The $7 Billion Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) is a one-time, federal effort to reimburse schools and libraries for 100% of spending on connected devices, eligible equipment, and internet services, provided these services and materials support students, teachers and library patrons with off-campus use. The ECF prioritizes students who are unconnected to the internet in an effort to meet the present and future virtual school offerings and close the homework gap. As a temporary measure, the ECF creates momentum for states to dedicate funding and sustain federal efforts.

**WHY IT MATTERS**

States have a responsibility to close the longstanding homework gap once-and-for-all. Building on the ECF, states can craft policies that ensure equitable access to connectivity and digital devices, close the homework gap and keep students connected. By creating a state internet connectivity grant program, states can sustain efforts made by new federal funding programs like the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

**ACTION STEPS THAT CAN FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE ECF PROGRAM**

- Establish and administer a state connectivity grant program to reimburse students’ virtual connectivity expenses.
- Establish a budget line-item for K-12 connectivity and devices through a matching fund.
- Reimburse reasonable remote connectivity expenses and/or schools not covered by the ECF.

**WHICH STATES ARE ACTING?**

- **The Texas Education Agency** has created Connect Texas, an internet connectivity grant program that reimburses schools in specific geographies for fixed internet connectivity, equipment and home connectivity services. Texas is using a combination of ECF and ESSER funds to sustain the program through 2023. The funds are targeted toward economically disadvantaged students.
- **Indiana** established a broadband connectivity program that uses federal funding to get broadband to the homes of K-12 students. Once federal funds expire, Indiana plans to sustain it with other funds.
- **Arizona, Nebraska and Oklahoma** have “universal service fund programs,” which utilize state funds to help schools cover expenses not met through e-rate program discounts. States could take a similar approach to cover non-discounted portions of the costs invoiced to the ECF program.
- **Mississippi** established the Mississippi Connects program, which allocates $200 million in state funding to cover up to 80% of costs for school districts to purchase computer devices and other tools to enable students to continue to learn when they are not in a school building. To qualify for state funds, districts must pay at least 20% of costs for the program.
- The **Connecting Colorado Communities Grant program** is a $20 Million state grant program that increases access to broadband services for students, educators, and other staff who lack stable, reliable internet access for online learning. The grant program prioritizes the most socioeconomically challenged students and students with little to no access to broadband.

**MODEL POLICY**

ExcelinEd created a Model Policy to support states in codifying a state grant program to support students’ virtual device and connectivity needs and to close the homework gap.