



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Rural Health Care

January 2026 RHC Monthly Newsletter

January 8, 2026

Latest News

FY2026 Filing Window Opened December 1, 2025 – Register for Upcoming Trainings Today!

The funding year (FY) 2026 filing window is open from December 1, 2025, to April 1, 2026. This means that you may submit funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) no later than 11:59 p.m. ET April 1, 2026. We highly encourage you to submit your funding requests as early as possible. Learn more about [filing windows](#). For FY2026, Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program and Telecommunications (Telecom) Program participants will use RHC Connect to submit their FCC Forms 462 (Funding Request Forms) and FCC Forms 466 (Funding Request Form). To learn more, please visit the following webpages:

- HCF Program – [Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 462](#)
- Telecom Program – [Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 466](#)

User guides for each form have been posted on the USAC website. To access the user guides, please click the links below:

- HCF Program – [RHC Connect User Guide FCC Form 462](#)
- Telecom Program – [RHC Connect User Guide FCC Form 466](#)

Upcoming Trainings

To assist you with filing your FY2026 funding requests (FCC Forms 426 and 466), the Rural Health Care (RHC) outreach team will be hosting the following webinars:

- FY2026 Telecom Program Office Hours – January 14, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- TPA and User Management in RHC Connect Webinar – January 21, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- Consortium Best Practices Webinar – January 28, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

Online Tools

Invoice Filing Deadlines

The [RHC Invoice Filing Deadline Tool](#) allows service providers and HCPs to look up the deadline to submit invoices for funding commitments. The tool allows users to avoid having to set up specific Excel configurations to find their deadlines.

Open Data Platform

As part of USAC's Open Data initiative, RHC program data is open and accessible to the public. Anyone is free to access and utilize the raw data submitted by Universal Service participants. Please note, data sets are regularly updated to include 10 years of information to avoid lowering the performance of USAC systems per USAC policies. The following data sets are available on the Open Data platform:

- [Rural Health Care Commitments and Disbursements \(FCC Form 462/466/466A\)](#) – This dataset contains data about funding decisions, total committed amounts, and total disbursement amounts for the RHC program.
- [SPIN Lookup Tool](#) – This tool can be used to view and export service provider profile data found in RHC Connect. This data includes important information regarding the service provider, such as contact information and details regarding the FCC Forms 498 and 499.
- [RHC Posted Services Tool](#) – This tool allows service providers to view service request information by individual HCPs and consortia applying for funding through the RHC program.
- [Rural Health Care Posted Services \(FCC Form 461/465\)](#) – This dataset allows service providers to view service request information provided by the RHC program. The data is collected from the FCC Forms 461 and 465, which includes the service request information.

Note: Some users have reported that they had issues downloading or opening some documents in Open Data. If you are experiencing such issues with Open Data, as a workaround, please copy and paste the URL into a new tab in your browser. If you are still experiencing issues, please reach out to the [RHC Customer Service Center](#).

Important Deadlines and Reminder

The following are recommended dates to submit the FCC Forms 460, 461, and 465 with enough time to file funding requests (FCC Forms 462 and 466) before the end of the FY2025 filing window.

HCF & Telecom Program Form	Last Day to Submit for Individual HCPs using a Request for Proposal (RFP)
FCC Form 460 (Eligibility)	January 5, 2026 (Recommended Date)
FCC Form 461 & 465 (Request for Services)	February 1, 2026 (Recommended Date)
FCC Form 462 & 466 (Funding Request)	April 1, 2026 (Deadline to Submit)

HCF & Telecom Program Form	Last Day to Submit for Individual HCPs NOT using a Request for Proposal (RFP)
FCC Form 460 (Eligibility)	January 8, 2026 (Recommended Date)
FCC Form 461 & 465 (Request for Services)	February 10, 2026 (Recommended Date)
FCC Form 462 & 466 (Funding Request)	April 1, 2026 (Deadline to Submit)

Please note that these are not mandatory deadlines per the program rules, but rather recommendations to ensure that the FCC Forms 461 and 465 are posted to USAC's website early enough for a 28-day competitive bidding period before the deadline to submit FCC Forms 462 and 466. If FCC Forms 461 and 465 are submitted with an RFP, allow at least an additional 10 days for review.

FCC News

Update: FY2026 Telecom Program Rural Rates

On November 18, 2025, the FCC released order [DA 25-954](#). This order waives the FCC's rules to permit the

use of previously approved rural rates from funding years (FY) 2023-2025 for funding year 2026 that would otherwise require approval of a cost-based justification for FY2026 under Method 3. Rural rates for the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program should be calculated using Method 1, or, if you cannot satisfy the requirements, then Method 2. If neither of these methods is feasible, then you must use Method 3.

For more information, read FCC Order [DA 25-954](#). Please use the [FY2026 Rural and Urban rates tip sheet](#) as a resource.

