



NEW YORK STATE REGIONAL INFORMATION CENTERS

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVES

New programs are available to support students and families in accessing high-speed internet. Throughout the pandemic, districts have assisted students in accessing the internet at home to participate in learning activities. The programs highlighted in this resource can help districts build on this work. Additionally, by building awareness of connectivity opportunities, districts can support families in attaining access to service to support community members' engagement in society.



**TRUSTED PARTNERS
SUPPORTING STUDENT
AND FAMILY CONNECTIVITY**



SCHOOL AND HOUSEHOLD CONNECTIVITY PROGRAMS & OPPORTUNITIES

Introductory Level Information for Educational Agencies

DEVELOPED BY:



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NYS RICS OVERVIEW:

12 NYS centers organized under and supporting the 37 BOCES to provide shared technology services.

The information provided in this brochure does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information and content is for general informational purposes only. For more information or if you have further questions, please contact your legal counsel.



AVAILABLE PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

The table below includes high level information about programs. Following this page, there is a page dedicated to each program noted below. Additionally, information about other related educational technology aligned opportunities is included at the end of the resource. To learn more about these opportunities, visit the program and agency websites and related legislation. Many agencies are working on providing resources that can be used to support awareness building. Finally, this documentation will be updated, as rules, interpretations, and procedures are developed. Request the latest version.

		PURPOSE	FUNDS	TIMELINE	DETAILS
HOUSEHOLD PROGRAMS	EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT PROGRAM (EBB)	Lower the cost of home internet for eligible households	\$3.2 billion in federal funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary pandemic program Ends when funds exhausted or 6 months post-pandemic Enrollment window opened May 12, 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides up to \$50/month service discount Eligible if the family benefits under the school lunch program (including USDA Community Eligibility) Enrollment through participating service providers or with the USAC Families can opt-in to continue service or providers will turn off service when funding expires
	NYS BROADBAND SERVICE FOR LOW-INCOME CONSUMERS	Lower the cost of home internet for eligible households	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective April 16, 2021 Providers must comply within 60 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires NYS providers to offer a low-income consumers service at a cost of no more than \$15/month Eligible if the family benefits under the school lunch program
SCHOOL PROGRAMS	EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY FUND (ECF)	Help schools and libraries provide home devices and internet to students and patrons	\$7.17 billion in federal funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary pandemic funding Rules were adopted May 10, 2021 The first filing window, is related to July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 purchases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding included in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Reimburse districts for K-12 home connectivity expenses Equipment (such as hotspots and connected devices) and services are eligible Administered by USAC
	CONNECTED NY	Help schools provide home internet to students	\$10 million in initial funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary pandemic program Applications were due April 14, 2021 Ends in June 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides hotspots to approximately 50,000 students Districts are eligible where the % of economically disadvantaged students exceeds the average Provided by the Schmidt Future and the Ford Foundation

PROGRAM 1 | EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT PROGRAM

<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p>Lower the cost of home internet for eligible households</p>
<p>WEBSITE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit • https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-21-29A1.pdf • https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-outreach-toolkit • https://getemergencybroadband.org/ • https://e-ratecentral.com/Portals/0/DocFiles/files/pdfs/EBB-Strategies-Schools.pdf • https://tech.ed.gov/broadband/ebb/
<p>FUNDS</p>	<p>\$3.2 billion in federal funding</p>
<p>TIMELINE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary pandemic program • Ends when funds exhausted or 6 months post-pandemic • Eligible households can enroll beginning May 12, 2021
<p>DETAILS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides up to \$50/month service discount for eligible households • Provides up to \$75/month service discount for households on Tribal lands • Provides up to \$100 discount on a device (including a laptop, a desktop computer, or a tablet) from a customer’s participating provider so long as the eligible household meets a copay of more than \$10, but less than \$50 • The cost for service or a device will depend on the eligible plan or device selected by the customer • Eligible if the family benefits under the school lunch program (including USDA Community Eligibility) • Other eligibility categories include: Lifeline Program (qualifying programs include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or certain Tribal Programs), Federal Pell Grant, Substantial Post-Feb 2020 Income Loss, and Provider Criteria • If already receiving LifeLine discounts, a household accesses the program by consenting to the EBB discounts • If not in the Lifeline program, a household must apply, and demonstrate eligibility, through USAC or a provider • Providers will receive reimbursement from the EBB Program for the discounts provided • A list of participating providers, and the discount types offered via each provider, can be accessed at: https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-providers#New%20York • Families can opt-in to continue service or providers will turn off service when funding expires • Households can apply if they have a past due balance • The benefit is available to new, prior, and existing customers • Schools providing bulk internet to students may be able to have EBB discounts applied to bills, with “consent” from households

PROGRAM 2 | NYS LOW-INCOME CONSUMERS BROADBAND

PURPOSE	Lower the cost of home internet for eligible households
WEBSITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-legislation-establishing-first-nation-program-provide-affordable-internet • https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/A3006/amendment/C
FUNDS	NA
TIMELINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Cuomo signed legislation on April 16, 2021 • Effective April 16, 2021 • Providers must comply within 60 days (June 15, 2021)
DETAILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires NYS providers to offer a low-income consumers service at a cost of no more than \$15/month (inclusive of any recurring taxes and fees such as recurring rental fees for service provider equipment required to obtain broadband service and usage fees) • Eligible if the family benefits under the school lunch program • Other eligibility categories include: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE), or Utility Affordability Benefits • Services must meet a minimum download speed of 25 Mbps or the provider’s existing low-income broadband service download speed (where speed is not reasonably practicable) • 25 Mbps Providers may, once every five years, increase the price of this service by the lesser of the most recent change in the consumer price index or a maximum of two percent per year • Providers who offer a high-speed broadband service (200+ Mbps) to eligible low-income customers at \$20/month or less are in compliance with the law • 200+ Mbps Providers may, once every two years, increase the price of this service by the lesser of the most recent change in the consumer price index or a maximum of two percent per year • Within two years and at least every five years thereafter, the department of public service will determine if the minimum broadband download speed should be increased

