

## **FILLING OUT THE BULK ORDER FORM:**

### **1. Where can I locate the bulk order form?**

The bulk order form / survey has been sent to all superintendents. You will need to coordinate with your superintendent to get the link. The form will not be posted on the TEA website due to the negotiated device and service rates included in the survey.

### **2. Is there a soft copy of all the survey questions posted anywhere?**

A PDF of all survey questions has been sent to all superintendents. Please coordinate with your superintendent to get this document. If you have any issues, please reach out to the [operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov](mailto:operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov) inbox and we can provide a copy of the survey questions.

### **3. Are the materials from the webinar or webinar recording posted anywhere for us to reference?**

The materials (presentation and recording) from the webinar have been sent to all superintendents. Please coordinate with your superintendent to gain access to these materials. If you have any issues, please reach out to the [operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov](mailto:operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov) inbox and we can provide the materials.

### **4. If we have already purchased devices and are interested in the reimbursement program, do we just skip the question on the survey regarding number of devices needed?**

Please enter a "0" for the number of devices needed.

### **5. Will we have the opportunity to change our delivery address prior to orders being placed?**

Yes, final order logistics will be confirmed with the individual completing the request form before the order is placed.

### **6. What constitutes an e-learning device?**

A desktop, laptop, Chromebook, or tablet are considered e-learning devices. Smartphones are not considered an adequate e-learning device.

### **7. What is considered high speed internet access?**

Fixed broadband (cable, fiber, DSL), wireless broadband, or satellite are considered high speed internet mediums. Internet access solely through a cellular data plan is not considered adequate connectivity.

**8. What if we do not yet have an accurate count for the number of students who will be remaining under virtual learning models?**

While we understand that many LEAs will not have detailed estimates for the number of students they expect to remain under virtual learning models, we will need your requested number of devices in order to include your order in the bulk purchase.

**9. Will we receive confirmation of final pricing, models, quantity, and delivery timing before the actual orders are placed?**

Each LEA will receive confirmation forms on their allocated quantities, provider / manufacturer, & models in addition to their required fund contribution prior to the final order being placed. Please consider your completion of this form as a commitment to purchase (at 1:1 matching of funds) the full quantities you have listed in the form; however, due to supply chain complexities, we are not able to guarantee that the exact quantities you have requested will be available through our bulk purchase. We will confirm the available quantity for your LEA as soon as we have confirmation from respective vendors.

**10. When can we expect to receive this confirmation?**

The confirmation of these details will be based on conversations with various providers and manufacturers. While we are not able to provide exact timing, we expect to confirmation to be provided by the week of July 27, 2020.

**11. What happens if I under / overestimate my quantity needs?**

Please consider your completion of this form as a commitment to purchase (at 1:1 matching of funds) the full quantities you have listed in the form; however, due to supply chain complexities, we are not able to guarantee the exact quantities you have requested will be available through our bulk purchase. We will confirm the available quantity for your LEA as soon as we have confirmation from respective vendors. Unfortunately, at this time, we are not planning an additional bulk procurement process, so any understated quantities would need to be sourced through LEA-level procurement.

**12. Are devices related to teacher connectivity eligible to be included in our order?**

Yes, hotspots / devices related to teacher connectivity are also eligible for the bulk order program.

**13. How were the specs included here determined?**

We leveraged input from a variety of technology practitioners (LEA CIOs, CTOs, etc.) on the Operation Connectivity taskforce in addition to research on technical requirements for various learning management systems and instructional learning platforms.

**14. What if a provider / manufacturer I would like to purchase through are not included on this list?**

At this time, our negotiated terms only exist for these providers / manufacturers. For procurement of devices / hotspots from other providers / manufacturers, these would need to go through LEA-level procurement.

**15. For amounts spent on devices, hotspots, data plans, should we be including recurring contractual spends that have been committed (i.e. monthly warranty, service costs, etc.)?**  
Yes, there is a specific question for this in the survey. Only include committed contractual costs through SY 2020-2021.

**16. For our hotspots spend, should we also be including costs related to web filtering, asset tagging, etc.?**  
Yes. These costs should be included within your enumerated hotspot spends.

**17. Should we be including costs related to increased IT support, device maintenance, etc.?**  
Spends on device maintenance should be included in your enumerated numbers. Increased costs related to IT support related should not as they will not be eligible for reimbursement.

**18. If the survey has already been submitted, will LEAs have a chance to make corrections?**  
If you need to update to your survey submission, please email the [operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov](mailto:operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov) inbox, and we can provide you with an updated survey link to edit.

### **BULK ORDER PROCESS:**

**19. What is the process and timeline for LEA payment of the bulk orders?**  
After receiving and approving their allotment confirmation form, LEAs will receive an invoice for their portion of the payment for the bulk purchase. Upon receiving the invoice, LEAs are expected to immediately submit payment.

