

# **Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices**

September 10, 2025



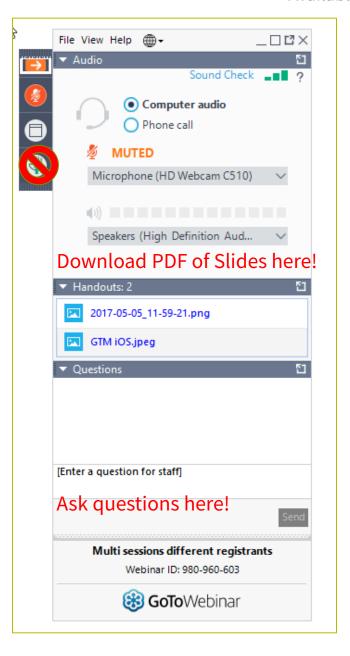
#### **DISCLAIMER:**

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## Housekeeping

- Use the "Audio" section of your control panel to select an audio source and connect to sound
  - Turn on your computer's speakers, or
  - Use the call-in instructions in your confirmation email
- All participants are on mute
- Submit questions at any time using the "Questions" box



#### **Meet Our Team**



**Blythe Albert** 

Advisor of Program Management | RHC Outreach



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## **Agenda**

- Invoicing Overview and Program Updates
- Invoicing Process Telecom Program
  - Submitting the FCC Form 469 Service Providers
  - Submitting the FCC Form 469 RHC Account Holders
- Disbursement Process
- Resources

## By the end of the webinar, you will be able to...

- Understand the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program invoicing process and deadlines
- Mark your calendars with upcoming invoice filing deadlines
- Identify the steps to submit the FCC Form 469 invoice for USAC review service providers
- Identify resources to help you submit the FCC Form 469 invoice
- For health care providers (HCPs), understand how to approve the FCC Form 469
- Understand the disbursement process

## Glossary

Acronym	Definition
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
HCF	Healthcare Connect Fund
FY	Funding Year
НСР	Health Care Provider (your site)
HCP Number	Number associated with your site
PAH	Primary Account Holder
FRN	Funding Request Number
FCL	Funding Commitment Letter
BAN	Billing Account Number
SPIN/498 ID	Service Provider Identification Number
FCCRN	FCC Registration Number (Referred to as FRN on FCC website)

## **Invoicing Overview and Program Updates**

Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices

## Application Process

Determine Eligibility Develop Evaluation Criteria and Request Services Evaluate Bids and Select Service Provider

3

Submit Funding Request

Invoice

1

Must meet three eligibility criteria:

- Not-for-profit/public
- In a rural area
- One of the eligibility facility types

HCF Program: FCC Form 460 Telecom Program: FCC Form 460 Describe the services you need and develop scoring criteria to evaluate bids. Your request for services is posted to the USAC website for a minimum of 28 days.

HCF Program: FCC Form 461
Telecom Program: FCC Form 465

Once competitive bidding has ended, choose the most "cost-effective" service provider. Provide information about the services selected: cost, service provider information, and terms of service agreement(s).

HCF Program: FCC Form 462
Telecom Program: FCC Form 466

Submit invoice before deadline:

- HCF Program:
   Applicant initiates
   invoicing process by
   submitting FCC Form 463
   to service provider for
   review and submission
   to USAC.
- Telecom Program:
   Service provider initiates invoicing process by submitting FCC Form 469 to applicant for review and submission to USAC.

HCF Program: FCC Form 463
Telecom Program: FCC Form 469

#### **RHC Connect**

- For FY2024 and forward, FCC Forms 469 are submitted in RHC Connect.
- In addition, all post-commitment change requests should be submitted in RHC Connect.
  - SPIN Changes
  - Service Substitutions
  - Invoice Filing Deadline Extensions
- Invoice Filing Deadline Extensions for HCPs and service providers will move to RHC Connect ahead of the October 28, 2025, deadline.

## **Invoice Filing Deadlines**

- The invoice filing deadline, per FCC Report and Order 19-78, is four months (120 days) from the service delivery deadline in both the HCF and Telecom Programs.
- To find your invoice filing deadline, use the <u>RHC Invoice Filing Deadline Tool</u> on the USAC website.
- Invoice filing deadlines can also be found on our website by going to the Open Data platform and clicking on the <u>Rural Health Care Commitments and Disbursements</u> (FCC Form 462/466/466A) webpage.
  - The invoice filing deadline can be found in the last column of the searchable table when viewing data or in Column BE of the Excel spreadsheet.
- For more information, please see the <u>HCF Step 5: Invoice USAC</u> webpage.

## FCC 23-110 Third Report and Order

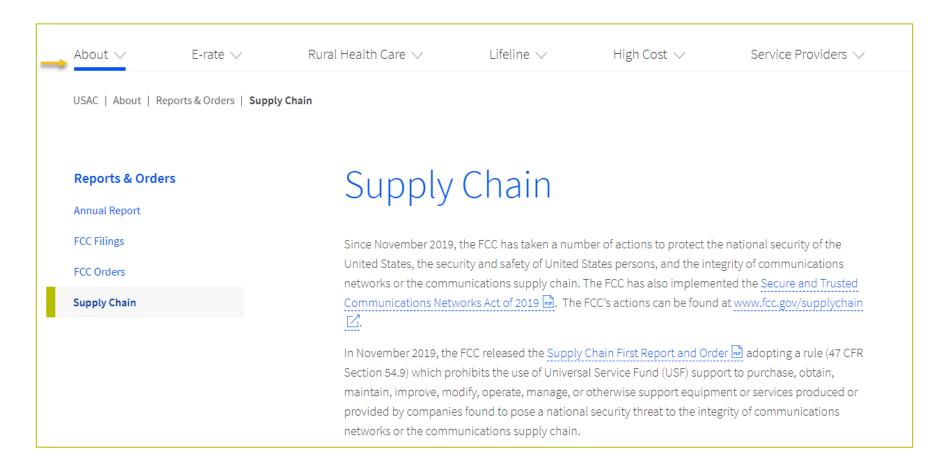
- On December 14, 2023, the FCC released <u>Order FCC 23-110</u>. This order improves RHC program administration and facilitates participation in the program by allowing health care providers that expect to become eligible during a funding year to complete the processes required to request funding, aligns program deadlines, simplifies rules for calculating urban rates, streamlines administrative processes, and frees up unused funding for other purposes. Changes to RHC program rules are as follows:
  - Permits health care providers to be granted conditional eligibility, thus allowing them to initiate competitive bidding and request funding while awaiting a final eligibility determination.
  - Provides health care providers more time to complete Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) changes by moving the SPIN change deadline to align with the invoice filing deadline.
  - Simplifies urban rate calculations by eliminating the seldom-used "standard urban distance" component of the rule for determining urban rates in the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program.
  - Allows health care providers to request changes to the dates covered by an evergreen contract postcommitment.
  - Adopts the FCC Form 460 for eligibility determinations in the Telecom Program, which will eliminate
    the need for Telecom Program participants to seek an eligibility determine every time they engage in
    competitive bidding.

## **Supply Chain Order**

- As a reminder, when service providers login to My Portal they will see two supply chain certifications included in the FCC Form 463 and Telecom program invoice.
- The first certification affirms compliance with the <u>Section 54.9</u> prohibition on USF for specified transactions with companies deemed to pose a national security threat. The second certification affirms compliance with <u>Section 54.10</u>, which prohibits the use of any Federal subsidies on any communications equipment and services on the <u>Covered List</u>.
- If you requested services or equipment that contain components of products produced by any of the listed covered companies or their parents, affiliates or subsidiaries in FY2024, you cannot invoice for these funds. Instead, you should immediately request a <u>service substitution</u>.
- As you proceed with competitive bidding for FY2026, please ensure you are not requesting funding for services or equipment from listed covered companies or any of their parents, affiliates or subsidiaries.

## **Supply Chain Web Page**

Supply Chain webpage



## **Questions?**

## **Submitting the FCC Form 469 – Service Providers**

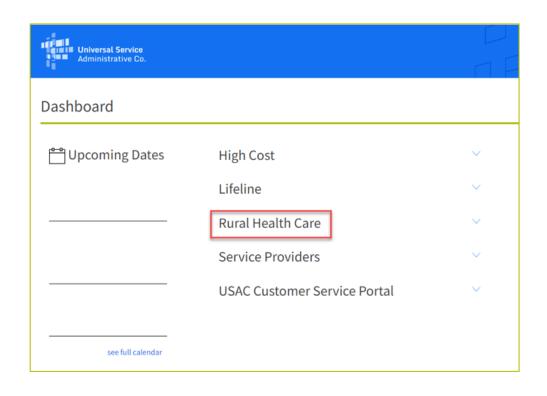
Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices

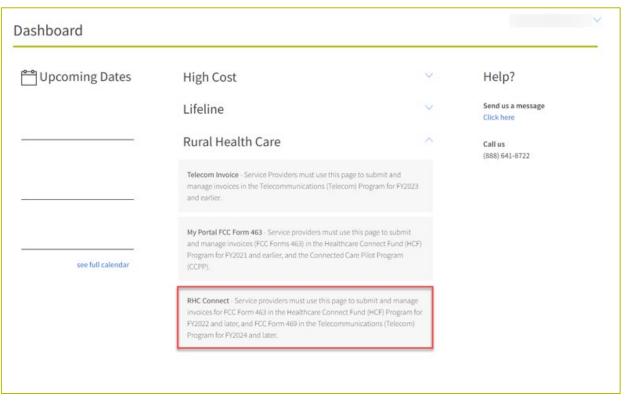
## FCC Form 469 - Telecom Program

- The FCC Form 469 is the new form for the Telecom Program.
- Per FCC Order 23-6, it's aligned with the FCC Form 463.
- One key difference is that the service provider will submit the FCC Form 469 in RHC Connect, the applicant will receive an email alerting them of the submission, and the applicant will officially submit the form to USAC by certifying and signing the form.
- For FY2024, the FCC Form 467, the Healthcare Provider Support Schedule (HSS), and the Telecom invoice will be eliminated in the Telecom Program.