RHC Connect Updates

My Portal Decommissioning

The decommissioning of My Portal has been pushed back to the middle of calendar year (CY) 2026. The RHC outreach team previously informed applicants that third-party authorizations (TPAs) will not be migrated to RHC Connect. Letters of Agency (LOA) and Letters of Exemption (LOE) must also be moved to RHC Connect. **Applicants were required to move all their TPAs and LOA/LOEs into RHC Connect by November 30, 2025.**

NOTE: Third-party account holders will not have access to health care providers (HCPs) that do not have an active TPA submitted in RHC Connect after November 30, 2025. In addition, consortium account holder will not have access to member sites if they do not have an active LOA/LOE stored in RHC Connect.

Submit Third Party Authorizations in RHC Connect!

If you are an HCP participating in the HCF or Telecom Program, and a consultant or other third party (i.e., anyone who is not employed by the HCP) will file forms on behalf of your site, you must file a TPA with USAC. A TPA provides written authorization to USAC, allowing the third party to complete and submit forms on behalf of the HCP or consortium in the HCF or Telecom Program. RHC program participants may now submit third party authorizations in RHC Connect. Please use the following resources to submit your TPAs:

- [Third Party Authorization](#) webpage
- [RHC Connect - Third Party Authorization User Guide](#)

Submit LOAs and LOEs in RHC Connect

As a reminder for consortia applicants, LOAs and Letters of Exemption (LOEs) are also submitted in RHC Connect. Please use the following resources to submit LOAs and LOEs:

- [Letter of Agency](#) webpage
- [Letter of Exemption](#) webpage
- [RHC Connect LOA/LOE User Guide](#)
- [Sample LOA](#)

The RHC outreach team will continue to provide information about important deadlines and the decommissioning of My Portal.

Submit RHC Program Post-Commitment Change Requests in RHC Connect

Telecom Program

The following post-commitment change requests are now available in RHC Connect for Telecom Program applicants.

- SPIN changes (corrective and operational)
- Site and service substitutions
- Invoice filing deadline extensions

For more information, visit the [Post-Commitment Actions](#) webpage on the USAC website as well as specific webpages for [SPIN Changes](#) and [Service Substitutions](#). A step-by-step [Post-Commitment Change Request](#) user guide is available to help you submit these requests correctly.

HCF Program

The following post-commitment change requests are available in RHC Connect for HCF Program applicants:

- SPIN changes (corrective and operational)
- Site and service substitutions
- Service delivery deadline extensions for non-recurring charges
- Invoice filing deadline extensions

For more information, visit the [Post-Commitment Actions](#) webpage on the USAC website as well as specific webpages for [SPIN Changes](#) and [Site and Service Substitutions](#). A step-by-step [Post-Commitments Change Request](#) user guide is available to help you submit these requests correctly.

RHC Connect Updates – FCC Form 469

The FCC Form 469 is now available in RHC Connect. The FCC Form 469 is the new Telecom Program invoicing form. Per [FCC Order 23-6](#), the new Telecom Program invoicing process is similar to the invoicing process in the HCF Program. One key difference is that the service provider submits the FCC Form 469 in RHC Connect, the applicant receives an email alerting them of the submission, and the applicant officially submits the form to USAC by certifying and signing the form.

RHC Connect for Service Providers

As you submit the FCC Form 463 and FCC Form 469, please keep in mind that the General Contact on the FCC Form 498 is the only user for the company who can create additional logins for other users in that company. This is done within RHC Connect.

If you have trouble accessing RHC Connect, it may be a result of outdated information on the FCC Form 498 (Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form). To correct the issue, please update your FCC Form 498 as soon as possible and, if applicable, your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on the [SAM.gov](#) webpage. For more information, please visit the [Manage Your 498 ID](#) webpage on the USAC website.

An [FCC Form 463](#) user guide as well as a [FCC Form 469](#) user guide, both specifically for service providers, are now available on the [Step 5: Invoice USAC](#) webpage in the RHC service provider section of the USAC website.

News You Can Use

Submit your FY2026 Request for Services Forms!

Beginning on July 1, 2025, applicants could start the competitive bidding process for FY2026. The HCF Program's FCC Form 461 (Request for Services Form) and the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program's FCC Form 465 (Request for Services Form) may be submitted in RHC Connect along with any other competitive bidding documents, such as a Request for Proposal (RFP). Please use the following resources to submit these forms:

HCF Program:

- [Prepare for Competitive Bidding & Request Services](#) webpage
- [Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 461](#) webpage
- [Competitive Bidding Exemptions](#) webpage
- [RHC Connect FCC Form 461 User Guide](#)
- [How to File the FCC Form 461](#) self-guided training video

Telecom Program:

- [Prepare for Competitive Bidding & Request Services](#) – webpage
- [Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 465](#) webpage
- [Competitive Bidding Exemptions](#) webpage
- [RHC Connect FCC Form 465 User Guide](#)
- [Telecom Program Request for Services \(FCC Form 465\)](#) self-guided training video

Search Posted Services Tool – HCF and Telecom Program

The [Search Posted Services](#) tool is available on the USAC website. This tool is a streamlined version of the

[Rural Health Care Posted Services \(FCC Forms 461 and 465\)](#) dataset, making it easier to search for posted services and download documents. The dataset contains data from the FCC Forms 461 and 465 (i.e., services requested for current and past funding years). The Open Data portal allows you to filter, sort, and visualize the data in many ways. There are hyperlinks in columns where you can download the PDF version of the FCC Forms 461 and 465, RFP, and any other additional documentation submitted with the FCC Forms 461 and 465.