**20. Can private schools be part of the bulk purchasing?**  
Currently, our bulk purchase and reimbursement programs do not apply to private schools.

**21. Are there any iPads without keyboards available for bulk purchase?**  
Yes. The same iPad listed in the survey can be purchased without the keyboard for \$294.

**22. If we started an order and it has not been executed, should we cancel and use this platform?**  
We are proud of the prices we have negotiated, and we encourage all LEAs to order through this bulk purchase if the devices and hotspot solutions offered meet your LEA's needs. We are confident that our order will be prioritized in the supply chain, given the combined scale of Texas LEAs. However, please consider all relevant criteria impacting your district and pursue the best option of your situation.

**23. Will there be an opportunity for supplemental bulk purchases after the Sunday deadline?**  
No; at this time, this is the only bulk order that we are planning for. However, we are working to secure broader rate card pricing that LEAs will be able to use for procurement in the future.

**24. Will we be able to order customizable device models through bulk order?**

No, the negotiated rates we have secured are for the specs listed in the order form only.

**25. Is T-Mobile able to offer the same hotspot and data plan for 1 year instead of 2 years for same price?**

Yes, they are willing to offer the same hotspot and data plan for 1 year instead of 2 years.

**26. Are schools required to follow regular purchasing requirements when paying for technology devices through Operation Connectivity? Can the formal bidding process be bypassed? Is board approval required for purchases over \$50,000?**

LEAs and their schools are not required to go through a formal bidding process before participating in the bulk order program. As it pertains to board approval for purchase amounts, this is a local level decision that should be discussed with each LEA's local school board.

**27. Can remote locations with internet access be set up for students that live far out in the district and do not have internet access? If we are able to set up wifi zones at churches around town and out in the rural areas of our school, will this suffice for internet access for the students?**

TEA is researching long term solutions, one of which is wifi zones. If LEAs are setting up wifi zones, LEAs should test to see if wifi zones provide the service needed for virtual learning.

**28. Are these purchases of chromebooks, etc., being made mostly through EMAT?**

No. The purchase of these devices will be done centrally through our direct contracts with Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), then shipped to LEAs based on their confirmed shipping information. The TEA bulk purchase program is utilizing the \$200 Million CARES Act funding.

**29. Will TEA prioritize the deployment of devices to schools starting earlier first?**

Through our negotiations with providers / OEMs, we are confident that our bulk orders will be prioritized in the vendors' overall supply chain. However, due to ongoing changes in LEA start of school plans, we are unable to prioritize LEA orders based on their current school start dates or plans.

**30. If you can accommodate all students with connectivity and devices but parents want to send their students to school, do you have to have in-person setting during the transition period?**

Districts that provide remote, online instructional access to all of their students are not required to offer on-campus instruction for the first four weeks of the transition period. For more information on the start-of-school transition period and on-campus instruction requirements, please refer to the SY20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ on the TEA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Guidance website under [Waivers, Finance & Grants](#).

**31. How do we provide internet to rural homes where there aren't towers so hotspots will not work?**

The Operation Connectivity taskforce is currently working on identifying longer-term solutions that can address the broadband availability issue that exists in various LEAs in our state. In the meantime, we encourage LEAs to work with their ESCs and local providers to identify solutions that can bridge the gap in the short-term (e.g. meshed networks, Cell on Wheels, etc.)

**32. We bought the hotspots in the spring, but there are additional costs to renew the data past July 31. Is there a way for assistance for the data component?**

Costs for data plans are an eligible expense for the state's reimbursement program. Further details regarding the application process for possible reimbursements will be issued later.

**33. Could you cover the reimbursement aspect of the connectivity plan?**

The full details regarding the state's possible reimbursement plan have not been communicated at this time. We are working internally to finalize details regarding the eligibility guidelines and application process and will communicate formally once we have the process finalized.

**34. What is the deadline for reimbursable expenditures under Operation Connectivity?**

The full details regarding the state's possible reimbursement plan have not been communicated at this time. We are working internally to finalize details regarding the eligibility guidelines and application process and will communicate formally once we have the process finalized.

**35. Will there be any increase in the state's support of digital connectivity if the surveys reveal that there is an even greater need than previously thought? Further, if COVID-19 continues to linger and remote learning becomes the primary form of instructional delivery, will there be additional grants or funding opportunities from the state/TEA for the ISDs?**

At this time, the funding committed to Operation Connectivity is \$200M. If need is greater than initially thought, TEA will communicate the need to state leadership. TEA is currently monitoring federal legislation for additional grants or funding opportunities should remote learning become the primary form of instructional delivery.

NEW  
9/3/2020

**36. For device asset tagging, LEAs will have to put bulk order devices on a separate tagging system, correct?**

The Logistics Confirmation Form allows each LEA to dictate a format for the suppliers to use to asset tag your products. Asset tagging is done through the supplier, so each LEA is not able to do it within their own system. All asset tags must comply with audit requirements. Please contact Customer Service ([customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com)) with questions.