## **My Portal Landing Page**

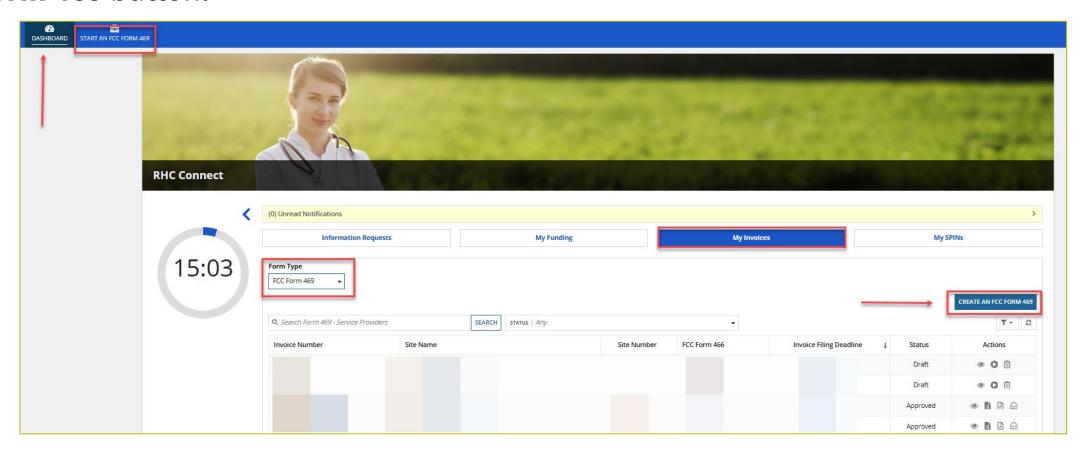
• Log in to My Portal and click **Rural Health Care**, then click **RHC Connect**.





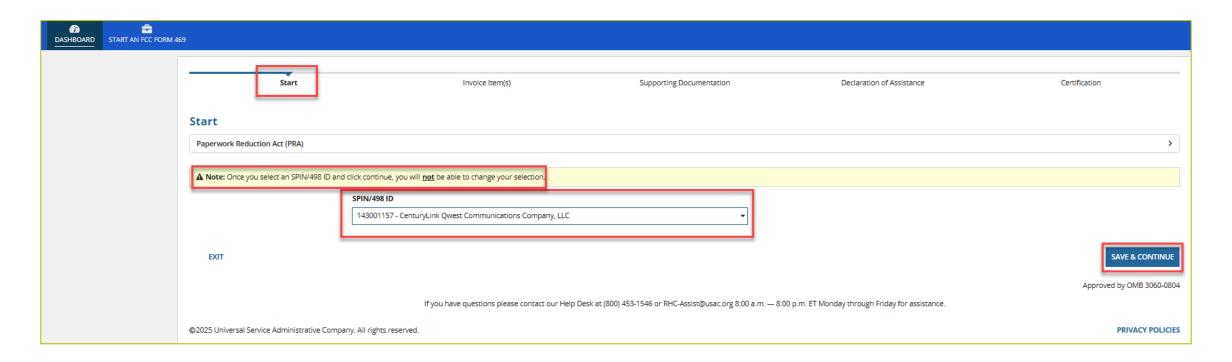
#### **RHC Connect Dashboard**

• On the My Invoices screen, click Start an FCC Form 469 or click the Create an FCC Form 469 button.



#### **Start**

• Select the SPIN/498 ID from the drop-down menu, then click **Next**.



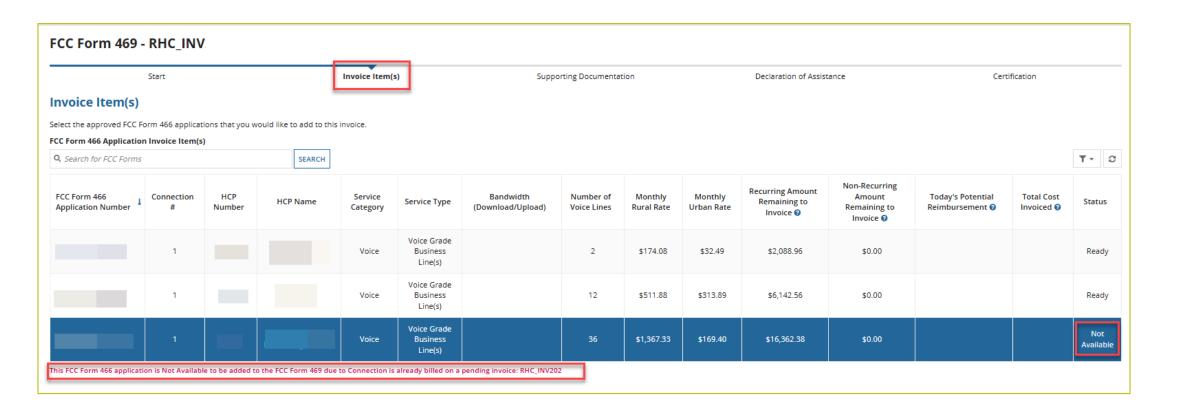
#### **Invoice Items**

- Select the FRN or use the **Search** field to select an FRN.
- Under the Status column, select any FRN that displays Ready.



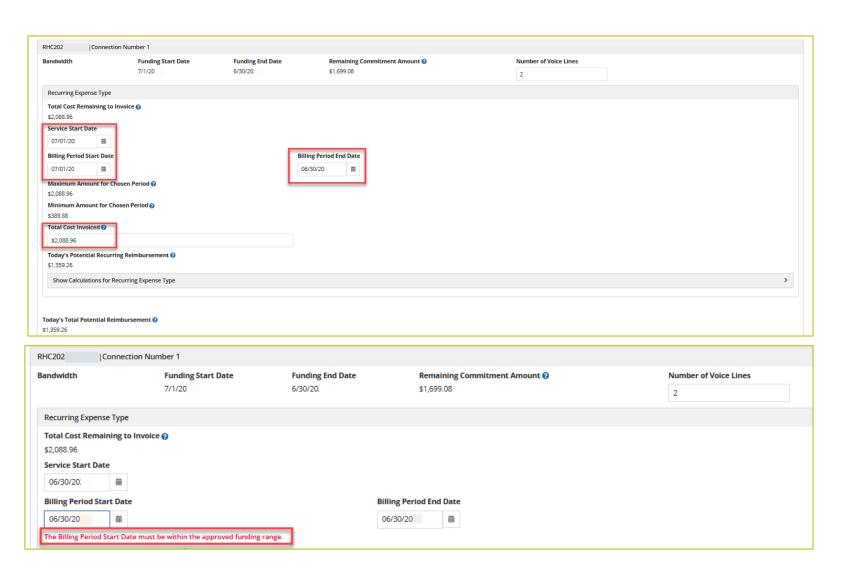
## **Invoice Item(s) (continued)**

• If an FRN is selected with **Not Available** in the **Status** column, an error message will be displayed citing the reason it cannot be selected.



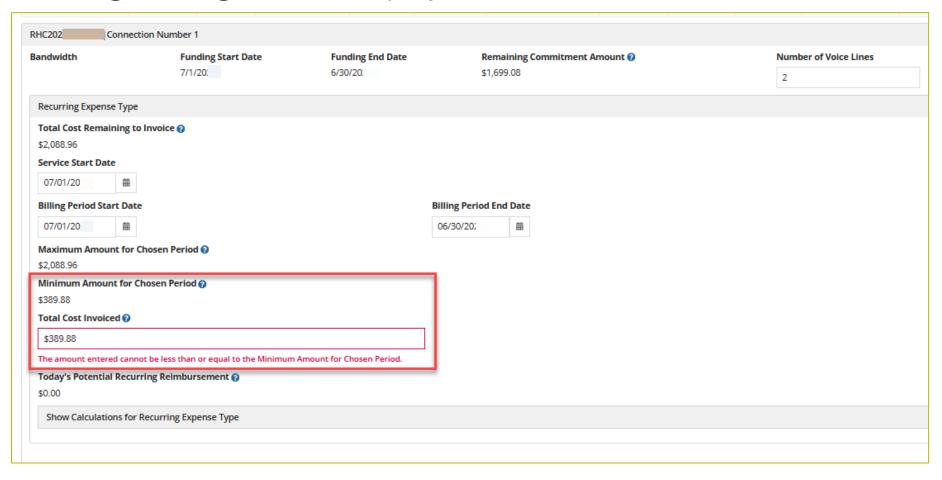
## **Recurring Expense Type - Error Messages**

- On the Invoice Line Items screen, enter the Service Start Date, the Billing Period Start and End Dates, and the Total Cost Invoiced.
- An error message will display if dates outside of the commitment are selected.



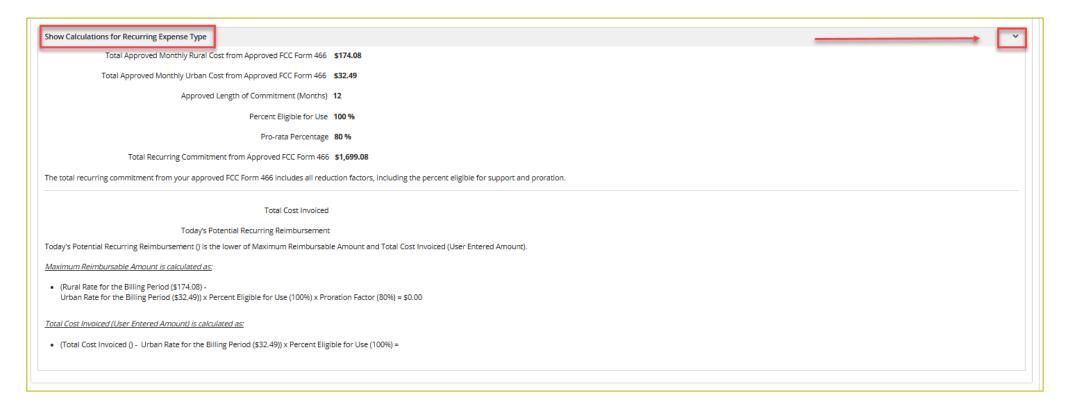
## **Recurring Expense Type – Error Messages (continued)**

 If the amount entered is equal to or less than the Minimum Amount for the Chosen Period, a warning message will be displayed.



