



RHC Program News for August 2020

August 6, 2020

Latest News

FY2019 Consortia Annual Report Due September 30, 2020

Per Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program rules, all consortia receiving Rural Health Care (RHC) Program funding are required to submit an annual report to USAC using the provided [Excel template](#) to supplement information collected in RHC Program application forms. The reports for FY2019 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020) are due September 30, 2020.

Who Needs to Submit the Annual Report? HCF Program consortium leaders must submit an annual report for each funding year in which they received HCF Program support and for the life of a supported facility or service for which the consortium received large upfront payments.

For instructions on how to complete and submit the FY2019 Annual Report, please visit our [website](#).

FCC Approves Final Set of COVID-19 Telehealth Applications

On July 8, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Wireline Competition Bureau approved the final round of funding applications for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. Since the beginning of the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program, the FCC approved 539 funding applications in 47 states plus Washington, D.C. and Guam for a total of \$200 million in funding—the amount of money provided by Congress in the CARES Act. No further applications will be accepted and USAC will no longer be reviewing and making eligibility determinations on pending FCC Forms 460 that were filed for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. [Read more](#).

Begin to Submit Your FY2021 Request for Services Today!

New for FY2021 and forward, the competitive bidding period will begin on July 1 of the prior calendar year. This allows RHC Program applicants more time to complete and submit their FCC [Forms 461](#) and [Forms 465](#) for the purposes of competitive bidding. Learn about the changes to the FY2021 competitive bidding process and corresponding My Portal updates by watching the [Request for Services Webinars](#) and view the [Request for Services Summary](#).

New! HCF Program Eligibility Training Module

RHC has added another [self-paced training module](#) to help HCF Program applicants submit the FCC Form 460. This module includes best practices for submitting the FCC Form 460 and includes a full My Portal walkthrough of the form. Let us know what you think about this resource by emailing our help desk RHC-Assist@usac.org with feedback. More training modules coming soon!

Submit Relevant Rates for Inclusion in Rates Database by August 31, 2020

On July 1, 2020, two new tools launched for FY2021: rurality tiers for Telecom Program support and a rates database for Telecom Program applicants. You can now access these two new tools which make program participation and form submission more efficient.

- [Rurality Tier Search Tool](#) – This tool can be used to search, by health care provider (HCP) site location, the applicable rurality tier for your HCP site. The rurality tier is used to calculate the “rural rate” for determining the amount of support for eligible telecommunications services in the Telecom Program. In addition to helping determine your HCP site’s rural rate, the rurality tier is also a factor (together with degree of medical service availability in the HCP’s area) in determining the prioritization of funding in the event eligible funding requests exceed the amount of available funding for a particular funding year.
 - Resources: [How to Use the Rurality Tier Search Tool](#), [Methods and Procedures](#)
- [Telecom Program Rates Database](#) - Beginning in FY2021, the rural and urban rates used to calculate the amount of eligible support for an HCP site location will be the median of available rates as identified in the Rates Database. Telecom Program applicants will use the median rural and urban rates from the Rates Database for the requested telecommunications services when submitting Telecom Funding Requests FCC Form(s) 466.
 - Resources: [How to Use the Rates Database](#), [Methods and Procedures](#)

How to Submit Relevant Rates: If there are relevant rates that are not already in the database, the public may submit these rates to USAC for inclusion in the database by emailing RHC-Assist@usac.org with the subject line “Urban and Rural Rate Database” by August 31, 2020.

Important Reminders

FCC Introduced \$100 Million Connected Care Pilot Program

In its [Report and Order FCC 20-44](#) released on April 2, 2020, the FCC adopted final rules for a new Connected Care Pilot Program which will provide up to \$100 million of support from the Universal Service Fund (USF) to help defray health care providers’ costs of providing connected care services and to help assess how the USF can be used in the long-term to support telehealth. The Pilot Program will provide funding for selected pilot projects to cover 85% of the eligible costs of broadband connectivity, network equipment, and information services necessary to provide connected care services to the intended patient population. Additional details regarding the Connected Care Pilot Program, including application information, will be made available soon.

Information Requests - Deadline Extended

On March 26, 2020 the FCC released [Order DA 20-345](#), granting relief measures to RHC Program participants to help health care providers effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this relief, the FCC waived the 14-day deadline for applicants to respond to Information Requests from USAC issued on or before September 30, 2020. Applicants have an additional 28 days, allowing a response time of 42 days. This waiver includes Information Requests related to funding requests, appeals and waivers, invoices, audits, and other documentation submitted by the applicant. Read a [summary](#) of the relief brought on by the Order.

FCC Form 460 Best Practice

During the submission of an FCC Form 460 (HCF Eligibility and Registration Form), we recommend that applicants upload any supporting documentation necessary to validate form data to the “Supporting Documentation” section. This includes documentation that is relevant to the required fields of the FCC Form 460. Submitting supporting documentation helps to verify health care provider (HCP) eligibility thereby expediting the review process. A few examples include:

- Hospital licenses, with the address clearly posted, to verify a non-profit hospital
- A recent bill or lease, with the address clearly posted, to verify the HCP address provided on the FCC Form 460
- Public tax documents to verify the Non-Profit Tax ID (EIN)
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) accreditation to verify a community health center.

You can submit your FCC Form 460 at any time during the funding year. First time applying? We suggest you review this [step-by-step guide](#) or watch a [short video](#) to check if your HCP site has previously registered with the RHC Program.

FCC Form 467 Revisions

Please remember to carefully review your Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) and Healthcare Support Schedule (HSS) prior to beginning the invoicing process. If there is an error or you have any questions about the information on the FCL or HSS, email RHC-Assist@usac.org with the FRN in the subject line. As a reminder, if services were delayed or not turned on, it is the responsibility of the HCP to submit a request for an FCC Form 467 revision.

Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about the Rural Health Care Program, call the RHC Help Desk Call at 800-453-1546 or email RHC-Assist@usac.org.

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