NEW  
9/3/2020

**37. How will each LEA know if they qualify for the extra devices at full cost?**

The Additional Quantity Request form was given to LEAs who requested quantities above their economically disadvantaged student population cap. If your LEA did not receive an

Additional Quantity Request form as an addendum to your Interlocal Agreement, your LEA does not qualify for the extra devices at full cost. All Additional Quantity Request Forms have been accepted.

### Help/support/resources

**38. Are the materials from the webinar or webinar recording posted anywhere for us to reference?**

The materials (presentation and recording) from the webinar have been sent to all LEA point of contacts that filled out the initial bulk order survey. Please coordinate with your LEA point of contacts to gain access to these materials. If you have any issues, please reach out to the [customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com) and we can provide the materials.

**39. Who do I contact to have additional questions answered?**

Please direct any additional questions to the [customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com) inbox.

### Interlocal Agreement/payment/LEA deadlines

**40. When will I be receiving my final order details?**

We will be sending out the Interlocal Agreements by Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> to your LEA's point of contact who filled out your initial bulk order survey. These documents will be coming from the [customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com) email address.

**41. Who must sign the final Interlocal Agreement?**

Superintendents must sign the final Interlocal Agreement packet, having run the details of the order through the LEA's necessary purchasing protocols/approvals.

**42. When do I need to have signed and returned my Interlocal Agreement?**

Your completed and signed copy of the Interlocal Agreement (as well as your Additional Quantity Request Addendum) must be submitted through DocuSign by COB Tuesday, August 4, 2020. Should your LEA not be able to provide signed approval of this document by this date, your order will unfortunately have to be cancelled.

**43. Who do we contact to have Region 4 ESC set up as a vendor with the district for payment?**

Region 4 will be including their W-9 information within the invoice that will be going out to LEAs. For any additional questions, please reach out to [customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com).

**44. Who will receive the order invoice at the district?**

The order invoice will be sent via email to the LEA point of contact who filled out your LEA's initial bulk order survey. This invoice will be coming from the [Opconninvoices@esc4.net](mailto:Opconninvoices@esc4.net) email address.

**45. How can we get you a check within 3 days via mail?**

The invoices being sent to LEAs will include instructions for electronic payment (e.g. ACH, etc.). We advise LEAs use electronic payment in order to ensure their payments are received within the 3-day payment timeline. Mailed checks will not allow LEAs to meet the payment deadline.

**46. Is it a new Interlocal Agreement or if we already have an interlocal with Region 4 will it suffice?**

This is a new Interlocal Agreement specific to this bulk purchase process. Region 4 is issuing direct purchase orders to the vendors, and the products and services will be passed to LEAs.

**47. If we made corrections on our survey have those been updated and will that be reflected on the agreement?**

Yes, the corrections made to your bulk order survey will be reflected in your LEA's Interlocal Agreement.

**48. Can't the Omnia Partners/TCPN existing cooperative interlocal cover these purchases?**

No, Omnia Partners/TCPN contracts do not cover these vendors and are also subject to various administrative fees. To secure the negotiated rates through this program, we have set up a separate Interlocal Agreement.

**49. Where can I access the guidance put out by TASB?**

The TASB specific guidance and board materials have been distributed through TASB's normal communications network. Your ESC may also be able to assist in providing these materials.

**50. Typically we are not allowed to pre-pay for items and these orders will be material to our fiscal audit for many districts. What type of documentation will be provided to districts and our auditors to allow pre-payment?**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the TEA is authorizing LEAs to make the required pre-payment as it pertains to the Operation Connectivity bulk purchase program. Audit findings go through the TEA for sustaining / not sustaining, and the TEA does not sustain findings where LEAs have followed TEA guidance.

**51. The amount of funds that the LEA is sending to Region 4 is only for the 50% correct?**

Correct, only the portion of the costs that the LEAs are not receiving through state match will need to be paid by the LEAs.

**52. How do I coordinate the details of my asset tagging and drop shipping?**

The initial details of asset tagging will be collected through the LEA order logistics confirmation document, which will be distributed along with your Interlocal Agreement. Further details or questions on asset tagging will be handled directly by vendors.

**53. What is the process and timeline for LEA payment of the bulk orders?**

Payment for your LEA's portion of the order costs will be due immediately upon receipt of the order invoice. Please note that payment is required before hotspots / devices will be asset tagged and shipped to your LEA. Specific payment instructions will be provided with your issued invoice. LEA orders will be tagged and shipped in the order in which invoice payment is received. Delay in payment will result in a delay of devices to your LEAs. Any LEA whose invoice has not been paid within three business days from the invoice date will have their order cancelled.