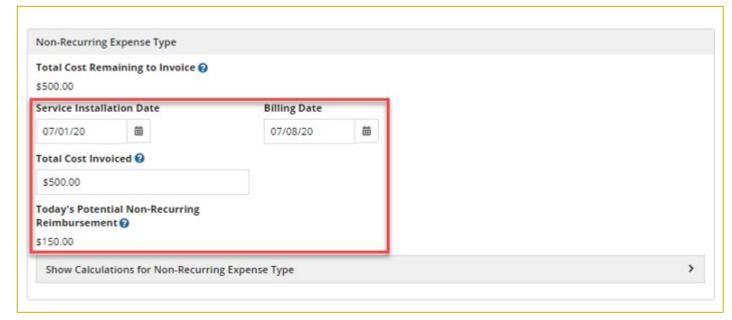
## **Recurring Expense Type(continued)**

 Click the arrow beside Show Calculations for Recurring Expense Type to understand how the system is calculating the potential reimbursement.



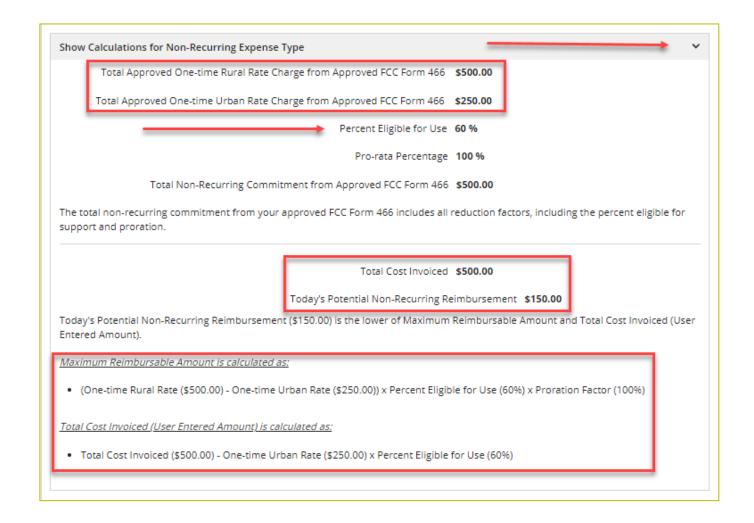
## **Non - Recurring Expense Type**

- Enter the following information:
  - Service Installation Date
  - Billing Date
  - Total Cost Invoiced
- For non-recurring expense types, only one FCC Form 469 may be submitted.
  - Please wait to submit until you're ready to submit an invoice for the entire charge.



## **Non-Recurring Expense Type (continued)**

Click the arrow beside Show
 Calculations for Non Recurring Expense Type to
 understand how the system is
 calculating the potential
 reimbursement.

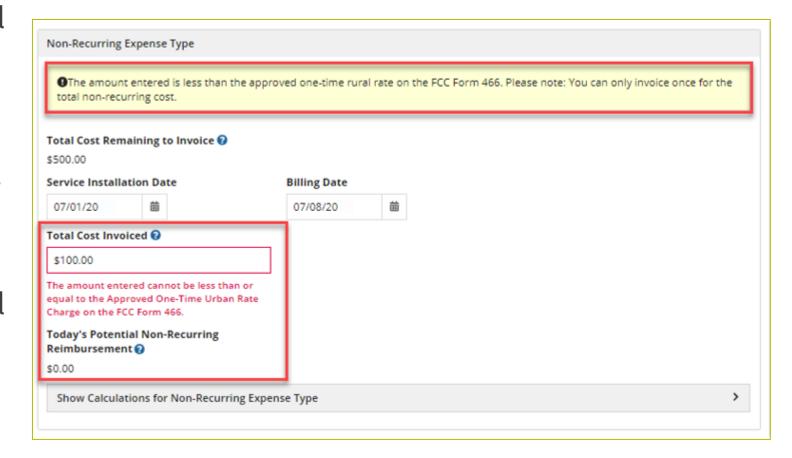


## Non-Recurring Expense Type – Error Message

- If the amount entered is equal to or less than the Total Cost Remaining to Invoice, a warning message will be displayed since non-recurring costs may only be invoiced once.
- to or less than the **One-Time Urban Rate Charge** on the

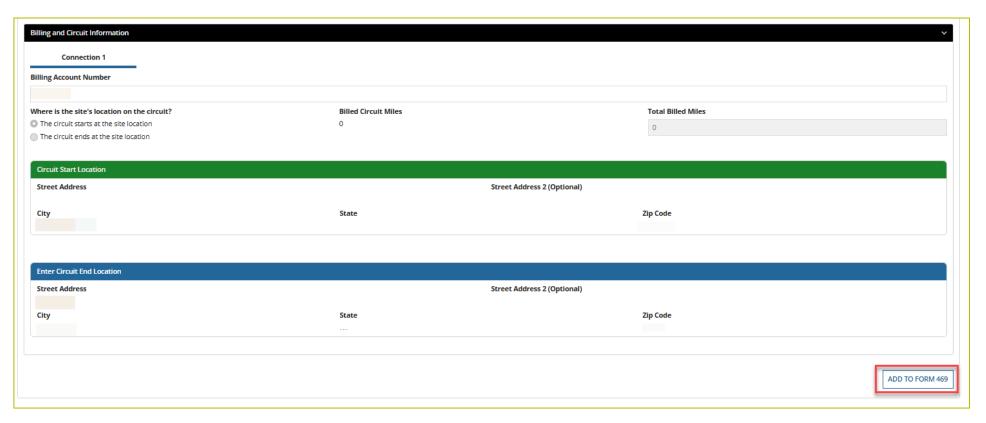
  FCC Form 466, a warning

  message will be displayed.



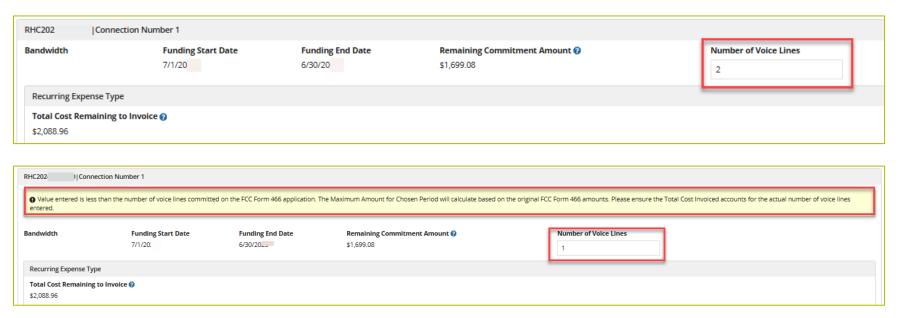
## **Billing and Circuit Information**

- Information is pre-populated based on information in the approved FCC Form 466.
- If information is correct, click Add to 469.



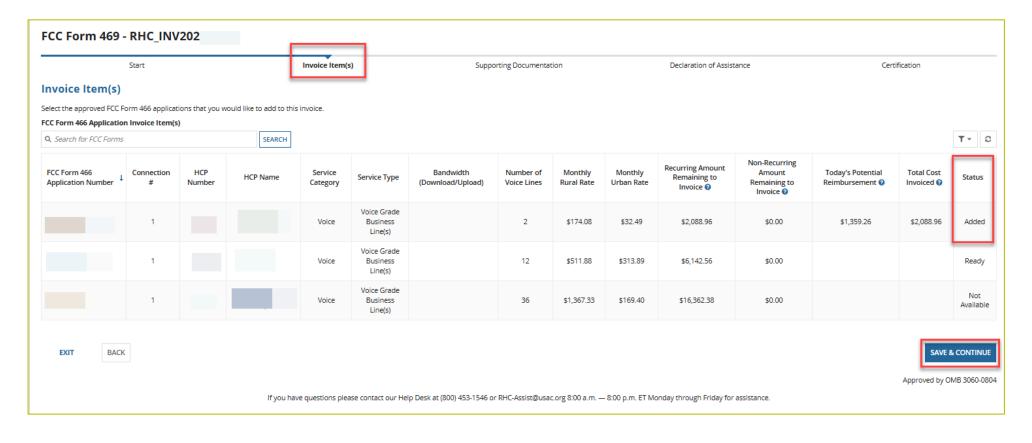
#### **Voice Lines**

- If the number of approved voice lines has changed, enter the corrected number in the editable field titled
   Number of Voice Lines.
- Warning message will appear if the value entered is less than the number of voice lines on the committed FCC Form 466.
- Note: the system will not recalculate the cost so the service provider and HCP must ensure the total cost invoiced is correct based the reduced number of lines.



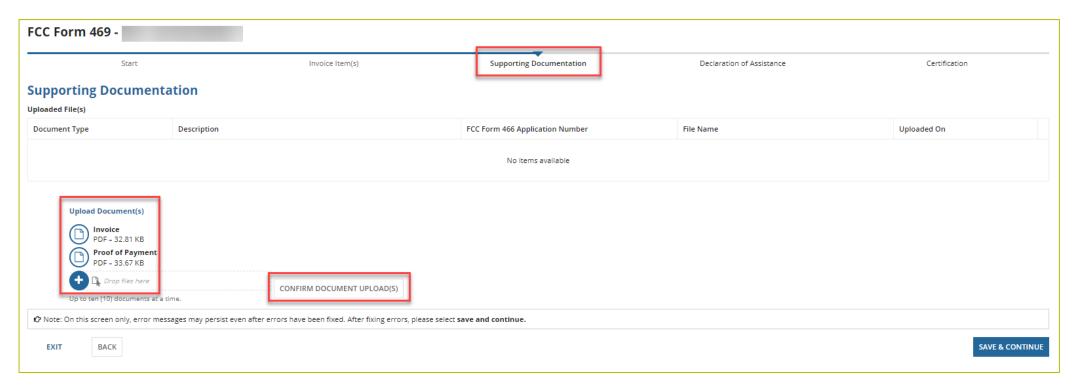
## **Invoice Item(s)**

- Once all invoice items have been added, click Save & Continue.
- Note, multiple FRNs for multiple HCPs may be added to an FCC Form 469.



