



Congress: Prevent 7,496,927 Internet Connections From Going Dark

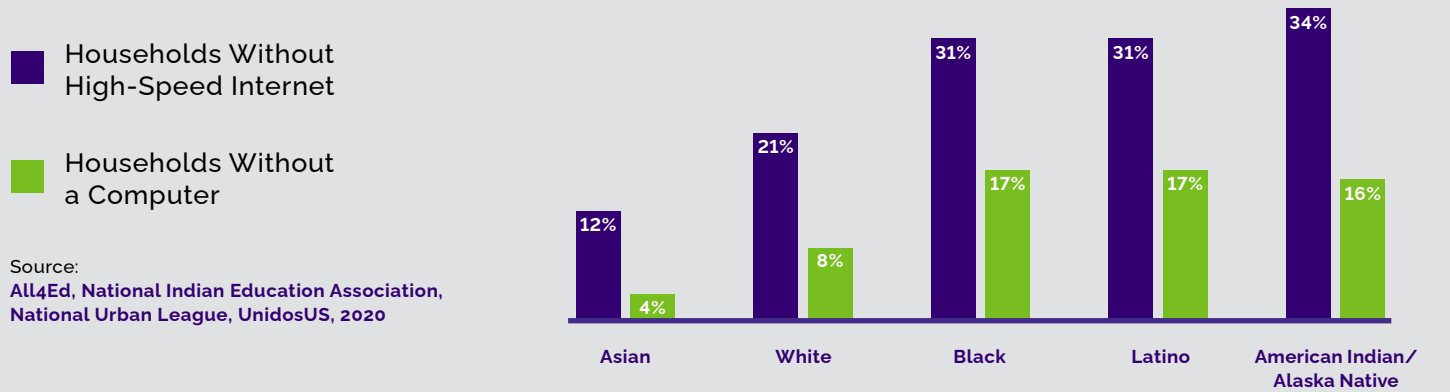
The **homework gap** is the digital divide that millions of children faced prepandemic and will continue to impede learning without support from Congress. Even before COVID-19, children across the country would stay after school to use their schools' devices or sit in a fast-food parking lot to access high-speed internet. The near-total shutdown of schools across the country due to the pandemic created a new sense of urgency to connect the **16.9 million children** without high-speed home internet, including 1 in 3 Black, Latinx, and American Indian/Alaska Native households and 2 in 5 rural families.

To address the homework gap, Congress established the **Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)**, a \$7.171 billion program created under the American Rescue Plan of 2021 that helps schools and libraries provide students and library patrons with home internet access and connected devices.

Demand Outpaced Supply by \$2 billion ECF By The Numbers	
Funding available	\$7.171 billion
Funding requested	\$9.25 billion
Internet connections funded	7,496,927
Connected devices funded	11,768,425
Children supported	15 million

Over 15 million children have benefited from the program. However, demand for the program outpaced supply by over \$2 billion. More, funding from the program will be depleted by the end 2023. Therefore, millions of children could lose the internet access they need to regain **learning lost due to the pandemic**.

Pre-Pandemic Homework Gap



Source:
All4Ed, National Indian Education Association,
National Urban League, UnidosUS, 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Congress provided funding for several internet programs in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Why do we need ECF in addition to those programs?

BIL supports long-term broadband infrastructure. ECF supports immediate needs regarding broadband affordability.

BIL provides \$65 billion for seven important programs that will support the deployment of infrastructure to expand internet access over the long-term. It will take years for much of the funding from BIL to be fully implemented.

ECF addresses the immediate need of broadband affordability. Students need internet access to succeed in school today. Millions of students can access the internet at their homes; however, their families cannot afford a high-quality wireline subscription. ECF addresses this need.

2. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) supports broadband affordability. Why do we need ACP and ECF?

This question is best answered in one word: *efficiency*.

ECF reaches students through the well-established and trusted infrastructure provided through the nation's libraries and 13,000 school districts. In addition, costs are reduced due to bulk-purchasing agreements districts and libraries are able to secure. ACP is an important program. However, families must apply on an individual basis and receive different broadband plans and devices. It is far more efficient for students to receive broadband, devices, and technical support from their school districts and libraries through ECF.

In addition, ECF and ACP have different eligibility requirements and provide different benefits. For example, a low-income household with two school-age children would only be eligible for a single connected device. However, each student would be eligible to receive a connected device through ECF.

3. Can't Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund internet access for students? Why do we need ECF and ESSER?

The ESSER fund is intended to address the steep learning loss caused by the pandemic. According to an analysis of data conducted by FutureED of nearly \$65 billion in ESSER funds provided by the American Rescue Plan Act, 75% of funding has been spent on staffing, academic recovery, and facilities/operations. ECF can work together to address the learning loss caused by COVID-19. While ESSER can be used for broadband and connected devices, it is more effective for these funds to focus on instruction and other school-related supports, and for ECF to address students' technological needs.

	ECF	ACP
Eligibility	All schools and libraries; priority for rural areas	Low-income students and families (see specific eligibility requirements here)
Broadband Connectivity	Reasonable costs for broadband connectivity, estimated at \$10-\$25/month	Up to \$30/month for low-income families (up to \$75/month for low-income families on Tribal Lands)
Connected Devices	1 device laptop or tablet per student (up to \$400 per device)	1 laptop, desktop, or tablet per household (up to \$100 per device)

ECF-Funded Internet Connections and Devices By State

Source: Federal Communications Commission (data as of October 19, 2022)

State	Internet Connections	Connected Devices	State	Internet Connections	Connected Devices	State	Internet Connections	Connected Devices
AK	10,362	21,064	KY	138,657	181,626	OH	162,147	278,041
AL	89,508	182,943	LA	40,802	218,931	OK	143,587	233,957
AR	26,647	119,044	MA	56,476	189,165	OR	35,259	215,286
AS	3,472	6,863	MD	97,939	179,525	PA	114,508	216,775
AZ	84,144	400,696	ME	8,367	14,819	PR	379,441	36,113
CA	1,232,991	1,358,432	MI	156,628	313,387	RI	7,285	49,704
CO	19,819	117,558	MN	52,302	202,647	SC	16,749	102,303
CT	32,332	126,684	MO	90,254	235,696	SD	4,341	22,859
DC	86,786	52,949	MP	4,125	125	TN	62,527	177,800
DE	760	41,000	MS	66,749	57,670	TX	730,229	1,446,933
FL	187,243	569,906	MT	1,744	15,769	UT	18,400	107,041
GA	108,105	471,950	NC	114,348	407,430	VA	77,385	195,334
GU	9,013	9,013	ND	784	6,228	VI	80	12,092
HI	88,735	117,115	NE	2,427	93,298	VT	3,777	11,441
IA	21,569	88,057	NH	2,487	21,351	WA	59,637	254,075
ID	13,598	81,401	NJ	150,131	338,130	WI	42,879	248,733
IL	138,595	555,372	NM	53,250	124,441	WV	84,219	23,750
IN	43,059	194,759	NV	21,078	29,764	WY	1,759	6,490
KS	40,750	70,159	NY	2,256,682	914,731	Total	7,496,927	11,768,425

Call To Action

If we do not act now, millions of children's connections may go dark. Their access to learning, knowledge and innovation will be stunted. We must act now to replenish the Emergency Connectivity Fund to ensure that students across the nation can continue to learn and grow and once and for all close the homework gap.

For More Information and Assistance

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All4Ed (formerly the Alliance for Excellent Education) is a Washington, DC-based national policy, practice, and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those underperforming and those historically underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. all4ed.org

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