



RHC Program News for January 2020

January 2, 2020

Latest News

Submit FY2020 Requests for Services Now!

Applicants applying for funding in FY2020 who are going through the competitive bidding process can now submit their FCC Form 461 (HCF Program) and/or FCC Form 465 (Telecom Program). The first day to submit these forms was January 1, 2020—six months before the start of the funding year, which begins July 1, 2020. Prepare to submit your Request for Services form with the following resources:

- Request for Services Best Practices Webinar [recording](#) and [slides](#)
- [RFP Checklist](#) (HCF Program)
- [Network Plan Checklist](#) (HCF Program)
- Search Posted Services Tool: [HCF Program](#) and [Telecom Program](#)

Filing Window Opens February 1, 2020

The FY2020 filing window will take place from February 1 – April 30, 2020. This means that you must submit your funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) as early as February 1 and no later than 11:59 p.m. ET April 30, 2020, for the initial filing window period. We highly encourage you to submit your application forms as early as possible in the filing window period. Other application forms for FY2020 (FCC Forms 460, 461, or 465) are accepted prior to February 1 to begin the application process. Learn more about [filing window periods](#).

Register for the Funding Request Best Practices for FY2020 Webinars

Based on feedback received from applicants, the FY2020 funding request training will be separated into two webinars, one for the HCF Program and one for the Telecom Program. These webinars will go through both the FCC Forms 462 and 466 in My Portal and will cover important tips for submitting a compliant funding request by the initial filing window close on April 30, 2020. Register here:

- HCF Program Funding Request Best Practices – January 14 at 2:00 p.m. ET - [Register now!](#)
- Telecom Program Funding Request Best Practices – January 16 at 2:00 p.m. ET - [Register now!](#)

FCC Releases Public Notice DA 19-1253

On December 10, 2019, the FCC released Public Notice DA 19-1253, providing guidance on the implementation schedule for reforms adopted by the FCC in Report and Order 19-78. As detailed in the Public Notice, some of the reforms originally scheduled to take effect in FY2020 will now be implemented in FY2021. The USAC Report and Order 19-78 [webpage](#) and [tip sheet](#) have been updated accordingly.

Consortia Majority Rural Rule for FY2020

Beginning in FY2020, all current and new HCF Program consortia must be “majority rural.” FCC Report and Order 19-78 eliminates the three-year grace period for consortia to become majority rural; there will also be no grandfathering of prior Pilot Program consortia or other existing consortia.

“Majority rural” means that *more than* 50% of participating HCPs in a consortium must be rural. For example, if a consortium has five participating HCPs, at least three of those HCPs must be in a rural area for the consortium to be deemed “majority rural.” Funding requests filed by consortia that are not in compliance with this rule will be denied. Download the [Consortia Rurality Compliance Tip Sheet](#).

Important Reminders

Letter of Agency (LOA) My Portal Enhancements

My Portal no longer allows consortia leaders or account holders to submit forms on behalf of health care provider (HCP) sites with expired LOAs. Account holders of the consortia and their member HCPs will now receive automatic emails from My Portal when an LOA is about to expire and will be required to update any expired LOAs. For instructions on how to submit an updated LOA, view the [LOA submission guide](#).

Third Party Authorizations (TPAs) Must Be Up to Date

Applicants must have their [TPAs](#) up to date through FY2020, at a minimum. This requirement applies if you use a consultant or third party to submit information to USAC on your behalf. Before submitting a form, please check to ensure your authorization documents are up to date. FCC Forms submitted with expired TPAs will result in applicants receiving Information Requests. [Download a Sample TPA](#).

Account Holder Guidance

Now is a great time to review your HCP’s account holders. USAC recommends having at least one secondary account holder per HCP. We’ve created guides for primary account holders with instructions for adding additional account holders in My Portal:

- [Telecom Account Holder Guide](#)
- [Healthcare Connect Fund Account Holder Guide](#)

What to do if You Receive an Information Request

FCC Forms submitted with incomplete or missing documentation cannot be processed, and RHC reviewers will reach out to all account holders (the primary and all secondary and tertiary account holders associated with that HCP) with a request for additional information (“Information Request”). Information Requests are sent to collect any missing documentation, address deficiencies, or to ask clarifying questions about the FCC Form. If you receive an Information Request, you must respond to it within 14 calendar days. Failure to respond within the 14 calendar days will result in a denial of funding, so be sure to meet that deadline.

Information Request Tips for the Telecom Program

- Applicants can receive Telecom Program Information Requests through My Portal OR by email
 - For Information Requests received through My Portal, applicants should respond through My Portal only
 - For Information Requests received by email, applicants should “Reply All” to respond to the Information Request by email
- Use Chrome/Firefox Only when using My Portal
- When uploading a document as a response, the document should be limited to 10MB and its file name should not contain any special characters, only letters and numbers

Information Request Tips for the HCF Program

- Applicants that receive HCF Program Information Requests through email should “Reply All” to respond to an Information Request by email

FCC Form 460 Best Practice

During the submission of an FCC Form 460, we recommend that applicants upload any supporting documentation necessary to validate form data to the “Supporting Documentation” section. This includes any documentation that is relevant to the required fields of the FCC Form 460. Doing so creates additional visibility into the eligibility of the HCP and increases the likelihood of a faster review. 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.

Filing an Appeal

Any party that wishes to appeal a USAC decision must file an appeal with USAC within the required 60 days of the date when USAC issued the decision. All appeals must be sent to RHC-Appeals@usac.org. The following information must be included in the appeal:

- Applicant or service provider who is filing the appeal (i.e. HCP number, service provider’s 498 ID (SPIN))
- Contact information of the person who can discuss the appeal with USAC in detail (include name, address, telephone number, and email address)
- Documentation of USAC's decision (e.g., copy of USAC's decision letter being appealed)
- Supporting documentation such as forms and previous correspondence with USAC
- A precise explanation of the relief sought through the appeal

USAC may reach out for additional information while reviewing your appeal, but failure to provide all of the information listed above within the 60-day period may result in denial of your appeal. Parties seeking a waiver of FCC rules (e.g., waiver of deadlines) should file the waiver request directly with the FCC because USAC cannot waive FCC rules.

For more information on filing appeals with USAC or the FCC, please visit the [Appeals Page](#) of the USAC website.

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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