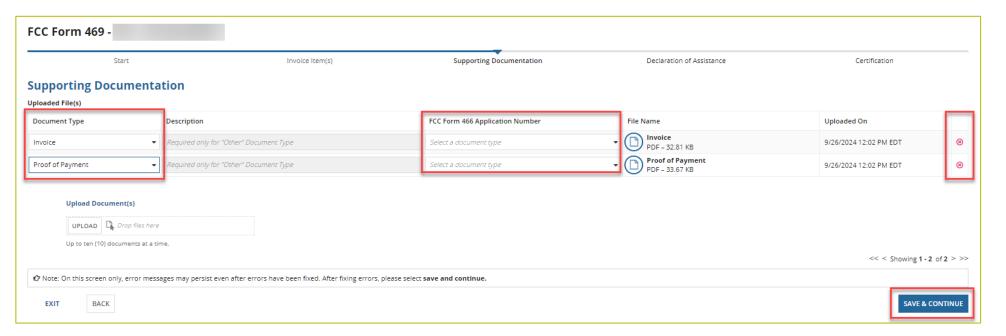
## **Supporting Documentation**

- Click **Upload** to upload first document, then click the plus sign (+) to add each additional document.
- Click Confirm Document Uploads.



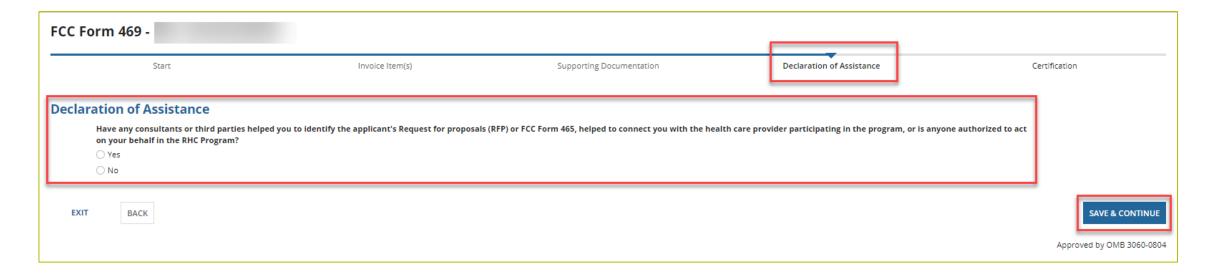
## **Supporting Documentation (continued)**

- Use the dropdown menu for Document Type to select Invoice or Proof of Payment or select Other and enter a description of the document.
- Select the FCC Form 466 Application Number.
- Click the red x to remove a document, then click Save & Continue.



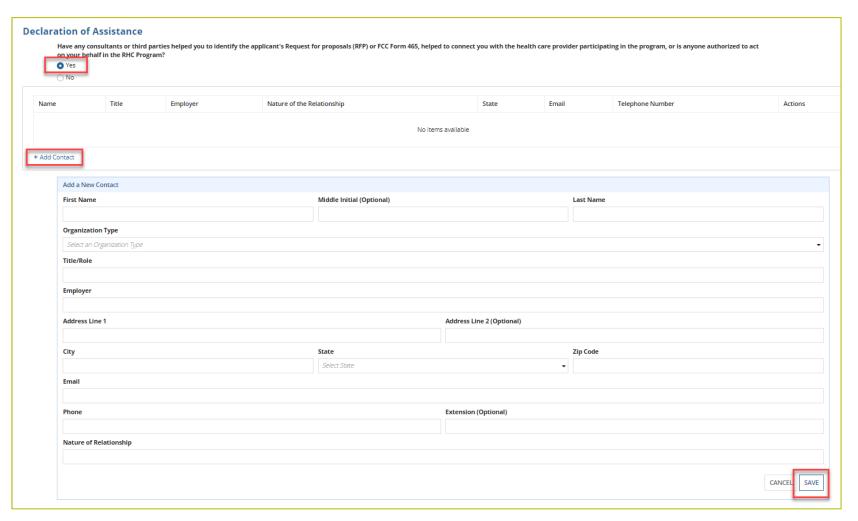
#### **Declaration of Assistance**

- Click the correct radio button to indicate whether any third parties were involved during the competitive bidding process.
- If No is selected, click Save & Continue.



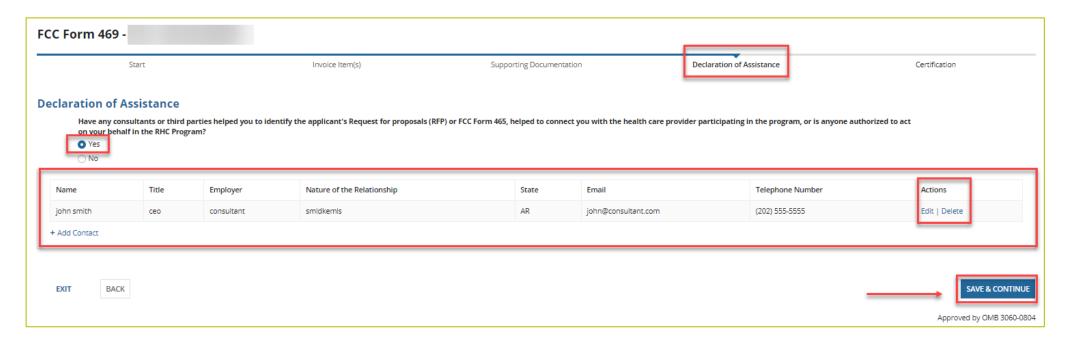
## **Declaration of Assistance (continued)**

- If Yes is selected, click the Add Contact hyperlink and enter information about the third-party assistance.
- Once all fields are complete, click Save to continue.



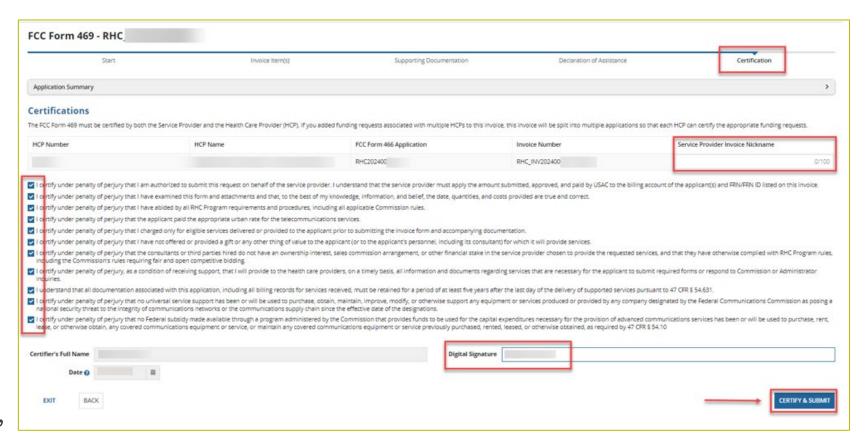
### **Declaration of Assistance (continued)**

- Once the information is saved, it will be displayed on the screen.
- Click Edit or Delete to remove or make changes, then click Save & Continue.



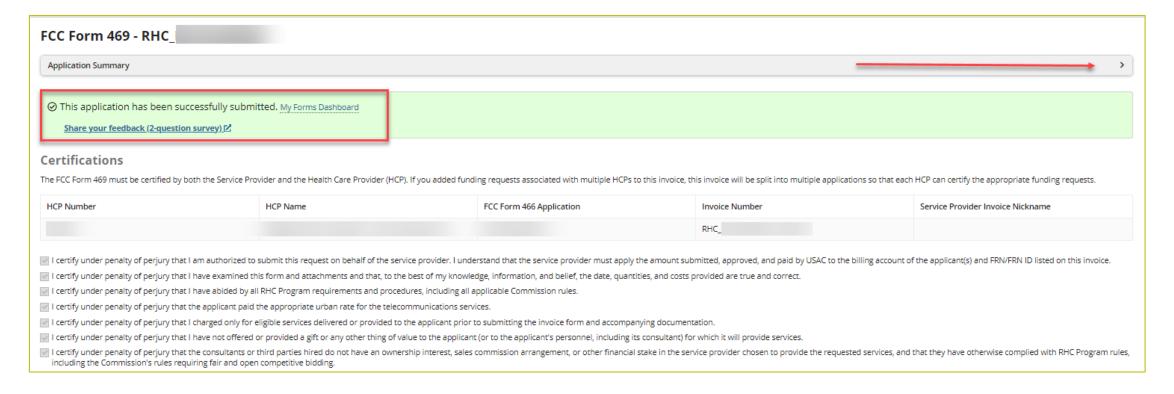
#### **Certifications**

- Read and click all certifications.
- All certifications must be clicked to continue.
- Service Provider Invoice
   Nickname is an optional
   field to help identify the
   invoice.
- Type your full name as it appears in RHC Connect in the Digital Signature field, then click Certify & Submit.



#### **After Submitting**

- Once you click Certify & Submit, this message will appear.
- Click the arrow at the far right to see the Application Summary.
- If there are multiple FCC Forms 466 for multiple HCPs, the system will generate unique invoice numbers based on each unique HCP

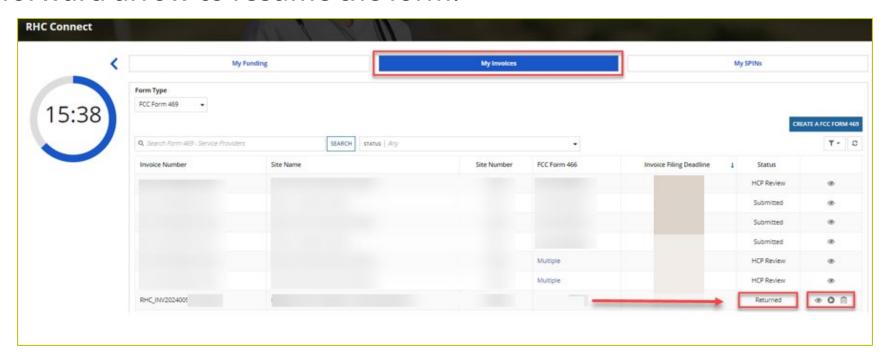


#### **Returned to Service Provider - Summary**

- If the HCP has found incorrect information in the FCC Form 469 during their review, the form will be returned to the service provider for corrections.
- Authorized users for the service provider will receive an email alerting them that the form has been returned.
- Service providers should log into RHC Connect to review the form and work with the HCP on the correction requests.
- Once everything is corrected, the service provider will re-certify the form and submit it for another HCP review.
- If the HCP agrees with the corrections, they will certify and submit the FCC Form 469 to USAC.
- Only after both parties certify and submit the FCC Form 469, is it considered submitted to USAC.