**54. Can I add the approval of this Interlocal Agreement and the device and hotspot expenditures as an emergency item for a board meeting?**

The TASB guidance sets forth the statutory requirements under the Open Meetings Act to post an emergency meeting notice. This is a case specific determination, and you should consult local counsel regarding this question.

**55. Is Board approval required for the Interlocal Agreement?**

TASB advises that interlocal agreements must receive board approval. TASB recommends this approval be obtained prior to the administration taking action on the interlocal agreement. If convening a quorum is not possible ahead of the pending deadlines, a quick ratification by an LEA's board may be considered in consultation with legal counsel.

NEW  
9/3/2020

**56. Can the delivery address be changed after the form has been submitted?**

Your delivery/shipping address should be verified in the Logistics Confirmation Form. If you must change the address after the form has been submitted, please verify with both Customer Service ([customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com)) and all of your suppliers. Operation Connectivity will not be updating the address information for LEAs – the primary contact is the supplier.

NEW  
9/3/2020

**57. We missed our invoice. Is it too late to pay?**

It is not too late to pay. Please pay the invoice as soon as possible, as Operation Connectivity cannot confirm the order with suppliers until payment has been received. The signed interlocal agreement is a binding legal document and requires each LEA to pay the full invoice balance. Follow payment directions on the invoice and remit payment through ACH or wire transfer. Please contact Customer Service ([customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com)) to explain any extenuating circumstances.

NEW  
9/3/2020

**58. How can LEAs confirm that the invoice has been paid?**

Each LEA will receive a payment receipt confirmation from Region 4 ([opconninvoices@region4.net](mailto:opconninvoices@region4.net)). The invoice will be sent to the email address of the person the LEA indicated as the Operation Connectivity contact. As it takes a few days for wire transfers and ACHs to process, each LEA will likely not receive a payment receipt confirmation on the day of payment. If your LEA has not yet received the payment receipt confirmation, you will shortly.

**59. Our LEA overnighted a check to Region 4. The presentation shows for payment to be completed via a wire transfer/electronic method. Is the payment still accepted?**

Yes, Region 4 will accept paper checks that have already been mailed. Paper checks will generally require much longer to process, so the payment receipt confirmation (from Region 4 at [opconninvoices@region4.net](mailto:opconninvoices@region4.net)) will likely be delayed. Note that this is the exception; payment must be remitted through wire transfer or ACH.

Change Requests

**60. Can LEAs that haven't placed an order place one now?**

Unfortunately, we are no longer accepting any additional LEA orders.

**61. For the Chromebooks that are delayed to 10-16 weeks, will we be able to change our order to any of the other devices?**

LEAs that ordered the delayed Chromebooks were given the opportunity to switch to the Dell 3190 or the Lenovo 100e through filling out the additional survey that went out to LEAs on July 27<sup>th</sup> and closed 12pm on July 29<sup>th</sup>. No additional switches are able to be accommodated at this time .

**62. If a district ordered 3,000 hotspots but only ended up deploying 2,500 hotspots, is there any way to only pay for the services on the 2,500?**

No, you will be responsible for paying for the services of all 3,000 hotspots.

**63. Because Verizon and AT&T hotspots now have additional charges for their hotspots, can we change to a different hotspot provider?**

LEAs who initially requested AT&T hotspots were offered the opportunity to switch to Verizon or T-Mobile hotspots through filling out the additional survey that went out to LEAs on 2/27 and closed 12pm on July 29<sup>th</sup>. No additional switches are able to be accommodated at this time.

**64. Can I change the initial amount of devices/hotspots I committed to order?**

LEAs will not be able to increase the size of their initial order. LEAs can decrease the size of their initial order after receiving their Interlocal Agreement by emailing [customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com) with their revisions. Any proposed revisions to increase quantities for any vendor or model will be rejected.

**65. What if I can't afford my original order?**

LEAs can decrease the size of their initial order after receiving their Interlocal Agreement by emailing [customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com) with their revisions.

## Device specific questions

**66. Is the fund matching for hotspots available for the device cost and the monthly service fee?**

Yes, for all hotspots you will be receive fund matching for the full cost of eligible hotspot expenditures, which includes the cost of the device and the monthly service fee.

**67. Do you have to use the hotspot filtering provided by the vendor?**

For vendors that charge for hotspot filtering, the LEA will be responsible for paying the filtering fee. However, you are not obligated to use the filtering.

**68. How long are the hotspot contracts? Is there a contract usage limit or contract limit? Can the hotspots be cancelled at any time?**

The hotspot contracts are for 1 year and cannot be cancelled during this time as payments are required upfront. LEAs can choose to renew the contract for AT&T and T-Mobile for a second year at the same price; however, state matching would only be contributed towards costs for the first year. All contracts are for unlimited priority data.

**69. What are the final prices for the devices?**

The final device prices will be listed in the Interlocal Agreement that will be emailed to your survey point of contact.

