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For Immediate Release

FCC TO LAUNCH \$7.17 BILLION CONNECTIVITY FUND PROGRAM

New Program Provides Funding to Schools and Libraries Critical to Closing the Homework Gap

WASHINGTON, May 10, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission today unanimously adopted final rules to implement the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program. This \$7.17 billion program, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, will enable schools and libraries to purchase laptop and tablet computers, Wi-Fi hotspots, and broadband connectivity for students, school staff, and library patrons in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Far too often, students, teachers, and library patrons lack the access they need to broadband and connected devices. This need has become even more apparent during these unprecedented times,” said Jessica Rosenworcel, Acting Chairwoman of the FCC. “Between this Emergency Connectivity Fund Program and the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, we are investing more than \$10 billion in American students and households. These investments will help more Americans access online education, healthcare, and employment resources. They will help close the Homework Gap for students nationwide and give so many more households the ability to connect, communicate, and more fully participate in modern life.”

The Report and Order adopted today establishes the rules and policies governing the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program. The new rules define eligible equipment and services, service locations, eligible uses, and reasonable support amounts for funding provided. It designates the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) as the program administrator with FCC oversight, and leverages the processes and structures used in the E-Rate program for the benefit of schools and libraries already familiar with the E-Rate program. It also adopts procedures to protect the limited funding from waste, fraud, and abuse.

Recent estimates suggest there may be as many as 17 million children struggling without the broadband access they need for remote learning. The Acting Chairwoman has long made closing the Homework Gap a priority during her tenure at the Commission.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).