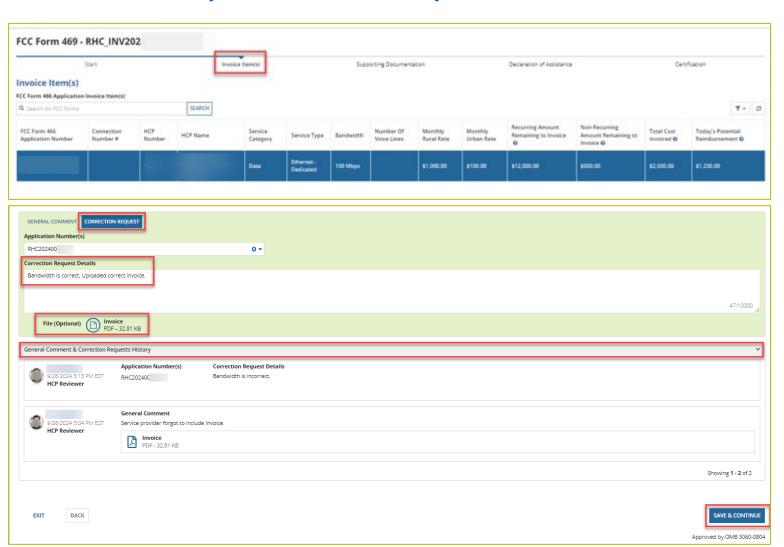
#### **Returned to Service Provider**

- Navigate to the **Dashboard**.
- Navigate to the My Invoices tab and the invoice will appear as Returned under the Status column.
- Click the icon to view, resume or delete the FCC Form 469.
- Click the forward arrow to resume the form.



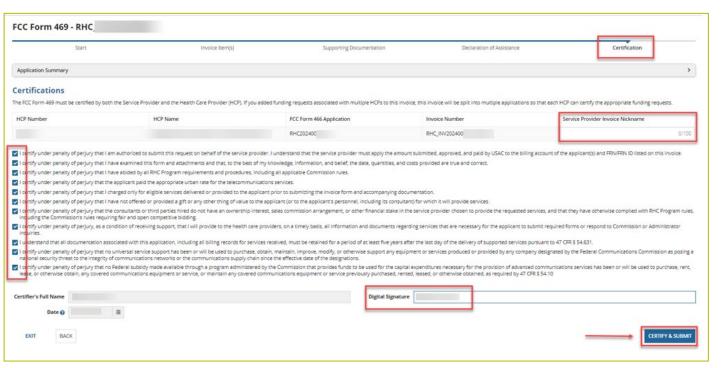
#### **Returned to Service Provider (continued)**

- Navigate to the Invoice Item(s) page.
- Select Correction Request and select the Application Number.
- Click the down arrow to view
   General Comment & Correction
   Requests History.
- Leave a comment and upload a file, if necessary, then click Save & Continue.



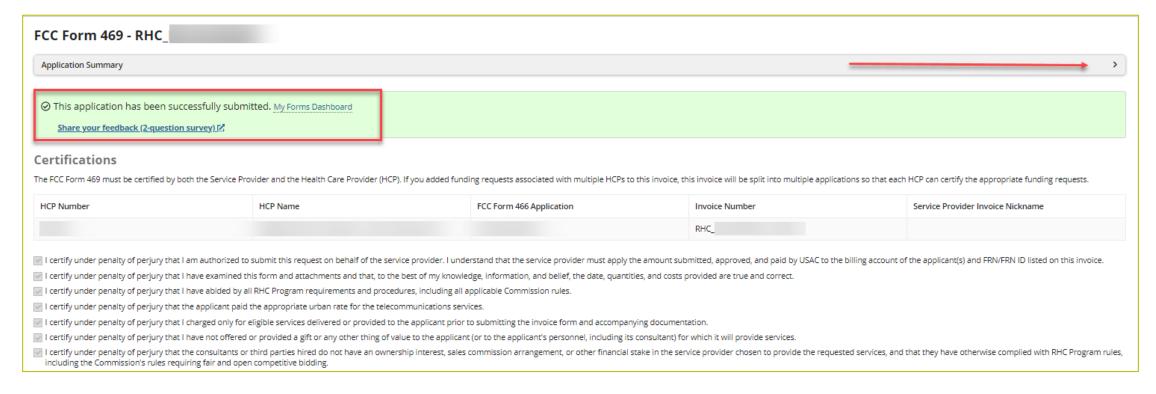
#### **Returned to Service Provider (continued)**

- Navigate through all tabs, correcting information as needed.
- Click all Certifications to recertify corrected information and type your full name in the Digital Signature field.
- Click Certify & Submit to return the form to the HCP.



### **After Submitting**

- Once you click Certify & Submit, this message will appear.
- Click the arrow at the far right. to see the Application Summary.



### What to Expect After Submitting to USAC

- An invoice is not considered submitted until approved by the HCP and received by USAC.
- With no Information Requests, the review generally takes about 30 days.
- If an Information Request is sent, it will come from rhcadmin@usac.org.
  - Respond to the Information Request in RHC Connect.
  - Email notifications sent from RHC Connect are from an unattended mailbox.
  - Use the <u>Information Request tip sheet</u> on the USAC website as a resource.
- Approval will be held until response is received and reviewed.
- Email notification of invoice approval will be sent from <a href="mailto:rhcadmin@usac.org">rhcadmin@usac.org</a> to all account holders.

# **Questions?**

## **Submitting the FCC Form 469 – Applicants**

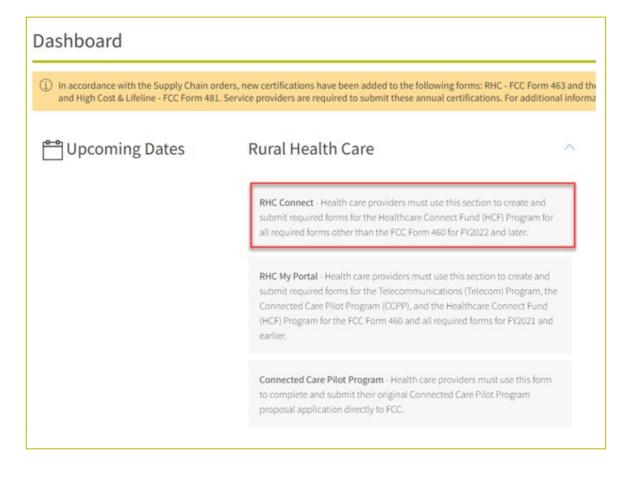
Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices

#### **HCP Review**

- An email notification will be sent to account holders stating that there's an invoice available for review.
- Log in to RHC Connect.
- Carefully review form for accuracy.
  - Confirm billing period and invoiced amount.
  - If inaccurate, return invoice to the service provider.
- Certify and sign the FCC Form 469.

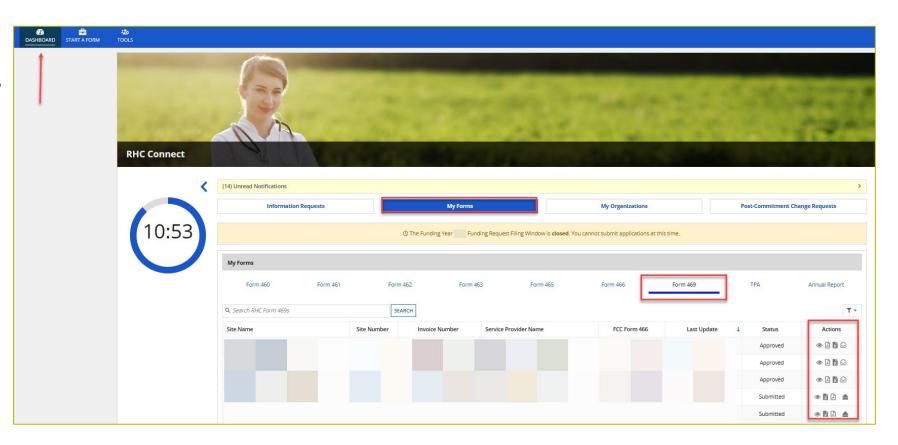
### **My Portal Landing Page**

Log in to My Portal and click RHC Connect.



#### **Dashboard**

- On the **My Forms** tab, you can view the status of all forms.
- Navigate to each form.
- Click the icons to view, continue with a draft form, discard a form, view a PDF copy or view the email for a processed invoice.



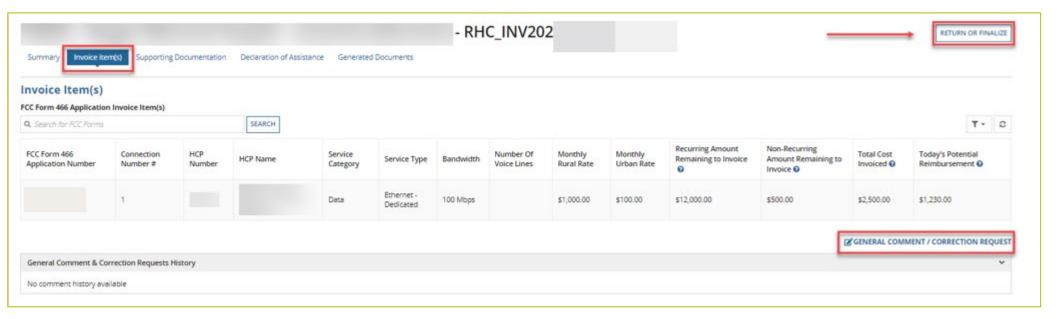
#### **Summary Page**

- Message in the yellow box instructs HCP to review each tab carefully and make comments or upload files where appropriate.
- SPIN used on the FCC Form 466 for this FRN is displayed.