**70. Will the hotspot need to be returned?**

No. After the execution of the bulk order, LEAs will be the sole owner of any device, including hotspots, purchased through the bulk order. After 1 year, services provided as part of the bulk order contracts (e.g., data plan for hotspots, warranties) will expire. Devices, including hotspots, will remain the property of the LEA.

**71. Will Region 4 own the hotspots/devices or will the LEA?**

LEAs will own hotspots and devices.

**72. Will the hotspots included on this bulk purchase list be CIPA compliant?**

Yes, these hotspots will be CIPA compliant and vendors will be providing a detailed guide for what is included in these devices to ensure CIPA compliance.

**73. Will covers/cases be available for devices through this program?**

Due to the high volume of requests for e-learning devices and hotspots through the bulk order, we are not able to accommodate additional requests for peripheral products at this time.

**74. Can we select specific Chromebook manufacturers?**

LEAs may select between Dell and HP Chromebooks, of the specific models described in the bulk order survey (and follow survey). Region 4 has not negotiated special pricing with any other Chromebook manufacturers.

**75. Who do I contact if I have additional, specific questions about the devices?**

There are device specifications included in the Interlocal Agreement your LEA will be receiving. Additional terms and conditions for specific devices you have purchased will be shared once you have submitted your Interlocal Agreement. To discuss further details, please contact [customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com).

**76. What are the model numbers for devices?**

The model numbers are available in the bulk purchase Interlocal Agreement.

**77. Will an MDM license cost be included for Apple iPads?**

Yes, MDM licenses are included with the listed Apple iPad costs.

**78. Do the devices included on this bulk purchase list meet the requirements for STAAR online?**

Yes, minimum system requirements for online STAAR were consulted in order to define minimum specifications for devices. LEAs will have to provide students with headphones, as they are not included in bulk purchase.

**79. Will Chromebooks come with a Google Chrome Management license?**

Yes, Google Management licenses are included in the price of Chromebooks. Similarly, iPadOS and Windows 10 operating system licenses are included on relevant tablets and laptops.

**80. How do I know if my Chromebook is a touch screen or a non-touch screen device?**

The HP Chromebooks do include a touch screen. The Dell Chromebooks do not include a touch screen.

**81. Do the devices include a warranty?**

All of the laptops and Chromebooks include a 1 year warranty. The iPads do not include a warranty. Additional details (i.e., on site vs mail in) are included in the Interlocal Agreement, and vendors will share specific terms and conditions relevant to your geographic region once you have submitted your Interlocal Agreement.

**82. Can we add accident protection to the devices?**

Yes, accident protection can be added directly through the OEMs.

Supply chain

**83. Are these devices already produced and ready to ship or do they have to be made then shipped?**

Region 4 is working with vendors to ensure devices and hotspots are delivered as quickly as possible. This will entail leverage of a mix of existing inventory and production capacity across

vendors. The delivery estimates provided account for this approach. Region 4 will provide updates throughout the order fulfillment process to ensure that LEAs have up-to-date information about supply chain constraints and delivery windows.

**84. Is the ship date also 10-16 weeks for the non-touch screen Chromebooks?**

While all Chromebooks are delayed 10 – 16 weeks, non-touch screen Chromebooks will be slightly faster – between 10-12 weeks—while touch-screen Chromebooks are likely to arrive later. The earliest expected delivery date for any Chromebook is early October. Laptops have about a 4-week ship date. The delivery date is usually around 1 week past the ship date.

**85. Will devices paid with matching funds have priority over additional devices purchased with LEA funds?**

At this time, only devices allocated to receive matching funds are eligible for order confirmation. Region 4 will provide more information about additional device purchases above your allocated amount within the next 7-10 days. Please email [customersupport@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customersupport@teabulkorder.com) with your individual questions in the meantime.

**86. Are the vendors providing estimated delivery dates for devices and hotspots?**

Vendors have provided shipping window estimates for all devices. Windows laptops and Apple iPads will be shipped about 4 weeks after order placement, placing delivery within the first half of September. Chromebooks will be shipped in 10 – 16 weeks, placing delivery in early October at the soonest. Hotspots are expected to be delivered within 2 – 4 weeks of order placement. Delivery dates are dependent on order placement, which is contingent on how quickly your LEA can complete and sign the interlocal agreement, provide shipment information, and pay the Region 4 invoice. Region 4 will provide updates throughout the order fulfillment process to ensure that LEAs have up-to-date information about supply chain constraints and delivery windows.

**87. If we had Chromebooks and change to one of the others, is that going to cause an upsurge in those devices that we won't get those in 4 week time?**

Laptop vendors (e.g., Lenovo, Dell) have indicated that they have the necessary capacity to provide laptops within 4 weeks, even with increased demand as people switch their orders from Chromebooks to laptops.

