



Oct 11, 2021

Dear Senators Sinema and Kelly,

As leaders in Arizona's technology, education, health care and child advocacy communities, we call on Congress to include funding to extend the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) in the budget reconciliation package. Nearly [30% of students and 10% of teachers in Arizona](#) lack adequate access to the internet.

We believe this funding is vital, and it will immediately support Arizona schools, libraries, students, and families in need.

The pandemic, increased occurrence of natural disasters, and other emergencies that schools, students and families must endure, have laid bare the impact of our digital inequities more than ever. Stopgap measures to curb the k-12 digital divide during this crisis have been helpful but are not enough. Now is the moment to ensure that every student and family in Arizona is able to connect from home to twenty-first century learning, health care, and jobs.

The ECF is well positioned to support these anchor institutions as they assess the digital needs of the students, continue programs to connect unconnected families, and plan for a variety of emergency disruptions. This progress could be halted, however, as the ECF program is expected to run out of funding by the end of the next window for applications, slated for October 13, 2021. Once those funds are allocated, schools will again be forced to scramble to keep their students connected or will see them fall back into the digital divide.

As community leaders we will continue to do our part to connect students and families, but we urge Congress to act as well.

Signed,
All In Education
Arizona Technology Council
Wildfire: Igniting Community Action to End Poverty in Arizona
Care1st Health Plan
Children's Action Alliance
Common Sense-Arizona
Local First
Mi Familia Vota
Rural Arizona Action
Sun Corridor Network
Valley of the Sun United Way