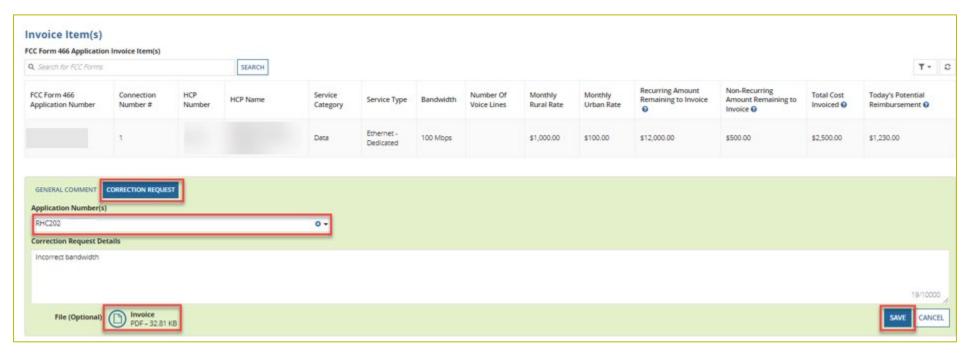
#### **Invoice Item(s)**

- Click **Return or Finalize** after all information is reviewed to return the FCC Form 469 to the service provider for corrections or to finalize and submit the form to USAC.
- All data is read-only for the HCP, so the FCC Form 469 must be returned to the service provider to make corrections.
- Leave a comment or a correction request by clicking the hyperlink titled General Comment/Correction
   Request .



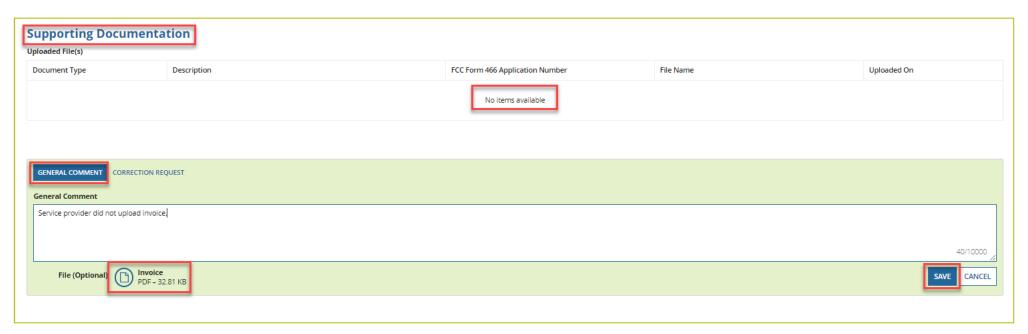
#### **Invoice Item(s) (continued)**

- To enter a correction request, click Correction Request.
- Select the Application Number from the dropdown menu.
- Enter the details of the correction request in the field and, if necessary, upload a supporting document.



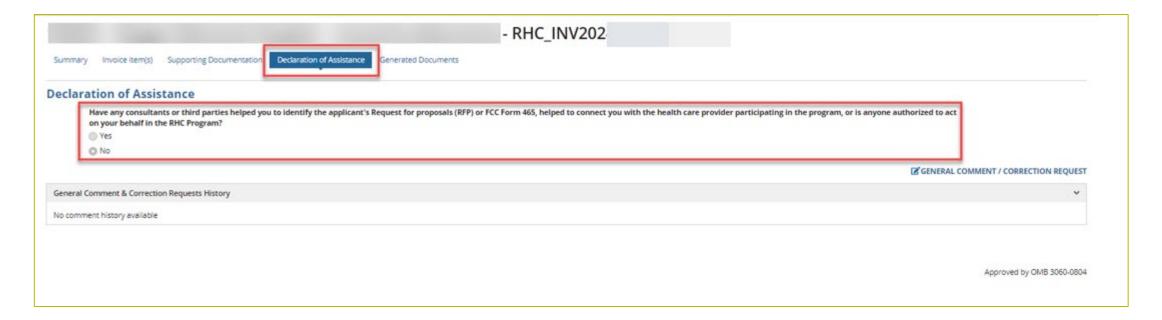
### **Invoice Item(s) (continued)**

- If the service provider uploaded documents, they will be visible to download and review on the Supporting Documentation page.
- To upload supporting documents, click **General Comment/Correction Request**, select either **General Comment** or **Correction Request**, leave an explanation and upload the supporting document(s).
- Click Save.



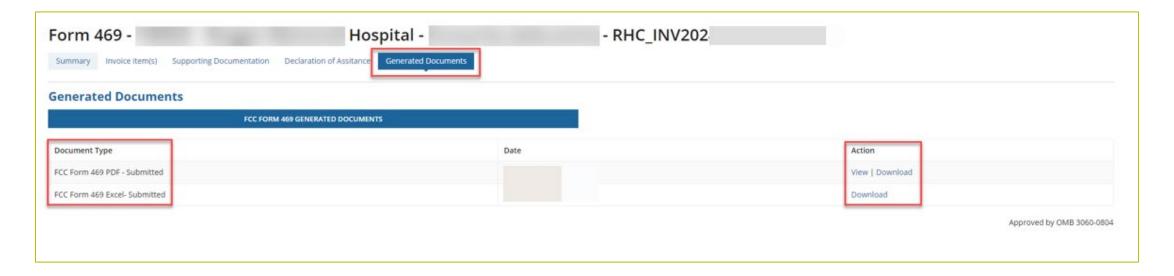
#### **Declaration of Assistance**

• The **Declaration of Assistance** question on the FCC Form 469 is answered by the service provider, so the response cannot be edited by the HCP.



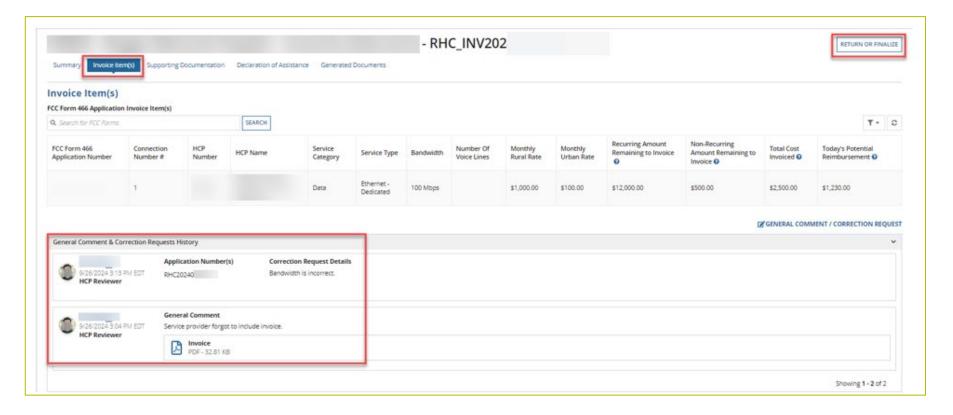
#### **Generated Documents**

- Once the FCC Form 469 is submitted, a PDF version of the form is generated and can be
  accessed on the Generated Documents tab.
- Generated Documents tab is the same for both the applicant and the service provider.



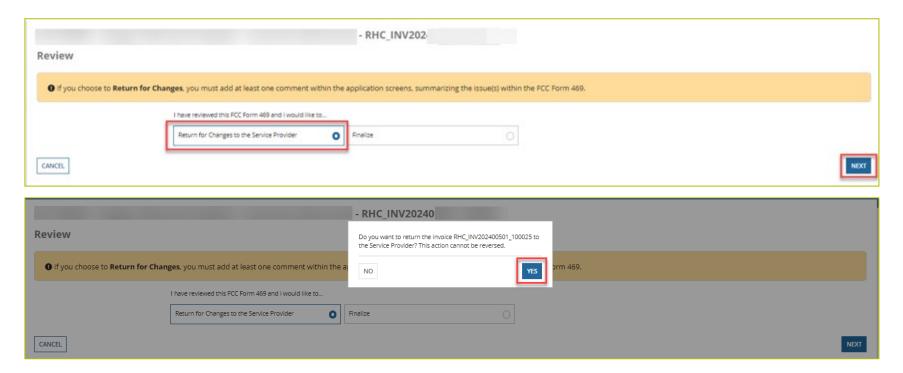
#### **Invoice Item(s) - Return or Finalize**

- Navigate back to the Invoice Item(s) page.
- All comments and correction requests are displayed.
- Click Return or Finalize.



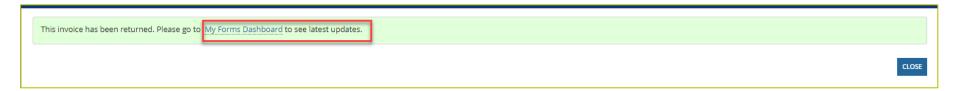
#### **Invoice Line Items - Return for Changes**

- Select Return for Changes to the Service Provider.
- You must add at least one comment, then click Next.
- Warning states if Yes is selected, this action cannot be reversed.
- Click Yes to continue.

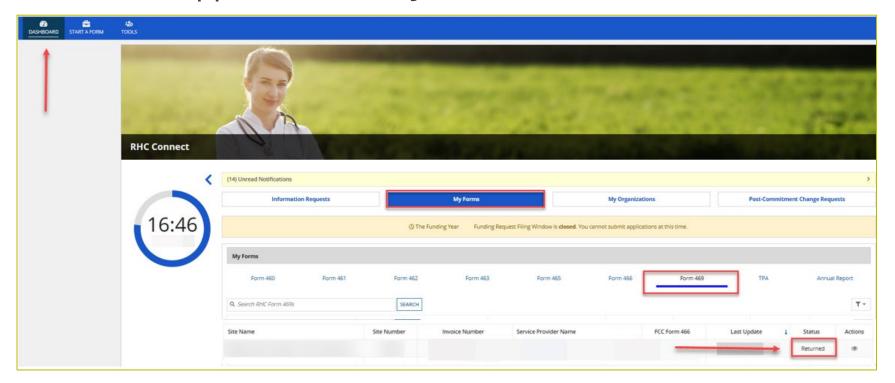


#### **Invoice Returned**

Confirmation that invoice has been returned.

