems and routers
- Ineligible Equipment: Desktop computers and mobile phones
- Discount Level: 100%
- Price Caps: Program will support only \$400 per computer and \$250 per hotspot
- Distribution limits:
 - one fixed broadband connection (or modem) per location
 - one computer per student, staff member or library patron.

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The ECF Rules II

- Eligible Services
 - Home Internet access delivered via a commercial provider
 - Activation, installation and initial configuration costs for eligible equipment and services
 - Taxes and fees
 - School construction of self provisioned networks to connect students and staff – *only where there are no commercially available service options*
- Ineligible Services
 - Cybersecurity tools
 - Learning management systems
 - Video conferencing equipment
 - Standalone microphones
 - Technology protection measures required by CIPA

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The ECF Rules III

- Application Process
 - First two Application Windows: funding for purchases that schools and libraries make prospectively between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.
 - Third Application Window: ?
 - If demand exceeds funding in any window, priority will be determined by E-Rate Category II discount rates.
 - No E-Rate competitive bidding required.
 - Must adhere to state, local and Tribal procurement rules
- Applicants must certify that they have not already been reimbursed:

"for eligible equipment and services that have already been reimbursed through other federal pandemic relief programs (e.g., CARES Act, Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, or other provisions of the American Rescue Plan); state programs specifically targeted to providing funding for eligible equipment and services; other external sources of funding or gifts specifically targeted to providing funding for eligible equipment and services."

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ECF: Future Funding

- All current ECF funding will be obligated before the end of the year.
- Funds can be used until June 30, 2023
- **Options for follow-on funding**
 - **Budget Reconciliation Bill:** House version includes an additional \$300 million for ECF
 - **FY23 Appropriations**
 - **Unused E-Rate Funding**
 - **New program tied to appropriations or universal service fund**

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