

Rural Health Care Program

Off-site Data Centers and Administrative Offices in the HCF Program

Off-site Data Center: An “off-site data center is a site that serves as a central repository for the “storage, management, and dissemination of an eligible HCP’s computer systems, associated components, and data, including (but not limited to) electronic health records.”¹

Off-site Administrative Office: An “off-site administrative office” is a site that does not provide hands-on deliver of patient care but provides administrative support functions that are critical to the HCP for the provision of healthcare.²

Eligible Connections

- Eligible HCP to off-site data center or off-site administrative office
- Off-site data center to another off-site data center
- Off-site administrative office to another off-site administrative office
- Off-site data center to an off-site administrative office
- Off-site data center or administrative office to the public internet or another network (most often a service provider)

Restrictions:

- The supported expenses must be used solely for healthcare purposes
- The expenses including connections and network equipment must be purchased by an eligible HCP
- If there are ineligible entities participating on the network, expenses must be cost-allocated to account for ineligible participants and/or ineligible usage.

Best Practices:

- When registering an off-site data center or administrative office, be sure to list all eligible HCPs that will be using that facility on the FCC Form 460.
- Provide the end location(s) for connections other than internet service on the FCC Form 462 for all expenses associated with off-site data centers and off-site administrative offices.
- The end location must be one of the eligible connections listed above.
- NOTE: The end location site must be a member of the filing consortium.
- If the end location is connected to multiple HCPs through a cloud or virtual network, provide an explanation and cost-allocation methodology (if shared with ineligible entities).³
- Include this explanation in your supporting documentation.
- While not required, a network diagram can be helpful to illustrate the eligibility of expenses associated with these entity types.
- If the end location is an address that is associated with the service provider, list the address of the service provider in Column X, Circuit End Location, on the FCC Form 462/NCW and include an explanation with your FCC Form 462 submission.

¹ § 54.637 Off-site data centers and off-site administrative offices. (a)(2)

² § 54.637 Off-site data centers and off-site administrative offices. (a)(1)

³ § 54.639 Ineligible expenses. (d)