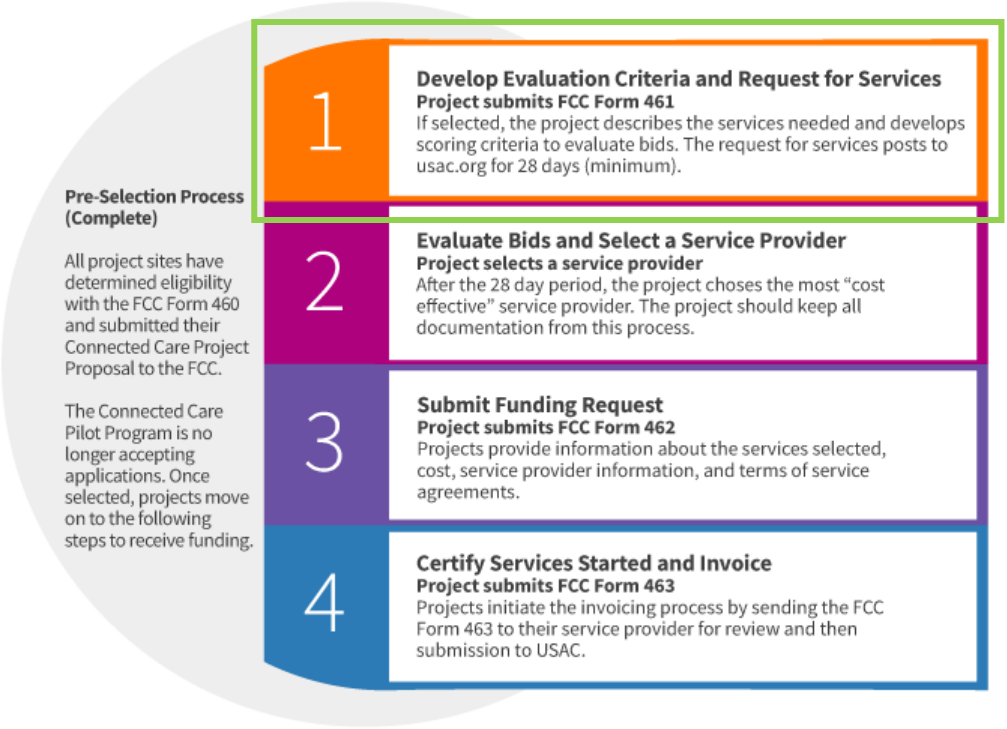
Connected Care Pilot Program

Requests for Services (FCC Form 461)



What is a request for services?

- A request for services is the form that lets services providers know what types of broadband services the project is seeking.
- You submit your request for services using the FCC Form 461 (Request for Services Form).
- Once a request for services is approved, it is posted to the USAC website for a minimum of 28 days, starting the competitive bidding process.
    - Service providers respond with bids by the deadline posted on the USAC website (minimum of 28 days).

What is competitive bidding?

- **Competitive bidding** is the process that allows service providers equal opportunity to bid on the project's service requirements.
- The FCC Form 461 is posted to the USAC website, and service providers have a minimum of 28 days to respond to the FCC Form 461.
    - The project and service provider may not enter into an agreement to purchase services until after the bidding period is over. (Note: Pre-existing contracts satisfying the requirements outlined in the Second Connected Care Report and Order may qualify for an exemption from the competitive bidding requirements).
- After the bidding period closes, the project and service provider can sign a contract; this is the Allowable Contract Selection Date (ACSD). Program rules require that the competitive bidding process be "fair and open."
- Service providers who plan to bid cannot help the project select a winner nor participate in the vendor selection process.
- All projects and service providers must comply with any applicable state or local competitive bidding requirements.
- For additional information on the Pilot Program rules concerning competitive bidding, please see the First Connected Care Report and Order and the Second Connected Care Report and Order.
- View posted services on the RHC Program's Search Posted Service web page.

- In some cases, the project's service needs or contract conditions can permit a competitive bidding exemption and they may bypass the competitive bidding process.

Bid Evaluation Criteria

- The bid evaluation criteria is a list of weighted standards the project uses to determine the most cost-effective bid.
- Each criterion is given a certain weight, and the sum of these weights must equal 100.
- The bid criteria should address the project's' needs per the FCC Form 461 and meet the FCC's definition of "cost-effective."
- Cost must be a primary factor, but need not be the only primary factor. Although other factors may receive the same weight as cost, no single factor can receive a weight that is greater than cost (47 CFR 54.622(c)).
- You must specify on the bid evaluation worksheet and/or scoring matrix the requested services for which you are seeking bids, the minimum requirements for the specified criteria, and each service provider's proposed service levels for the specified criteria. You also must also specify disqualification factors, if any, that you will use to remove bids or bidders from further consideration.
- Please see the Second Connected Care Report and Order for additional information on selecting the most cost-effective service and developing bid criteria.

Requests for Proposal

A request for proposal (RFP), submitted at the same time as the FCC Form 461, is a comprehensive bidding solicitation that describes the applicant's business priorities and functional requirements in greater detail.

- Information that is required on the FCC Form 461 must be identical to the information described in the RFP.
- Projects are required to file an RFP where required under applicable State, Tribal, or local procurement rules or regulations, or if they are a consortium seeking more than $100,000 in Pilot Program support.

Tips for Consortia

- Make sure the FCC Forms 460 and Letters of Authorization (LOA) for all member sites have been approved before filing the consortium FCC Form 461.
- Once the FCC Form 461 is filed, you will not be able to link sites to that FCC Form 461 that are later added to the consortium.