




Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Rural Health Care Program





\$400 million a year available to provide reduced rates to eligible health care providers for **telecommunications** service and **broadband** access.

The Components of the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program

Telecommunications Program

Provides eligible rural HCPs with discounts for telecommunications services using the urban/rural differential

Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program

Provides eligible rural HCPs and consortia with a 65-percent flat discount on eligible expenses related to broadband connectivity

Highlights of the Telecommunications Program

Eligible Health Care Providers

Rural, not-for-profit or public entities of the following types are eligible:

- Hospitals
- Community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants
- Rural health clinics
- Local health departments or agencies
- Community mental health centers
- Post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, such as teaching hospitals or medical schools
- Dedicated emergency departments of rural for-profit hospitals
- Consortia of HCPs consisting of one or more eligible entities
- Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) *effective January 2017*



Eligible Expenses

Telecommunications services



Discount Rate

Urban/rural differential of cost of service



Competitive Bidding Exemptions

Applicants are exempt if the Health Care Providers (HCP) site has a Rural Health Care Program-endorsed evergreen contract

Highlights of the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program

Eligible Health Care Providers

- Consortia of eligible rural and non-rural public / nonprofit healthcare providers (HCPs)
- Individual rural public/nonprofit HCPs



Non-Rural Health Care Providers

Non-rural HCPs are eligible as a member of a consortium made up of more than 50 percent rural Health Care Provider sites



Eligible Expenses

- Telecommunications and broadband services / network equipment
- Consortium applicants: Health Care Provider (HCP) — constructed and owned — network facilities
- Consortium applicants: Upfront payments



Discount Rate

65 percent flat-rate discount on all eligible expenses



Competitive Bidding Exemptions

Applicants are exempt if:

- Annual undiscounted cost for services is \$10,000 or less
- HCP site participating in a Government Master Service Agreement (MSA)
- HCP site has an MSA approved under RHC Pilot Program or HCF Program
- HCP site has an RHC Program-endorsed evergreen contract
- HCP site has a contract negotiated under Schools and Libraries Program

The Rural Health Care Program

Program Comparison

HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND PROGRAM		TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM	
ELIGIBLE ENTITIES			
Not-for-profit and public of one of the entity types outlined on pages 4 and 5.			
ELIGIBLE EXPENSES			
Telecommunication service Broadband service Network equipment HCP-constructed and owned network facilities (<i>consortia only</i>)		Telecommunications service	
DISCOUNT			
65 percent flat rate discount on all eligible expenses		Calculated as urban-rural differential of cost of service	
APPLICATION OPTIONS			
Apply as an individual HCP or as part of a consortium Can obtain a multi-year funding commitment		Apply as an individual HCP Must seek new funding commitment for each funding year	
RURALITY			
HCP can be located in non-rural location if applying as a member of an eligible consortium		HCP must be in a rural location	
OFF-SITE?			
Connections associated with off-site data centers and off-site administrative offices used by eligible HCPs for healthcare purposes are eligible for funding		No off-site associated connections are eligible for funding	