What To Do When You Receive an Information Request

As part of their review of any eligibility, requests for services, funding requests, and invoicing forms, RHC reviewers may need further information or explanation. If so, RHC staff will contact all account holders (the primary and all secondary and tertiary account holders associated with the HCP) with a request for additional information ("Information Request"). This request will assist with the collection of any missing documentation, address deficiencies, or general information required to address questions of FCC form reviewers.

For more information, use the [Information Request tip sheet](#) as a resource.

Service Provider Webpage Updates

USAC's Rural Health Care (RHC) and E-Rate programs have updated the [RHC Service Provider Process](#) and [E-Rate Service Provider Process](#) webpages to better support your participation in the Universal Service Fund (USF) programs. These updates:

- Ensure titles and descriptions of the service provider enrollment process reflect the key activities within each process step.
- Simplify page content where process requirements are similar.
- Continue the tradition of incorporating link-accessible resources to reduce page scroll.

Additionally, a new resource for Tribal service providers is now available:

- [Registering for a Service Provider Identification Number \(SPIN\) Checklist for New Tribal Service Providers](#)

These updates aim to improve ease of participation by aligning the steps that service providers must take to participate in the RHC and E-Rate programs – especially for small and rural service providers that are new to USAC.

Important Reminders

Information Request Tips for the RHC Program

- For FY2026 FCC Forms 462 and 466, an auto-generated email will be sent directing HCPs to RHC Connect to respond. HCPs should respond through RHC Connect only. Please use the [Information Request Tip Sheet](#) to help you navigate Information Requests sent through RHC Connect.
- Use only Chrome, Firefox, or Microsoft Edge Internet browsers when using RHC Connect.
- When uploading a document as a response, the file must be limited to 10MB, and its file name should not contain any special characters – only letters and numbers.

Reminders for Account Holders

Per RHC program rules, a primary and secondary account holder for an individual HCP must be an officer, director, or authorized employee of the HCP. For consortium applicants in the HCF Program, the Project Coordinator must be an officer, director, or other authorized employee of the Consortium Leader. If you are an HCP participating in the HCF or Telecom Program and a consultant or other third party will file forms on your behalf, you must file a [TPA](#).

Per FCC Order 19-78, if you are a consultant, you must obtain a consultant group registration number when logging into RHC Connect. In My Portal, the system automatically assigned a number however, in RHC Connect, the registration number is only assigned once the simple registration process is complete. Please

follow the steps shown in [RHC Connect – Third Party Authorization User Guide](#), starting on page 9, to complete your consultant group registration and obtain the registration number.

Note: The primary account holder is responsible for all activities associated with submitting and certifying forms and for all activities in the RHC program for their HCP site.

Duplicate Funding Prohibited

Please remember: FCC rules prohibit duplicate funding for the same service, for the same location, during the same period, from more than one FCC program. This includes the RHC programs (HCF and Telecom) and the Connected Care Pilot Program (CCPP).

Reminder: Certifications Requirements for National Supply Chain

As a reminder, when service providers log in to RHC Connect, two Supply Chain certifications included in the FCC Form 463 and Telecom Program invoice will be displayed. The first certification affirms compliance with the [Section 54.9](#) prohibition on specified transactions with companies deemed to pose a national security threat. The second certification affirms compliance with [Section 54.10](#), which prohibits the use of any federal subsidies on any communications equipment and services on the [Covered List](#).

Note: If you requested services or equipment that provide or contain components of products produced by any company on the [Covered List](#), or any of their parents, affiliates, and subsidiaries, you cannot invoice for these funds. Instead, you should immediately request a [service substitution](#) prior to invoicing to ensure complete program compliance. In addition, as you proceed with competitive bidding, please ensure you are not requesting funding for services or equipment from listed covered companies or any of their parents, affiliates, and subsidiaries. USAC updated the [Supply Chain](#) webpages to include three new subpages: [COVID-19 Broadband Programs](#), [Audits](#), and [FAQs](#).

Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about the Rural Health Care Program, email RHC-Assist@usac.org or contact the RHC Customer Service Center (CSC) at (800) 453-1546 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET Monday through Friday for assistance. Use the [RHC CSC Tip Sheet](#) to learn about how the RHC CSC can and cannot help you.