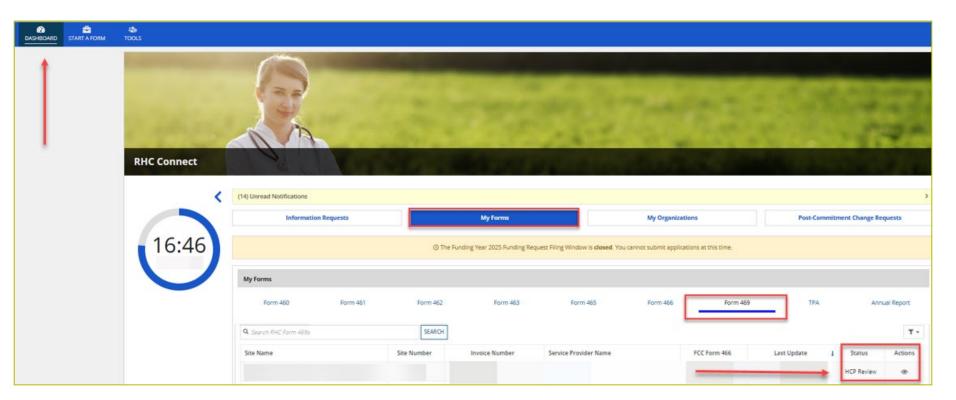


• Status of invoice appears on the **My Forms** tab of the **Dashboard**.



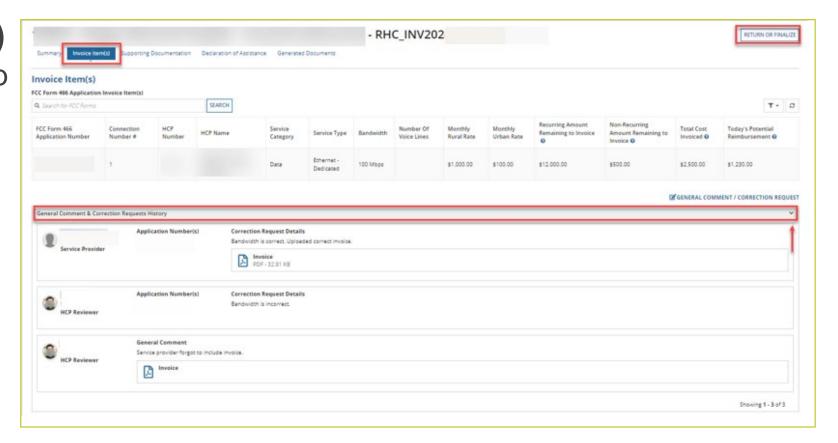
#### **Return to HCP**

- The HCP account holders will receive an email once the service provider addresses the correction request and returns it to the HCP for review.
- Navigate to the My Forms tab on the Dashboard, select FCC Form 469 under Form
   Type, and click the view icon under the Actions column of the invoice to be reviewed.



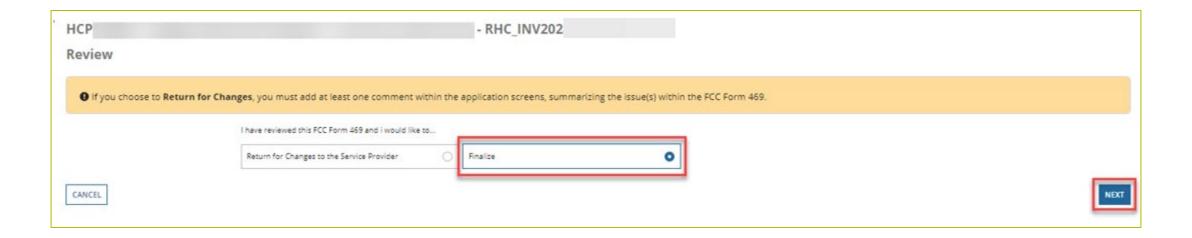
#### **HCP Review After Return**

- Navigate to Invoice Item(s)
   and click the down arrow to
   the right of General
   Comment & Request
   History to view comments
   and correction requests.
- Navigate through all sections to confirm all information is correct.
- On Invoice Item(s) page, click Return or Finalize.



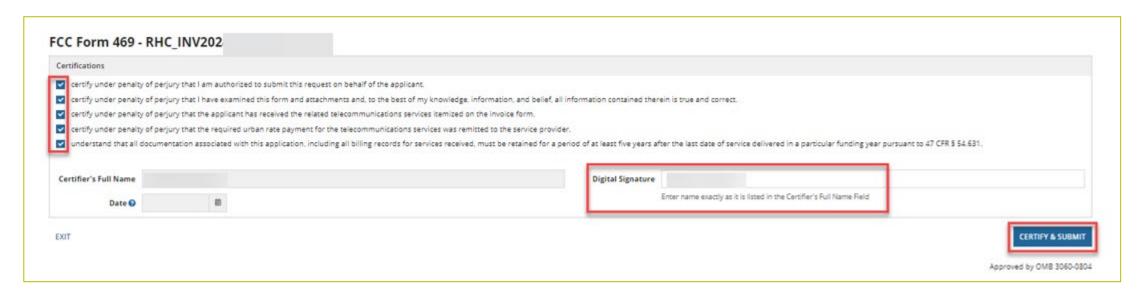
#### Finalizing the FCC Form 469

• If everything is correct, click **Finalize**, then click **Next**.



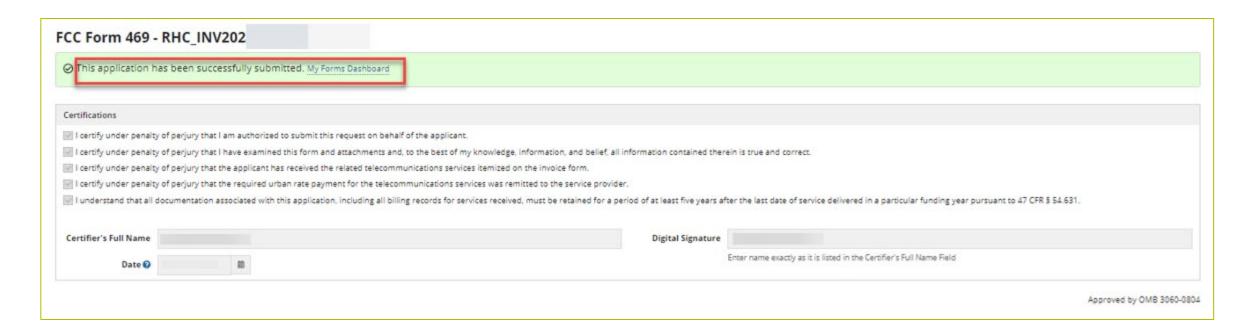
#### **HCP Certifications**

- Read and click all Certifications.
- You are unable to move forward until all certifications are clicked.
- Type your full name as it appears in RHC Connect in the Digital Signature field.
- Click Certify & Submit.



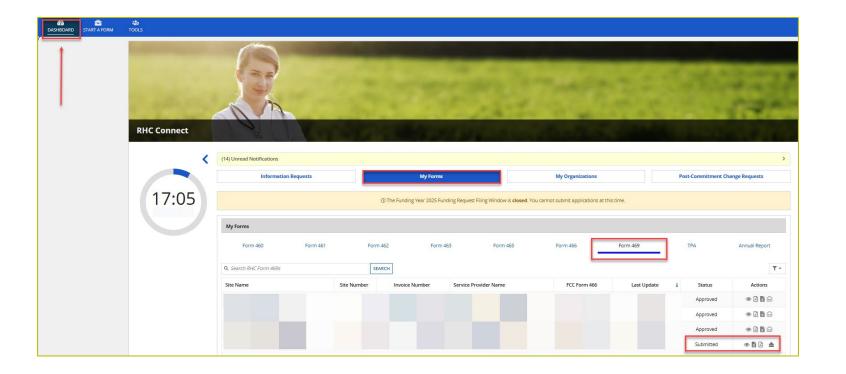
### **After Submitting**

• Once you click **Certify & Submit**, a message indicating that the application was successfully submitted will be displayed.



### **After Submitting (continued)**

- Navigate to the My Forms tab on the Dashboard, then click on and select Form 469.
- Under the Status column, the FCC Form 469 should be displayed as Submitted.
- Click the icons under the Actions column to view, download an Excel spreadsheet, or download a PDF version of the FCC Form 469.



### **Best Practices for Creating the FCC Form 469**

- Consolidate invoices.
- Use calendar drop down for billing start and end dates.
- Identify eligible amount for chosen period.
- Common issues:
  - Expense items unavailable to invoice
  - \$0.00 in the USF Support Amount to be Paid column
  - Error Messages

### **Commonly Asked Questions**

- Why is the service start date greyed out?
  - When you file the first FCC Form 469 for an FRN, you are prompted you to enter a
    date into the service start date field.
  - Once USAC approves an FCC Form 469 with a service start date, neither USAC nor the account holder or service provider can modify that date at a later time.

### **Commonly Asked Questions (continued)**

- Why is USAC requesting supporting documentation for my FCC Form 469?
  - USAC must ensure that an invoice accurately reflects the services an HCP is receiving and the support due to the service provider.
  - RHC is requesting supporting documentation to verify the services that were submitted on the FCC Form 469 and confirm eligibility for payment for the requested billing period.
  - This validation ensures that HCPs receive accurate funding for approved services and eliminates the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse of program funds.

