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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC PROPOSES E-RATE PROGRAM SUPPORT FOR WI-FI HOTSPOTS FOR STUDENTS AND LIBRARY PATRONS WITHOUT INTERNET AT HOME**

WASHINGTON, November 8, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today [proposed](#) allowing schools and libraries to apply for funding from the FCC’s E-Rate program for Wi-Fi hotspots and wireless internet access services that can be used off-premises. As students and educators increasingly rely on remote educational tools and the online space becomes part of the classroom, the FCC seeks to update the E-Rate program to help meet these educational needs.

“During the pandemic we saw the power of community-driven efforts to help close the digital divide. Many schools and libraries found ways to support internet access by loaning out Wi-Fi hotspots. Some used this agency’s Emergency Connectivity Fund to do so. The program made a great down payment on closing the digital divide, but it was a one-time effort. Now, it’s time for a permanent solution,” **said FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel**. “Supporting today’s libraries and schools means updating the E-Rate program to ensure communities can learn without limits and keep connected.”

The FCC, under Chairwoman Rosenworcel, has been focused on addressing the Homework Gap. Too many students and library patrons are on the wrong side of the digital and educational divide. Building off the agency’s successful investment in school and library connectivity through its Universal Service Fund-supported E-Rate program, the Commission is looking to modernize the program to meet today’s needs, including its recent decision to support Wi-Fi on school buses and its recent changes to ensure libraries in Tribal communities can better access E-Rate support.

These efforts come as the FCC is wrapping up its implementation of Congress’s game-changing investment in education connectivity through the Emergency Connectivity Fund. The ECF program is the first-ever federal program designed to address the Homework Gap. During the more than two years of ECF investment, the FCC has committed more than \$120 million for the purchase of Wi-Fi hotspot devices and nearly \$1.3 billion for associated services to provide off-premises broadband connectivity to students, school staff, and library patrons who otherwise would lack sufficient broadband access needed to fully engage in remote learning.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking released today proposes making clear that off-premises use of Wi-Fi hotspots and wireless internet access services by students, school staff, and library patrons for remote learning and the provision of virtual library services serves an educational purpose and enhances access to advanced telecommunications and information services for schools and libraries. As proposed, eligible schools and libraries would be permitted to request E-Rate support for the off-premises use of Wi-Fi hotspots and services.

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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).*