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PROJECT



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Ed Tech Access for All Students

Expanding broadband access to K–12 students via Community Youth Broadband Technicians

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to improve broadband access for underserved K–12 students, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should expand funding of its E-Rate broadband subsidy program to cover the residences of K–12 students. To facilitate the successful expansion of the E-Rate program to these residences, the US Department of Education and FCC should also spearhead a Community Youth Broadband Technician (CYBT) program that would hire youth technicians to help families install, configure, and test their new broadband equipment. This E-Rate expansion, combined with the CYBT program, would provide much-needed broadband access to [the millions of K–12 students who currently lack sufficient internet for quality remote and hybrid learning.](#)



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THE PROBLEM

During the 2020–21 academic year, [over 3 million students in America’s K–12 system went missing](#) from school. These students did not have adequate broadband services at home to continue their education outside the classroom. Even as students return to in-person school, this lack of quality broadband access presents obstacles for students to engage with hybrid learning models or education technology services in the future.



During the 2020–21 academic year, over 3 million students in America’s K–12 system went missing from school due to a lack of quality broadband access.

THE SOLUTION

The FCC should expand its E-Rate program, which currently provides broadband subsidies to schools and libraries, to serve the residences of underserved K–12 students. Simultaneously, DoEd should fund a Community Youth Broadband Technician (CYBT) program that would pair families receiving new broadband services with youth technicians from their communities who could install this new equipment. The proposed CYBT program could be funded from the recently-passed [Education Stabilization Fund](#).

The E-Rate expansion and CYBT program would provide much-needed broadband access and tech support to underserved communities. The CYBT program would solve many of the implementation challenges that plague broadband expansion by utilizing youth technicians that go to school with the very same students the E-Rate expansion would attempt to serve.

For more information on this proposal, please see: 1) a [policy brief](#) to the FCC explaining the expansion of the E-Rate program to K–12 residents; 2) a [policy brief](#) to the Department of Education explaining the proposed Community Youth Broadband Technician program; 3) an [operational plan](#) further describing the CYBT program; and 4) a demo of the [E-Rate @ Residence app](#) that families could use to request CYBTs.

ABOUT THE HUB

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is a Bay Area policy incubator, training a new generation of tech policy entrepreneurs. We take tech experts, teach them the policy process, and support them in creating outside-the-box solutions to society’s problems.

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