#### **Supporting Documentation - Best Practices**

When responding to Information Requests, please submit the following documentation:

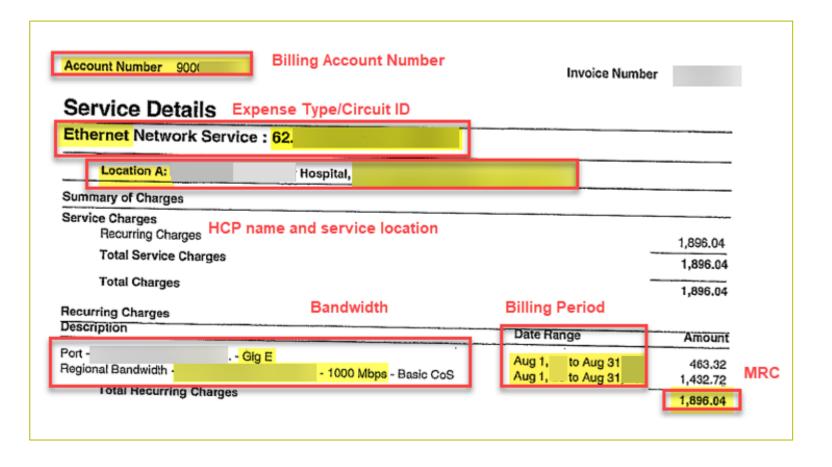
- Copies of billing documentation for the referenced billing period with the following information highlighted:
  - HCP Name
  - Circuit Location(s)
  - Billing Account Number (BAN)
  - Bandwidth
  - Circuit ID (if applicable)
  - Service Type
  - Monthly Recurring Charges (MRC)

### **Supporting Documentation – Best Practices (continued)**

- Proof of payment for the requested billing period, e.g., check, bank statement, or a
  printout from the accounts payable system. Proof of payment must show that the HCP
  has paid the urban rate.
  - In the absence of payment or if no payment was made as a result of **credits** on an account, please provide an explanation of what action resulted from the credits.
- If these details can't be identified on an invoice or proof of payment document, please provide the contract or service agreement.
- Supporting documents must be submitted by the deadline on the Information Request.
- Requests for deadline extensions must be submitted prior to the original deadline.

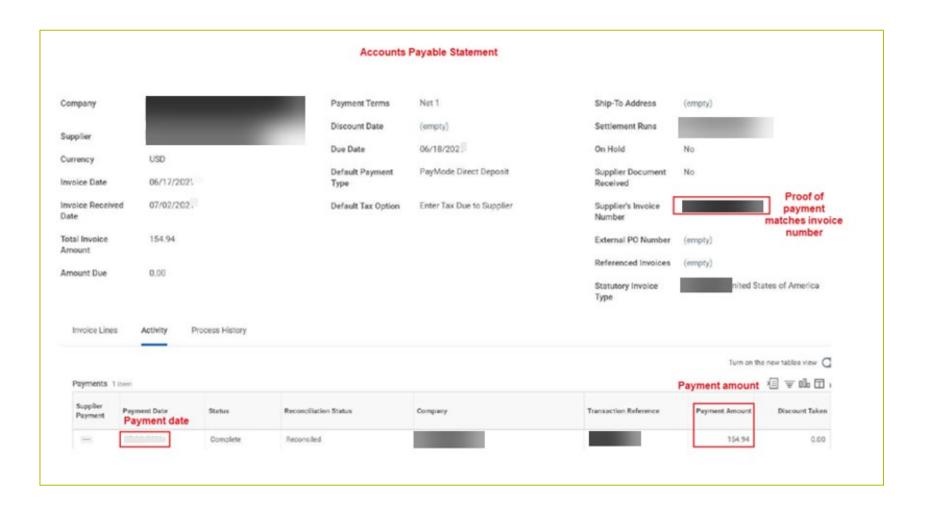
#### **Supporting Documentation - Examples**

• Marked up invoice that clearly reflects HCP, Billing Account Number (BAN) Circuit Location(s), Bandwidth, Service Type, and Monthly Recurring Charge (MRC).



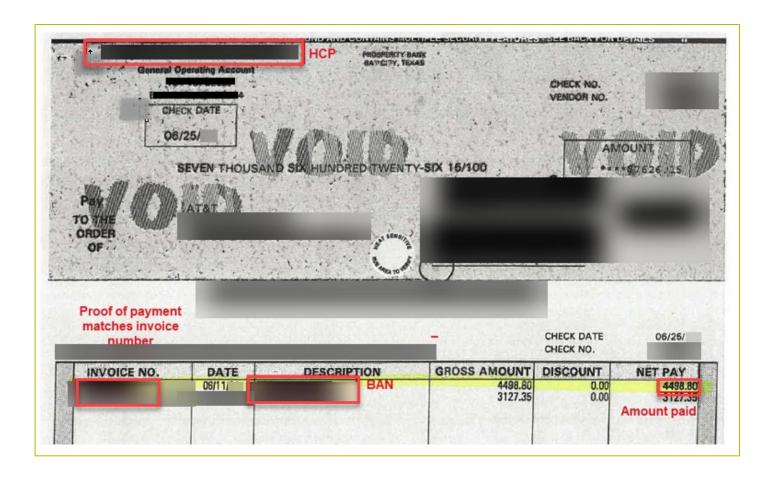
### **Supporting Documentation – Examples (continued)**

Proof of payment using an accounts payable statement.



### **Supporting Documentation – Examples (continued)**

Proof of payment by check.



## **Supporting Documentation**

- If supporting documentation is found to be insufficient or does not confirm approved services, a reviewer will send an Information Request.
- If a discrepancy is discovered, the invoice may be returned for corrections or denied.
  - Discrepancies can occur when the service approved on the FCC Form 466 is not the same service as what is in use and being billed by the service provider.
    - Example: The bandwidth for an expense increased from 25 Mbps to 50 Mbps,
       even if there is no change to the monthly recurring charge.
- Any pending issues about services must be resolved prior to submitting an invoice to USAC.
  - If a service provider is in dispute with their customer, an invoice **should not** be submitted to USAC until the dispute has been resolved.

## **Information Request Reminders**

- Forms with missing or incomplete information or documentation cannot be processed.
- If USAC requires information that cannot be located on the submitted supporting documentation, you will receive an Information Request.
- All account holders will receive all Information Requests.
- Account holders have 14 calendar days to answer the Information Request.
  - 11:59 p.m. ET on the 14<sup>th</sup> day would be the last time to respond to the Information Request.
- Forms are denied if Information Requests are not answered within 14 calendar days.

# **Disbursement Process**

Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices

### **Disbursement Process**

- All account holders and service provider will receive email notification from <a href="mailto:rhcadmin@usac.org">rhcadmin@usac.org</a> once the FCC Form 469 is approved.
- Funds are disbursed to the service provider on the sixth and 21st of each month, barring weekends and holidays.
- For clerical errors, please notify USAC before the disbursement date.
- HCPs and service providers are required to maintain records of billing and invoices for at least five years.

# **Red Light Status and Voluntary Netting**

- Red Light status
  - Contact Customer Support: (888) 641-8722
- Voluntary Netting

#### Block 17: Offsetting Disbursement Payments Against Federal Universal Service Contribution Obligations For Rural Healthcare Participants

See Instruction Section III.O

The following information pertains only to telecommunications companies participating in the Rural Health Care Program. In accordance with FCC rule section 54.679 regarding Rural Health Care payments, a telecommunications company may choose to offset its payment against its Federal universal service contribution. A telecommunications company must have an FCC Form 499 Filer ID number in order to offset its Rural Health Care Program payments against its Federal universal service contribution. In order to obtain an FCC Form 499 Filer ID number, visit http://www.usac.org/cont/tools/forms/default.aspx and select FCC Form 499. You do not need an FCC Form 499 Filer ID in order to be issued a FCC Form 498 ID.

94 Yes, I want my Rural Health Care Program disbursement payments to be offset against my Federal universal service contribution obligations. This box must be checked in order to receive offsets. The Default is "No."

## **Resources**

Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices

#### Resources

- Step 5: Invoice USAC webpage (HCP)
- Step 5: Invoice USAC webpage (service provider)
- Welcome to RHC Connect FCC Form 469 webpage
- Welcome to RHC Connect FCC Form 469 User Guide
- <u>Telecom Program Invoicing</u> self-guided training module
- <u>Post-Commitment Actions</u> webpage
- Information Request Tip Sheet

# **Upcoming Trainings**

- FY2025 Program Update Webinar
  - When: Wednesday, September 17, 2025, from 2-3 p.m. ET Register
- For more information about upcoming webinars and trainings, please visit the <u>Upcoming Dates</u> webpage.

## **RHC Program Customer Service Center**



Email: RHC-Assist@usac.org

- Include in your email
  - HCP Number
  - FRN Number

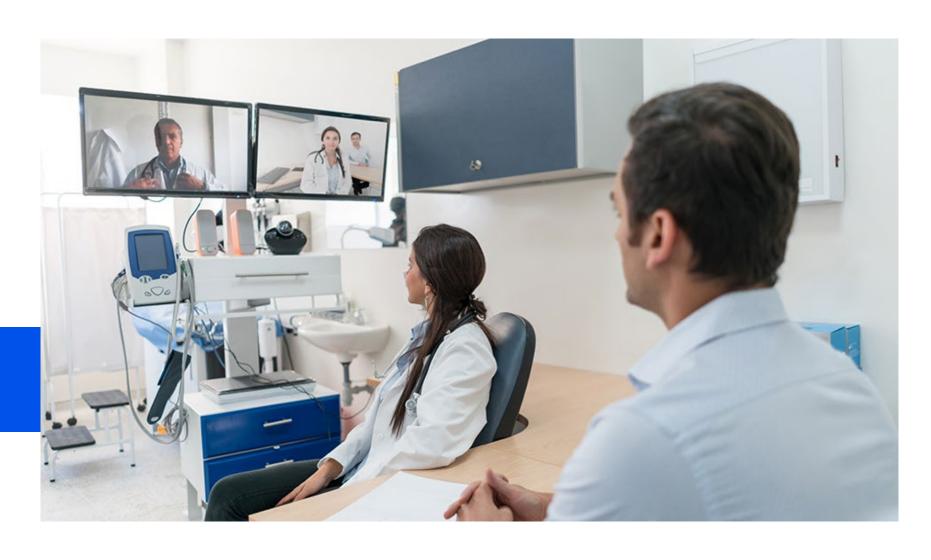


- Phone: (800) 453-1546
  - Hours are 8 a.m. 8 p.m. ET
  - Monday- Friday

## **RHC Customer Service Center**

The RHC Customer Service Center CAN	The RHC Customer Service Center CANNOT
Answer general questions regarding both programs	Determine eligibility of a specific site or service before an official form submission
Provide account holder information for an HCP	Review a form or document for accuracy before an official submission
Provide clarity regarding FCC Report and Order 19-78 and other FCC Orders	Contact a service provider or other account holder on someone else's behalf
Provide helpful resources and best practices for forms	Provide documents that are not already accessible in My Portal and RHC Connect
Assist with My Portal and RHC Connect	Transfer a call to a specific form reviewer

# **Questions?**



# **Thank You!**