**88. Can we get hotspots before Chromebooks?**

All orders through the bulk purchase program must be confirmed at the same time, upon receiving the Interlocal Agreement from Region 4. Delivery dates are dependent on how quickly your LEA can complete and sign the Interlocal Agreement, provide shipment information, and pay the Region 4 invoice. Once the order is placed, products will be shipped individually from each vendor. Based on current supply chain constraints, it is likely that hotspots will arrive before other devices; Chromebooks are likely to be delayed.

**89. If we decided to switch from Chromebooks to Lenovo, what is the guarantee, if any, that Lenovo devices will be stocked and ready to ship?**

Region 4 cannot provide any absolute guarantee for delivery dates. However, laptop vendors (e.g., Lenovo, Dell) have indicated that they have the necessary capacity to provide laptops within 4 weeks, even with increased demand as people switch their orders from Chromebooks to laptops.

NEW  
9/3/2020

**90. How will updates be provided regarding shipping estimated time of arrivals (ETAs)?**

Operation Connectivity will be providing weekly supply chain updates to local education agencies (LEAs). These reports will begin the week of August 24.

NEW  
SECTION  
9/3/2020

**Device/Supplier Information**

**91. T-Mobile’s documentation asks my LEA to sign a document which shows the full cost of the hotspots and does not indicate TEA has a responsibility for any of the amount. Can some language be added that shows LEAs are not responsible for the full dollar amount?**

The documentation suppliers request is necessary for their internal account creation process. In order to be the owner of record, LEAs must show the same paperwork that anyone else setting up an account would go through. Operation Connectivity does not regulate the information suppliers require for their own internal processes. The language in the documentation reflects that the LEAs have full ownership of the products, despite TEA paying the suppliers in full (and subsequently being reimbursed by LEAs for 50%).

**92. I have been contacted by both Apple and Verizon, but have yet to hear from AT&T. Should I expect a call from them as well? How and when will they contact me?**

You should expect to hear from all the suppliers from which you ordered at some point during the order fulfilment process. However, each supplier is on different timetables and will be reaching out to coordinate any missing specs or logistics information, as well as shipping verification. Most suppliers have been reaching out via email. Please inform Customer Service ([customerservice@teabulkorder.com](mailto:customerservice@teabulkorder.com)) if you have not heard from suppliers after **two weeks from the time you receive your invoice payment receipt confirmation.**

**93. Will the hotspots automatically be renewed or will LEAs work with suppliers at the end of the year if we want to renew or not? When does service begin?**

The hotspot service begins based on your delivery date and extends for 12 months from that date. If you receive them in August, your service begins in the middle of the month and will extend through the first half of August 2021. Hotspots will not be automatically renewed after one (1) year from the beginning of service. You will need to coordinate with the supplier to extend service past 2021.

**94. Can the hotspot service be suspended since there may be three (3) months, such as the summertime, when they are not being used?**

Your hotspot service will extend for 12 months after your delivery date uninterrupted. You cannot choose to suspend service during the summer months. If your supplier has offered any kind of concession regarding the 12 months of uninterrupted service, please notify Customer Service (customerservice@teabulkorder.com) immediately, as that would constitute renegotiating contract terms and is unacceptable.

**95. Apple has contacted our LEA with several options for cases on iPads. Is this acceptable communication or should all communication go through Region 4?**

iPads offered through the bulk order program comes with a keyboard and case. Apple may contact you regarding the cases, which were negotiated to be Logitech. Apple and Operation Connectivity are allowing LEAs to swap cases if they are an equivalent cost, as Operation Connectivity will not allow any reimbursements. Generally, product specs and logistical coordination is normal for a supplier to address with you. Inappropriate supplier contact includes renegotiation of bulk order contracted rates, offers regarding product switches or upgrades, any request for payment, and payment related information for devices purchased through the bulk order.

**96. T-Mobile is asking our LEA for a W9, tax exempt form and copy of the interlocal agreement. Is it appropriate to provide this documentation?**

Appropriate documentation suppliers can and should request from LEAs are account formation documents (e.g., proof of your tax exempt status, W9, and account contract formation documents). Suppliers should not be requesting a copy of your LEA's interlocal agreement.

**97. Do Chromebooks come with cases?**

No, they do not. Cases are not covered by the TEA bulk order program. However, the iPads include keyboards and cases.

**98. Should LEAs contact the vendor they regularly use?**

No, please wait for the suppliers to reach out to your LEA to coordinate your bulk purchase order. This minimizes communication confusion.

**99. Are iPad cases shipping at the same time as iPads?**

This depends on supplier demand. LEAs should ask their bulk order supplier contact.

