


# Rural Health Care Program

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The Rural Health Care Program made significant operational changes in 2014 that resulted in successful outcomes for the beneficiaries of its programs: the Telecommunications and Internet Access Program, the Pilot Program, and the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program. The Rural Health Care Program brought Telecommunications Program operations in-house in 2014. All Rural Health Care Programs are now run in-house at USAC, which places knowledgeable program staff as the first point of contact for program stakeholders.

HCF Program operations and procedures continue to roll out, building review systems for the processing of HCF Program forms and hiring new staff to handle the increased workload. In 2014, the Rural Health Care Program implemented a program-wide Help Desk to direct callers to appropriate program staff with the goal of increasing response times for program inquiries and to gather feedback on program operations. The Help Desk has become increasingly user-friendly for both applicants and service providers.

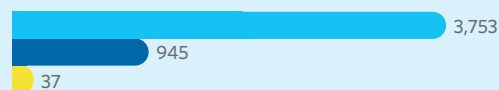
The Rural Health Care Program has seen a 50 percent increase in committed dollars, from \$117.91 million in Funding Year (FY) 2012 to \$177.94 million in FY2013, and the number keeps growing. Across the board for the Rural Health Care Program, USAC received \$192.95 million in commitment requests for FY2013 and, through the end of 2014, \$100.84 million for FY2014. For the Telecommunications Program, staff sought to reduce the number of outstanding, uncommitted funding requests.

## AUTHORIZED SUPPORT\* BY CALENDAR YEAR



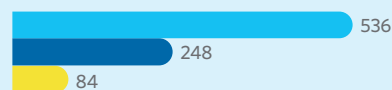
\*Authorized Support is approved funding for disbursement for January through December 2014—it does not include recoveries from audits, appeals, or other enforcement actions.

## HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS RECEIVING SUPPORT IN 2014



Note: Represents the total number of unique applicants with authorized support during calendar year 2014.

## SERVICE PROVIDERS PARTICIPATING IN 2014



- Telecommunications, Telecom/Internet Access Programs
- Healthcare Connect Fund Program
- Pilot Program

For FY2012, the Telecommunications Program received 11,815 total funding requests. At the end of 2013, 1,636 (14 percent) remained in the processing queue. For FY2013, USAC received 11,527 funding requests and staff were able to reduce the processing queue to 100 (less than 1 percent) by the end of 2014. Rural Health Care Program staff reduced total outstanding funding requests (including both FY2013 and FY2014 forms) to 16 percent of annual funding requests submitted—a record low—and a reduction from the more than 35 percent of annual funding requests outstanding at the beginning of the calendar year.

For the HCF Program, staff continued to approve site eligibility, post requests for services, commit funding, and pay invoices. For FY2013, USAC made over \$49 million in HCF Program commitments in 2014, with \$6.98 million going to individual HCP applicants and \$32.9 million going to consortia applicants. For FY2014, USAC made over \$20 million in HCF Program commitments in 2014, with over \$3 million going to individual HCP applicants and \$17.5 million going to consortia applicants. USAC disbursed over \$9.9 million to HCF Program service providers and vendors in 2014.

From an outreach perspective, in 2014 Rural Health Care Program staff created outreach plans customized to suit stakeholders' needs. Separate quarterly webinars were held for the individual HCP applicants, for the HCPs applying as consortia, for the Pilot Program projects, and for the HCPs participating in the Telecommunications Program. During 2014, USAC communicated with over 108,000 stakeholders through email and the program's newsletter—the quarterly RHC Circuit.