



## ***Tips from Learningtech.org*** **Determine “Unmet Needs”**

### **Form 471 Specifics**

With the first (prospective funding) window for the Emergency Connectivity Fund [ECF] program open as of 6/29/2021, many are scurrying to pull together the details to be entered into the Form 471 (*Description of Services Requested and Certification ECF FCC Form 471*) in USAC’s ECF Portal. For exact descriptions of required fields, see USAC’s ECF FCC Form 471 page regarding Entity Information (<https://www.emergencyconnectivityfund.org/ecf-fcc-form-471/entity-information/>) with key questions:

- Starting with, “At the start of the pandemic, how many students in your school or school district lacked access...”
- Finishing with, “Please describe the steps you have taken to collect the data...”

“Your *best estimates*” of unmet needs must be included in the application covering four time periods: 1) start of pandemic, 2) during 2020-2021 school year, 3) ECF requests, 4) post ECF. Additionally, a description of steps taken to determine unmet needs is required. This information can be in any format that conveys your methodology, such as a narrative (typed into the 4000 character field, or an uploaded document (e.g., a flowchart, a board presentation).

### **Best Estimate**

Of course, the best way to determine remaining unmet needs is to do a survey. Now that summer breaks have started, survey response rates will likely be low... assuming families have devices and connectivity to respond!

What else can you do to estimate unmet need?

- If you did a survey back in 2020, start there. Repeat it now, or create a new survey,<sup>1</sup> even if results cannot be tallied by the ECF Form 471 deadline of 8/13/21
- Consider historical NSLP eligible data and extrapolate for 2021-2022
- Review your asset inventory for:
  - Damaged equipment and items that were not returned
  - Devices that are end of life or cannot meet the Homework Gap requirements of being able to support video conferencing platforms and other software necessary to ensure full participation in remote learning (appropriate supporting documentation would include a formal end-of-life policy, implementation date and feature set per expiring device)

Once school restarts in August/September and you have greater access to families to confirm the number of students with unmet needs, you may still have time to adjust the application to lesser numbers (reductions only, no increases). Even if approved for more devices/services than are truly needed, as long as reimbursement is sought for only those with need, you will have complied with program rules.

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<sup>1</sup> A FREE Student Tech Needs Survey is being offered by Digital Wish and BrightBytes ([read more](#)).