One USAC

2019 Tribal Applicant Training
Purpose

Working at the infrastructure, community and individual level, Universal Service Fund programs help connect Tribal communities to phone and broadband services. This session will introduce you to opportunities to further connect your community through USF programs.
The Four Universal Service Programs

- **Lifeline Program**: Reduced rates for telecom services to eligible low-income consumers.
- **High Cost Program**: Reduced rates for telecom and broadband services in eligible high-cost areas.
- **Schools and Libraries Program**: Funding for telecom and broadband services to eligible schools and libraries.
- **Rural Health Care Program**: Funding for telecom and broadband services to eligible rural health care providers.
High Cost and the Connect America Fund

Expanding access to modern communications networks across rural America
Connect America Program

Program Goals

- Preserve and advance universal availability of voice service
- Drive universal availability of modern networks capable of providing voice and broadband service to homes, businesses and community anchor institutions
- Drive universal availability of modern networks capable of providing advanced mobile voice and broadband service
- Ensure that rates for broadband and voice services are reasonably comparable in all regions of the nation
- Contain administrative costs and minimize the universal service contribution for consumers and businesses through efficient, effective program management
Connect America Program

How it Works

- The FCC determines areas of the country that are unserved or underserved by broadband deployment

- Eligible service providers accept offers or submit bids to deploy network infrastructure on those areas and provide service

- Service providers use universal service funds to build out networks

- Service providers report progress on deployment

- USAC monitors compliance with build-out obligations
Connect America Program

Modernization of the High Cost Program Creates the Connect America Fund

Since 2011, a series of FCC modernization orders has radically transformed the High Cost Program to create the Connect America Fund

Legacy
- High Cost
- Voice
- Maintaining service
- Cost-based funding
- Forms-based reporting requirements
- Beneficiary audits
- Compliance

Modernized
- Connect America
- Voice and broadband
- Maintaining and expanding service
- Incentive-based support
- Systems-based portal
- In-program deployment verification
- Success
Connect America Fund Map

USAC offers a public map that shows the impact of Connect America Fund support on broadband expansion across rural America. The CAF Map:

• Displays the geographic areas eligible for CAF support, as well as the specific fixed locations where carriers participating in the program have built out broadband service (by latitude and longitude)
• Uses broadband deployment data submitted by carriers to the HUBB (a location mapping tool that tracks deployment data)
• Displays USF-funded broadband network availability by location, technology, speeds
• Displays summary data by state, as well as individual broadband deployment location

The CAF Map is linked to USAC’s Open Data platform, which is where the data resides.
Rural Health Care Program
Connecting health care facilities across America
Overview of the RHC Program
What Does the Rural Health Care Program Do?

The RHC Program discounts support getting the facility connected; the money goes directly to the service provider who then offsets the facilities’ costs by applying the discount to their bill or a check.
Three Criteria for Eligibility

1. Status
   - Not for Profit
   - Public

2. Eligibility Category

3. Rural Location
   - Telecom Program: HCP applicants must be located in an FCC-approved rural location to be considered rural.
   - HCF Program: Individual HCP applicants must be located in an FCC-approved rural location to be considered rural. Non-rural HCP applicants may apply as part of a majority-rural consortium.
   - Use the rural look-up tool on the USAC website.

Each HCP site or location is considered an individual HCP for purposes of calculating support under the RHC Program. Each site must thus demonstrate that *by itself* it is an eligible entity.
Health Care Provider (HCP) Type

- Post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools
- Community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants
- Local health departments or agencies
- Community mental health centers
- Not-for-profit hospitals
- Rural health clinics
- Dedicated emergency departments of rural for-profit hospitals
- Part-time eligible entities
- Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)
- Consortia of the above entities
The Two Components of the RHC Program

There are two “subprograms” of the RHC Program:

1. Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program
   - Supports broadband connectivity and broadband networks for eligible health care providers (HCPs)
   - Eligible services and equipment receive a 65% discount

2. Telecommunications (Telecom) Program
   - Funds urban/rural rate difference for telecommunications services for eligible rural HCPs.
   - Remained in place after adoption of the HCF Program.
## HCF and Telecom Programs Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>HCF Program</th>
<th>Telecom Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discount</td>
<td>65% flat rate discount on all eligible expenses</td>
<td>Calculated as urban-rural differential of cost of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rurality</td>
<td>HCP can be located in a non-rural location as a member of an eligible consortium, as long as consortium is majority rural</td>
<td>HCP must be in a rural location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Site Expenses</td>
<td>Connections associated with off-site data centers and off-site administrative offices used by eligible HCPs for health care purposes are eligible for funding</td>
<td>No off-site associated connections are eligible for funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### HCF and Telecom Programs Comparison

