Rural Health Care Program
The Components of the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program

Telecommunications Program
Provides eligible rural HCPs with discounts for telecommunications services using the urban/rural differential

Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program
Provides eligible rural HCPs and consortia with a 65-percent flat discount on eligible expenses related to broadband connectivity

$400 million a year available to provide reduced rates to eligible health care providers for telecommunications service and broadband access.
Eligible Health Care Providers
Rural, not-for-profit or public entities of the following types are eligible:

- Hospitals
- Community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants
- Rural health clinics
- Local health departments or agencies
- Community mental health centers
- Post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, such as teaching hospitals or medical schools
- Dedicated emergency departments of rural for-profit hospitals
- Consortia of HCPs consisting of one or more eligible entities
- Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) effective January 2017

Eligible Expenses

- Telecommunications services

Discount Rate
Urban/rural differential of cost of service

Competitive Bidding Exemptions
Applicants are exempt if the Health Care Providers (HCP) site has a Rural Health Care Program-endorsed evergreen contract
The Rural Health Care Program

Program Comparison

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<th>HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND PROGRAM</th>
<th>TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ELIGIBLE ENTITIES</strong></td>
<td>Not-for-profit and public of one of the entity types outlined on pages 4 and 5.</td>
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</table>
| **ELIGIBLE EXPENSES** | Telecommunication service  
Broadband service  
Network equipment  
HCP-constructed and owned network facilities (consortia only)  
Telecommunications service  
Discount  
65 percent flat rate discount on all eligible expenses  
Cost of service calculated as urban-rural differential of  
APPLICATION OPTIONS | Apply as an individual HCP or as part of a consortium  
Can obtain a multi-year funding commitment  
Apply as an individual HCP  
Must seek new funding commitment for each funding year  
RURALITY | HCP can be located in non-rural location if applying as a member of an eligible consortium  
OFF-SITE? | Connections associated with off-site data centers and off-site administrative offices used by eligible HCPs for healthcare purposes are eligible for funding  
No off-site associated connections are eligible for funding |

Additional Tips for the HCF Program

Review the HCF Order

Consider whether to apply as an individual Health Care Provider, as a member of an existing consortium, or to start a new consortium

Step 1
Review the eligibility criteria

Step 2
Review the application process

Step 3
File the FCC Form 460/465 to obtain an eligibility determination

The Rural Health Care Program
Get Started

usac.org/rhc
### Rural Healthcare Program

**Application Process**

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<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Forms</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Determine Eligibility</td>
<td>Must meet the three initial program criteria and make sure requested services are eligible</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop Evaluation Criteria and Request Services</td>
<td>Develop scoring criteria to evaluate bids and describe service needs (posted on USAC website)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Evaluate Bids and Select a Service Provider</td>
<td>Choose the “most cost-effective” service provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Submit Funding Request</td>
<td>Provide information about services and selected service provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Certify Connection</td>
<td>Confirm service start and end dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Invoice</td>
<td>Initiate invoicing process and submit to service provider for review (HCF Program)</td>
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**Notes:**
- TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM
- HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND

[usac.org/rhc](usac.org/rhc)
Where Does the Money Come From?
Telecommunications companies are required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to make annual contributions that make up the universal service fund. USAC administers the disbursement of these contributions to the four programs established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC):

- **Schools and Libraries Program**
  Provides discounts to eligible schools and libraries that qualify for reduced rates.

- **High Cost Program**
  Provides support to eligible telecommunications companies that, in turn, offer rates and services comparable to those available in urban areas.

- **Lifeline Program**
  Provides support to telecommunications companies that, in turn, offer discounts to eligible consumers.

- **Rural Health Care Program**
  Provides support for telecommunications and broadband to eligible rural health care providers that qualify for reduced rates.

USAC Is...
an independent, not-for-profit corporation designated by the FCC as the administrator of the universal service fund and the four universal programs.

Rural Health Care Program
How it Works

What is a Consortium?
A consortium is a group of healthcare providers ranging from a single unified health system to a statewide or regional network of different types of entities. Non-rural eligible HCPs may receive support as part of a consortium consisting of a majority of rural HCP sites. In addition, ineligible HCP sites also may participate in a consortium and take advantage of lower contract prices often associated with consortia bulk-buying, but they will not receive RHC Program funding.

How Do I Start a New Consortium?
To talk to a consortia expert about getting started with a new consortium, email us at RCH-Assist@usac.org or call our Help Desk at 800-453-1546.

What Are the Benefits?
- Creation and growth of broadband HCP networks
- Sharing of medical, administrative, and technical costs
- Lower prices, higher bandwidth, and better quality connections
- Access by rural HCPs to medical specialists at larger hospitals
- Rural and non-rural HCPs can be eligible for program support

Consortia 101

Rural Health Care Program