**100. Can ESSER funds be used to purchase these devices and hotspots?**

The state has implemented a local matching requirement to this program in that the LEA must pay for an applicable percentage of the total costs of the program. This requires other fund sources available to the LEA to be used to pay for the remaining percentage of the program. This is not an in-kind match. The LEA may use its CARES Act ESSER Grant allocation, TIMA, and other local sources to be approved later by TEA, in addition to other state and local funding to pay the LEA portion of this program and therefore split the total cost of the connectivity equipment between this program and its ESSER Grant. LEA local documentation must be maintained to document 1) the percentage paid from the ESSER Grant, 2) inventory records and other appropriate safeguards to protect the equipment are in place, and 3) appropriate internal controls are being implemented.

**101. Will district matching funds come from 2020-21 budget even though ordered by TEA in 19-20 fiscal year?**

LEAs should work with their local budgeting group to gain guidance on what fund year their matching funds will be coming from.

**102. Our district has a 2020-2021 Technology Lending Grant. Can we use grant funds to purchase the equipment through Operation Connectivity’s bulk purchase program, thereby leveraging the grant funds to serve more students?**

No. Operation Connectivity is an emergency procurement program, and LEAs may only use Operation Connectivity for its intended purpose, not for a traditional, non-emergency technology procurement such as Technology Lending.

NEW  
9/3/2020

**103. Will LEAs receive a copy of Mr. Cory Green's Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) presentation?**

The presentation is posted under the “Operation Connectivity” section on the TEA website. See the link [here](#).

Allocation Methodology

**104. What is the methodology for determining the allocation of funds?**

LEAs will be eligible for fund matching of 50% of the expenditures incurred through the statewide bulk purchasing event. However, the level of LEA fund matching for purchases made through the statewide bulk purchasing event will be contingent on the number of economically disadvantaged students in the LEA. The amount of TEA’s fund matching will not exceed 50% of LEA expenditures to purchase device and/or hotspots for the number of economically disadvantaged students in the LEA. The costs associated with device and hotspot purchase volume that exceeds the number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA will not be eligible for fund matching. Please refer to Funding Allocation for Bulk Order Purchase Event or a full description of the funding allocation methodology

**105. Can LEAs order more devices/hotspots than they have economically disadvantaged students?**

An LEA can order additional devices and hotspots (capped at the difference between the LEA’s initial order request and their allocated quantities) via the bulk order purchase and pay with local funds. However, the costs associated with device and hotspot purchase volume that exceeds the number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA will not be eligible for fund matching.

**106. Are the devices / hotspots only available for economically disadvantaged students?**

No. The number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA was used as the cap on the number of devices/hotspots that are eligible for fund matching (i.e., 1 device AND 1 hotspot allowed, per economically disadvantaged student) to ensure the equitable distribution of a limited amount of funds. LEAs can decide how they are going to distribute devices across their entire student population to best ensure connectivity for all students participating in remote learning.

**107. How did you determine the number of economically disadvantaged students?**

The number of economically disadvantaged students in an LEA are calculated as the PEIMS ages 3-21 low income students (eligible for free lunch, reduced price lunch, or federal aid programs), from the October 2019 fall collection, released for 2020-2021 ESSA funding formulas.

**108. How will staff devices requested be counted in the economically disadvantaged numbers?**

Staff were not factored into the economically disadvantaged numbers that determined funding allocations. We still allowed for the purchase of additional devices beyond the volume of economically disadvantaged students, which may be used by staff, but those expenditures will not be eligible for fund matching.

NEW  
SECTION  
9/3/2020

**CRF Matching Program**

**109. What is the process if a city wants to match funding for hotspots or Chromebooks? Does the process change depending on a future or existing order?**

The city and LEA must enter into a documented agreement stating the amount of city funding approved to be allocated to the LEA, the purpose, and the timeline. If the funding can be approved by the city and the signed documentation provided by the October 1 deadline, the matching funding can meet part of the local match requirement for the LEA's bulk order purchase. After that date, the city and LEA would work together to determine the process for the city reimbursing the LEA or other allowable purchases.

**110. Our county told our LEA that they can only contribute if this these technology purchases can be considered "prevention of disease," which they must spend 75% of their CRF funds on. Will Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) allow this to be considered "prevention of disease"?**

No. Section 1.5 of the CRF Terms and Conditions require all jurisdictions to spend a minimum of 75% of their CRF allocation in the categories of medical expenses, public health expenses, and payroll expenses for employees substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the public health emergency. This aligns with the first three categories of eligible CRF expenditures as defined by Treasury Department guidance. Expenses to facilitate distance learning, including technological improvements, in connection with school closings to enable compliance with COVID-19 precautions, do not fall under these three categories and therefore may not count towards the 75% requirement.

However, there is no sequencing requirement. The city/county is not required to have expended all their 75% of funding in Categories 1-3, see above, before expending in Categories 4-6 (where the LEA reimbursements would be coded). At the completion of the CRF period of performance, TDEM will review each jurisdiction's spending in the aggregate in order to determine compliance with the 75%/25% requirement.