The Rural Health Care Program

Get Started

Step 1

Review the eligibility criteria

Step 2

Review the application process

Step 3

File the **FCC Form 460/465** to obtain an eligibility determination

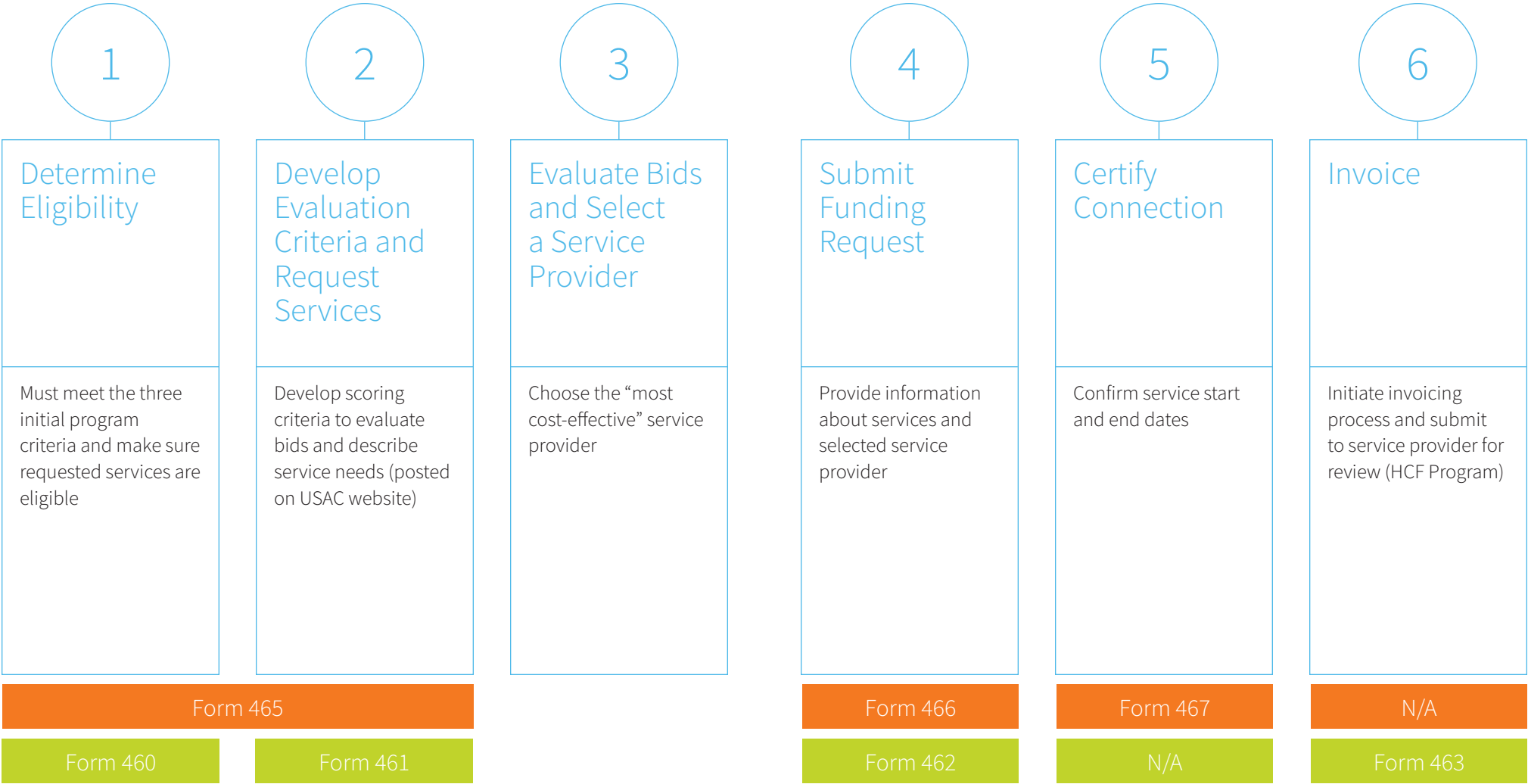
Additional Tips for the HCF Program

Review the HCF Order

Consider whether to apply as an individual Health Care Provider, as a member of an existing consortium, or to start a new consortium

Rural Healthcare Program

Application Process



TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND

Rural Health Care Program

How it Works

Where Does the Money Come From?

Telecommunications companies are required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to make annual contributions that make up the universal service fund. USAC administers the disbursement of these contributions to the four programs established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC):

Schools and Libraries Program

Provides discounts to eligible schools and libraries that qualify for reduced rates.

High Cost Program

Provides support to eligible telecommunications companies that, in turn, offer rates and services comparable to those available in urban areas.

Lifeline Program

Provides support to telecommunications companies that, in turn, offer discounts to eligible consumers

Rural Health Care Program

Provides support for telecommunications and broadband to eligible rural health care providers that qualify for reduced rates

USAC Is... an independent, not-for-profit corporation designated by the FCC as the administrator of the universal service fund and the four universal programs.

Rural Health Care Program

Consortia 101

What is a Consortium?

A consortium is a group of healthcare providers ranging from a single unified health system to a statewide or regional network of different types of entities. Non-rural eligible HCPs may receive support as part of a consortium consisting of a majority of rural HCP sites. In addition, ineligible HCP sites also may participate in a consortium and take advantage of lower contract prices often associated with consortia bulk-buying, but they will not receive RHC Program funding.

How Do I Start a New Consortium?

To talk to a consortia expert about getting started with a new consortium, email us at RCH-Assist@usac.org or call our Help Desk at 800-453-1546.

What Are the Benefits?

- Creation and growth of broadband HCP networks
- Sharing of medical, administrative, and technical costs
- Lower prices, higher bandwidth, and better quality connections
- Access by rural HCPs to medical specialists at larger hospitals
- Rural and non-rural HCPs can be eligible for program support



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For more information visit
usac.org/rhc

For assistance,
email **RHC-Assist@usac.org** or
call **888-203-8100**