

## Obtaining Funds to Bridge The Digital Divide

From onboard School Bus WiFi to In-Home 4G and 5G connectivity, there are more robust and secure options for students beyond MiFi hotspots.

The federal government, through the legislative process, provides assistance to the states and schools in an effort to supplement state support, but September 30, 2021 is the last date the U.S. Department of Education can make awards from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER Fund). **Here's how to pay for the School Bus WiFi, In-Home connectivity, and other solutions you need:**

### The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act

- ESSER I Fund monies are available now but September 30, 2021 is the last date the U.S. Department of Education can make awards. After that, it's gone forever.
- Purchasing 1:1 devices and Internet service for students without laptops and Wi-Fi access
- Provides \$13.5 billion for K-12 emergency relief grants and an additional \$3.5 billion reserved for governors to use based on local need.
- Can be used as matching funds for E-rate

### American Rescue Plan Act (and Emergency Connectivity)

- FCC with support from USAC disbursing funding for routers and in-home devices for students without connectivity for remote learning
- 45-day window to apply for funds is open now
- \$7.17B for E-rate can be used for School Bus WiFi, and 4G or 5G In-Home Connectivity Devices
- \$122 billion in relief for K-12 schools
- "Reimburse 100% of the costs associated with the eligible equipment, advanced telecommunications and information services"

### The Consolidated Appropriations Act

- "Support of online learning by purchasing educational technology and Internet access for students, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment, that aids in regular and substantive educational interactions between students and their classroom instructor"
- \$900 Billion Covid Stimulus package included the Education Stabilization Fund
- \$81,880,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2022 and managed by the Department of Education
- \$54.3 billion for K-12 schools
- \$22.7 billion for higher education with \$1.7 billion set aside for minority-serving institutions and close to \$1 billion for for-profit colleges
- \$4 billion for governors to spend at their discretion, with \$2.7 billion of that for private schools
- Extensive Definitions of Distance Learning
- Largely delivered through the Title I formula, which generally means that high-poverty school districts will get more

## Get Started Now

STEP CG can help you understand all of the federal grants and funds made available for schools in need of Network access to help with remote learning while solving the Digital Divide.