**111. The TEA 50% discount for our hotspot devices was paid by our LEA. Does this mean we can file for CRF connectivity and remaining 50% that was expended?**

TEA paid 50% of the bulk order and the LEA paid the remaining 50%. If the LEA receives city or county CRF funding as part of your local match, then you may apply for the local match reimbursement from TEA. TEA will match the amount received from the city or county, therefore reducing that actual cost to the LEA.

**112. Will the county and city receive detailed information on how to apply for their funding?**

Counties and eligible cities have already applied to TDEM and in most cases already have access to the city/county CRF funding.

**113. How do LEAs apply for city/town fund?**

Contact your local city or county officials asking for an allocation of their CARES Act CRF funding. Sometimes, the LEAs within the county go in together to meet with local officials, which has been more effective.

**114. What if the city or county pays for the LEA's share (50%)?**

If the county or the city pays for the entirety of the LEA's 50% share, then there is nothing for TEA to reimburse and no application is needed.

**115. Do LEAs account for the city/county funds received in the federal CRF fund as well? What fund do LEAs use to account for this revenue?**

Yes, you will code the city/county reimbursement as fund code 277 and revenue object code 5939. Be sure to use a local option code to identify the CRF funding from the city/county differently from the CRF funding from TEA and differently from the CRF funding from TDEM (if you are also eligible for that program).

**116. If our LEA did not get funding from the county or local city funds, we don't need to participate in the CRF matching program? Or do we have to do this if we received the initial 50% from TEA?**

If you did not receive funding from the city or county, there is nothing further required of the LEA for the local match reimbursement program.

**117. Can LEAs receive local matches if they did not use the bulk purchase but ordered the devices in the early summer and paid for them directly?**

The reimbursement process from TEA for devices ordered outside the bulk-purchase process will be different. That process will be distributed at a later date. However, the LEA can request reimbursement funding from the city/county for those expenses as well and the LEA would only apply to TEA for reimbursement for costs not covered by the city/county funding.

**118. LEAs are having to pay the invoice in Aug (2019-20 budget year) and reimbursement will come in 2020-2021 budget year. How will LEAs be able to reclassify?**

We are working to get an answer to this question.

**119. Can multiple cities and counties participate?**

At most, the LEA could have reimbursements from the city where you are located and the county where your city is located.

**120. The city and county have not committed to helping with our LEAs contribution toward bulk purchasing. Do the other CRF qualifying expenses such as payroll to facilitate distance learning also require their matching commitment?**

Payroll costs and other CRF allowable expenses are not allowed under this local match reimbursement program. However, the LEA may always request other CRF funding from their city/county for other allowable purposes.

**121. Are the bulk order CRF reimbursements requested through TDEM, as well? How is this different then the CRF being applied through TDEM?**

No. The bulk-purchase local match reimbursement process will be administered by TEA. You will apply for the funds through the Operation Connectivity system similar to how you ordered your bulk-order devices. The TDEM CRF reimbursement program follows TDEM's grant process and is only for allowable costs caused by COVID-19 from March 1 to May 20, 2020.

**122. Our LEA was awarded \$12,500 from our local county electric cooperative, specifically for this project. Do these funds count?**

The funds will be applicable if the local county electric cooperative received CRF funding and is using that funding. Only city or county CRF funds count for this reimbursement purpose.

**123. If the LEA ends up out of pocket locally for the 50%, will there be an "on-behalf" accounting entry for the 50% they did not pay for?**

We are working to get an answer to this question.

**124. Do charter schools need to contact each separate city in which we have campuses? (Our county judge already said the funds were distributed to cities and the county could not assist us.)**

Yes, the charter school would contact the city where the school is located.

**125. Can a list of the LEAs that are participating be provided?**

If your LEA is interested in partnering with other LEAs in your region who are participating in the bulk purchase, please contact your ESC for more information.

**126. When will TEA provide the detailed training on the bulk-purchase local match reimbursement process before the application opens September 7, 2020?**

TEA will offer training to ESC staff on Monday, August 31, 2020, from 2-5pm. Login information for ESCs will be sent to the ESC staff once the training platform is selected. TEA will offer training to eligible LEAs on Wednesday, September 2, 2020, from 9:30am to 12:30pm via a Teams Live Event. To access the LEA training, go to this [link](#).

**127. On a recent superintendent, it was stated that each LEA had until October to get the county funding set up. Do we wait? Should LEAs wait to get started until October?**

No, each LEA is encouraged to get the county CRF funding set-up and get the required signed documentation so that they can apply for the local match reimbursement by the October 1 deadline.

**128. Can you please tell me about the status of my shipment and where I am on the bulk order shipment list?**

Delivery dates are dependent on how quickly your LEA completed and signed the Interlocal Agreement, provided shipment information, and paid the Region 4 invoice. Once the order is placed, products will be shipped individually from each vendor. Starting the week of 9/1/2020 the Operation Connectivity team will be providing weekly supply chain updates via emails to all LEAs participating in the bulk order program.