Telecommunications Program

How to Use the Rates Database

In the RHC Telecom Program, support for eligible telecommunications services is calculated based on the difference between the rates available for identical or similar services in rural and urban areas in a state.

Beginning in FY2021, the rural and urban rates used to calculate the amount of eligible support for a health care provider (HCP) site location will be the median of available rates as identified in the Rates Database. Applicants will use the median rural and urban rates from the Rates Database for the requested telecommunications services when submitting Telecommunications Program Funding Requests (FCC Form(s) 466). Per FCC Report and Order 19-78, applicants are required to use either the median rural rate from the rates database or their actual rate charged, whichever is lower, when requesting funding.

Finding Rural Rates

The amount of discount a HCP receives in the Telecom Program is the difference between the urban rate and the rural rate for similar services in the state in which the HCP is located. For more information on rurality, similar services and how rural rates were derived in this database, view the Rates Database Methods and Procedures document.

The rural rate is entered on Line 33 of the FCC Form 466 and will be the lower of the median rural rate from the rates database or the actual rate of the service charged to the HCP excluding taxes and fees for the service selected.

Step 1 – Navigate to Page

Navigate to the Rates Database page on the USAC public website.

Step 2 – Review Information

Review the information on the page and then click on the “Get Started” button.

You must use Google Chrome or Firefox to access this tool.

Get Started

Don’t know your rurality tier for conducting a rate search? Start with the Rurality Tier Search Tool.

Just interested in the raw data in the Rates Database? You can access that through our Open Data Platform.

Continued on next page...
Step 3 – Enter Location and Service Information
For your HCP/site, use the drop downs to enter: the State in which the site is located, Rate Tier (from the Rurality Tier Search Tool), Bandwidth (MB), the Category of Service (either data or voice), and whether the service is Best Efforts or Dedicated Service. Entering the Service Type is optional. Click “Calculate.” For more information on these data points, view the Rates Database Methods and Procedures document.

Step 4 – View Results
The search tool will display the median rural rate. Below the median rate is a table of data used to calculate the median rate. Click “Download Data” to export the data into an Excel file.

Finding Urban Rates
The urban rate will be the median of all available rates identified by USAC for functionally similar services in all urbanized areas of the state where the HCP is located to the extent that urbanized area falls within the state. HCPs must use the urban rate available in USAC’s database. Safe harbor urban rates will no longer be used or available. The urban rate is entered on Line 41 of the FCC Form 466.

To find the median urban rate needed to complete the FCC Form 466, repeat Steps 3 and 4 above but choose “Urban” in the Rate Tier dropdown.