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible Expenses</strong></td>
<td>• Broadband services</td>
<td>• Telecommunications services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Network equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• HCP-constructed and owned network facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application Options</strong></td>
<td>• Apply as an individual HCP or as a part of a consortium</td>
<td>• Apply as an individual HCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can obtain a multi-year funding commitment</td>
<td>• Must seek new funding commitment for each funding year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rural Healthcare Program
Application Process

1. Determine Eligibility
   - Must meet the three initial program criteria and make sure requested services are eligible

2. Develop Evaluation Criteria and Request Services
   - Develop scoring criteria to evaluate bids and describe service needs (posted on USAC website)

3. Evaluate Bids and Select a Service Provider
   - Choose the "most cost-effective" service provider

4. Submit Funding Request
   - Provide information about services and selected service provider

5. Certify Connection
   - Confirm service start and end dates

6. Invoice
   - Initiate invoicing process and submit to service provider for review (HCF Program)

Form 465
Form 460
Form 461
Form 466
Form 462
Form 467
Form 463

TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM
HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND
Participation by Program

Number of Tribal HCPs by Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Tribal YES</th>
<th>Tribal NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCF</td>
<td>11,443</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELECOM</td>
<td>3,621</td>
<td>1,910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RHC Program Help Desk

- Email: RHC-Assist@usac.org
  - Email at any time to request a one-on-one appointment to learn more about the application process or ask specific questions.
- Phone: (800) 453-1546
  - Hours are 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET
Lifeline Program

People across the United States rely on phone and internet to stay connected to family, work, education, and essential services. The Lifeline Program provides a monthly discount for the cost of these services for qualified, low-income households.
Lifeline Program

What Is Lifeline?
About the Lifeline Program

As of September 2018, 9.3 million U.S. households participate in the federal Lifeline program, including 234,000 Tribal participants.

Subscribers prove eligibility through participation in a qualifying assistance program or demonstrating income at or below 135% of federal poverty guidelines.

Available in every state, territory, commonwealth & on Tribal lands.
Program Rules

- Subscribers must be able to prove that they qualify for the program.
- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household.
- Subscribers are required to recertify that they are still eligible once per year.
About the Lifeline Program

• Lifeline is a federal benefit of $9.25/month toward phone, internet, or bundled service

• Goal: To make communications services more affordable for low-income customers so they can
  • Have access to emergency services, find/keep a job, and stay connected with loved ones

• Other Lifeline benefits are available:
  • Up to $25/month extra is available for subscribers on qualifying Tribal lands
  • Up to $100 “Link Up” benefit to connect telecommunications services from a carrier receiving high-cost support on qualifying Tribal lands once per residential address
  • Many states offer an additional Lifeline discount of $2-4/month
How to Qualify for the Lifeline Subsidy

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit
- Demonstrate income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines
How to Qualify for the Lifeline Subsidy

• Consumers may also qualify if participating in one of the following Tribal assistance programs:
  • Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance (BIA-GA)
  • Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TTANF)
  • Head Start (must meet income qualifying standard)
  • Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
Eligibility Checking

- Most consumers apply for the Lifeline program through the National Verifier.
- In states that have not yet joined the National Verifier, consumers apply through their service provider or with the state.
- The application process:
  - Consumer fills out a Lifeline application and initials the Lifeline certifications.
  - Tribal consumers self-certify that they are eligible for the enhanced tribal benefit.
  - National Verifier (or responsible party) checks the consumer’s Lifeline eligibility by checking a database or reviewing documents.
  - If consumer is eligible, the service provider begins phone or internet service.
Eligibility Checking

• Consumers can apply online through the Consumer Portal at CheckLifeline.org, by mail using a paper application or in person through a service provider.

• For help and step-by-step instructions, consumers can visit LifelineSupport.org
How to Identify Phone or Broadband Companies in Your Area that offer Lifeline:

• USAC’s “Companies Near Me” tool helps subscribers find a service provider near them

• Search by city, state or zip code for a printable list of phone and broadband carriers in your area
Questions?
USAC Tribal Liaison (E-rate)

• Assists with Tribal-specific outreach, training, and assistance

  • Monthly E-rate Tribal Calls
    (The second Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. ET)
    • November 12, 2019
    • December 10, 2019

• Contact USAC Tribal Liaison Kraynal Alfred at TribalLiaison@usac.org
  • Request more information
  • Ask questions
  • Suggest the E-rate Tribal Call’s Topic of the Month or an agenda item
Point of Contact

USAC Tribal Liaison
Kraynal Alfred
TribalLiaison@usac.org