

Emergency Connectivity Fund FAQs

What is the Emergency Connectivity Fund?

The Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) is a federal program created as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This federal program is available to libraries and schools to help fund the equipment and services needed to connect residents to the internet. Washington County has received \$94,080 to pay for service on all our Wi-Fi hotspots (including those in a Chromebook kit) during the funding period of the program, November 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Why is Washington County Library using this funding?

Accepting this funding allows us to provide eight additional months of internet access through our Wi-Fi hotspots and Chromebooks. We recognize that internet service is a vital need in our communities and are looking seriously at all opportunities to continue providing this resource.

Why do I have to sign a form when I check out a hotspot or Chromebook kit?

The purpose of ECF funding is to provide equipment and services to community members who do not have sufficient access to the internet. A requirement of this program is to demonstrate that community members checking out the devices do not otherwise have sufficient access to the internet. We are meeting this requirement by asking everyone who checks out a hotspot or Chromebook kit to sign a form stating they do not have sufficient access to the internet.

If I have internet access at home, does that mean I can't check out a hotspot or Chromebook kit?

No, hotspots and Chromebook kits are available to all library users. There are no specific criteria about what "sufficient" access to the internet means. We assume that all library users requesting hotspots or Chromebook kits have a need and want them to be checked out.

If I have more questions, who should I talk to?

If you have questions about ECF funding, you can reach out to Library Director Amy Stenftenagel at 651-275-8501 or Amy.Stenftenagel@co.washington.mn.us.