

Evergreen Status

What is evergreen status?

Evergreen status is when a valid contract between a service provider and a Health Care Provider (HCP) is in effect for longer than a one year period. The benefit of having evergreen status is that HCPs do not need to re-compete for service each year, so they do not need to file the FCC Form 465 annually. The HCP does not need to re-bid the services as long as the evergreen contract is valid, or until the contract is modified in any way. HCPs that have evergreen status must still apply for USF support of the contracted services by filling out the FCC Forms 466 or 466-A, and Form 467.

How can I become evergreen?

To attain evergreen status, applicants must submit a valid contract to USAC. USAC considers a contract valid, and will deem in “evergreen,” when it meets all of the following criteria:

- both parties in the contract are identified,
- both parties sign and date the contract,
- the contract specifies the type and terms of service, and
- the contract has a specific duration.

When an applicant is evergreen, the Funding Commitment Letter issued by USAC will show “contract.” If the applicant is not evergreen, the contract status will show “month to month.”

If I have evergreen status, can I use e-certification to submit my forms?

Yes. USAC recommends using electronic certification (e-certification) to submit all forms, and applicants can still do so if they have evergreen status. While evergreen status contract holders are not required to file an FCC Form 465 annually, they must file an electronic copy of this form each year that they want to use e-certification to file their other forms. Luckily, most fields on the electronic Form 465 are automatically populated and HCPs do not need to re-compete the contract – they simply indicate on Line 29: “Under contract until [End Date].”

Why e-certify? It eliminates the need for printing and mailing and begins the competitive bidding process instantly. E-certification also pre-populates most required information and transfers that information to all forms, saving the HCP time with each filing.

What do I do if my evergreen contract is modified or ends during a Funding Year?

At the start of the Funding Year that will be affected, applicants must post an FCC Form 465 to seek new bids on the desired services. Use Line 29 to specify which services your HCP will be seeking, and when the services should begin (i.e., after the evergreen contract changes or expires). For example, Form 465’s Line 29 description could read, “Transmission of data to central hospital along with video conferencing capabilities. Please note that this circuit is under contract until January 1, 2010. Seeking bids for service beginning January 2, 2010.”

If a contract ends during the Funding Year, applicants must submit a new FCC Form 466 to cover the remainder of that Funding Year.

To learn more about the Rural Health Care Program, visit www.usac.org/rhc. For questions related to the program, please contact rhc-admin@universalservice.org.