PROGRAM 3 | EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY FUND

<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p>Help schools and libraries provide home devices and internet to students and patrons</p>
<p>WEBSITE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text • https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-launch-717-billion-connectivity-fund-program-0 • https://www.fundsforlearning.com/news/2021/05/remote-learning-support-ecf-launches-in-june/
<p>FUNDS</p>	<p>\$7.17 billion in federal funding</p>
<p>TIMELINE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary pandemic program • Final Rules were adopted May 10, 2021 • The Final Rules outline that during the initial 45-day filing window, eligible agencies may apply for funding related to July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 purchases • If demand does not exceed available funds in the first application period, there will be additional application filing windows until the funds are exhausted or the emergency period ends • If there is a second application window, applicants may be able to submit retroactive requests for funding for purchases made from March 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Based on need, the Commission may also open a second prospective window before opening a window to fund previously purchased equipment and services.
<p>DETAILS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding included in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 • Reimburse districts for K-12 home connectivity expenses • Equipment (Including Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, devices that combine a modem and router, and connected devices) and/or services are eligible • Devices and services used by students and staff at locations other than the school are eligible • The program offers reimbursement of 100% of the costs associated with eligible equipment and services (see additional details about caps associated with eligible expenses below) • Districts can seek up to \$250 in reimbursement for a Wi-Fi hotspot and \$400 for a laptop or tablet • Administered by USAC • In the event that demand exceeds available funds, funding may be allocated by E-rate discounts (adjusted to provide a five percent bump up for rural schools and libraries) and/or National School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility percentages • To safeguard the program from waste, fraud, and abuse, applicants must provide several certifications and submit invoices detailing the items purchased • Eligible agencies must comply with document retention requirements, audits, and other program rules

PROGRAM 4 | CONNECTED NY

PURPOSE	Help schools provide home internet to students
WEBSITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-launch-connected-ny-fund-provide-no-cost-internet-access-50000 • https://connectedny.digitalpromise.org/
FUNDS	\$10 million in initial funds
TIMELINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary pandemic program • Applications were due April 14, 2021 • Hotspots are being shipped in May 2021 • Data plans end in June 2022
DETAILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides hotspots to approximately 50,000 students • Districts are eligible where the percent of economically disadvantaged students exceeds the average • Hotspots include unlimited data through AT&T (Internet service may be slowed each month after exceeding a usage threshold of 50 GB) • Districts may include in their application a request to work with an alternative service provider should AT&T not adequately serve the needs of their students • Hotspots have CIPA compliant filtering (districts are not able to customize filter settings) • Districts will reach out to students and parents/caregivers to solicit sign-ups for the program • Multiple students in one household may apply for their own hotspots • Provided by the Schmidt Futures and the Ford Foundation in partnership with New York State • Managed by Digital Promise and a project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors • Participating districts agree to submit data to Digital Promise • List of eligible districts in priority order: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LPH1VIVBMinfVozl9Nq9PgiktwnEI1DN/view



OTHER RELATED OPPORTUNITIES & INFORMATION

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF II (ESSER II)

- NYS allocated \$4 billion to address the impact COVID has had on educational agencies
- LEAs are receiving related allocations calculated using the relative shares of grants awarded under Title I, Part A of the ESEA for the 2019-20 fiscal year
- **May be used for costs dating back to March 13, 2020 - September 30, 2023**
- **Funds can be use to purchase educational technology** (hardware, software, and connectivity) to support online/remote/hybrid learning

- To learn more about ESSER, ESSER II, and ARP ESSER in NYS visit: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/funding/currentapps.html>
- To learn more about ESSER and other federal funding related to the digital divide visit: https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/wp-content/uploads/Federal-Funding-Matrix_2021.pdf

BOCES PURCHASES

- District expenses funded through the programs highlighted in this resource are not BOCES aidable.

COMPREHENSIVE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY ACT

The public service commission will **study the availability, reliability, and cost of high-speed internet** and broadband services in **New York**.

- The study will:
- identify areas at a census block level that are served by a sole provider and **assess** any **state regulatory/statutory barriers**
 - **review** and make recommendations related to **technologies that best support service in underserved or unserved areas**
 - **identify** instances where local governments have notified the commission of alleged **non-compliance** with franchise agreements and instances of enforcement actions that have had an impact on internet access
 - **identify locations where insufficient access**, and/or persistent digital divide, **is causing negative** social or economic **impact on the community**
 - **produce** and publish, a detailed internet access **map** of the state, indicating access to internet service by location

- The **map will include**:
- download and upload **speeds advertised and experienced**
 - the **consistency and reliability of** download and upload **speed** including latency
 - the **types of internet service** and technologies available (dial-up, broadband, wireless, fiber, coax, satellite)
 - the **number of** internet service **providers available**
 - the **price of** internet **service available**

To learn more visit: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/A3006/amendment/C>