RHC Program News for June 2020

June 4, 2020

Funding Request Deadline Approaching

FY2020 Filing Window Closes June 30, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.
The Funding Year (FY) 2020 filing window closes in 26 days, on June 30, 2020*. This means that you must submit your funding requests (FCC [Forms 462](#) or [466](#)) by 11:59 p.m. ET June 30, 2020 to be considered for RHC Program support in FY2020. We highly encourage you to submit your application forms as early as possible in the filing window. See below for helpful resources:

- Funding Request Webinars: [HCF Program, Telecom Program](#)
- [Funding Request Summary](#)
- [Information for FY2019 Applicants Applying in FY2020](#)
- [Urban and Rural Rate Information](#) (Telecom Program only)

*The FY2020 filing window was extended to June 30, 2020 by [FCC Order DA 20-345](#).

Latest News

Submit FY2021 Request for Services Starting July 1
For FY2021 and forward, the competitive bidding period will commence on July 1 of the prior calendar year. This means that applicants in the RHC Program can begin to submit their FCC [Forms 461](#) and [Forms 465](#) for the purposes of competitive bidding as early as July 1, 2020 for FY2021. Additional training for competitive bidding and requests for services will be announced soon!

USAC and RHC Remain Open for Business
At USAC, we are committed to the health and safety of our employees, contractors, and stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic. While USAC's Washington, DC office is closed, the RHC Division remains fully operational. RHC Program staff will work remotely and continue to process and review forms and implement guidance from the FCC. Visit the RHC Program [COVID-19 Response page](#) for more information about the relief provided to HCPs. We will continue to update the [Announcements](#) page with all the latest news relating to COVID-19 and the RHC Program.

FCC Established $200 Million COVID-19 Telehealth Program
On April 2, 2020 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released [FCC Report and Order 20-44](#) which included the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, funded through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will provide immediate support to health care providers responding to the pandemic by providing funding for telecommunications services, information services, and devices to enable the provision of connected care services. Visit the [FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program website](#) for complete information about the program, including eligibility, supported services and equipment, and the

application process. Please note that the COVID-19 Telehealth Program is **limited to nonprofit and public eligible health care providers**. The FCC began accepting applications for the program on April 13, 2020 and continues to review and approve applications on a rolling basis. Interested new applicants must submit an [FCC Form 460](#) through USAC to be eligible for the program. RHC Program participants with an existing approved FCC Form 460 or 465 are already eligible and can submit applications directly to the FCC.

FCC Introduced $100 Million Connected Care Pilot Program
Also included in Report and Order FCC 20-44 were 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.

FY2019 Funding Requests Continue Without Proration
[FCC Order 20-30](#), issued March 13, 2020, directed USAC to carry forward additional unused funds from prior years to fully fund all eligible RHC Program funding requests filed during the FY2019 filing window. The Order also waived the funding cap on multi-year commitments and upfront payments. Without this Order, pro-rated reductions in FY2019 support for rural health care providers would be necessary. RHC is currently issuing decisions on FY2019 funding requests and will continue to do so on a rolling basis. RHC will communicate any updates via the email addresses the applicant has submitted in My Portal.

New for FY2020
Starting on February 1, for FY2020, several new rules adopted in [FCC Report and Order 19-78](#) became effective, including: elimination of the grace period for the consortia majority rural rule, gift rule, elimination of limitation on support for satellite services, and revised and harmonized funding request certifications. [Read more](#) and download the [Report and Order 19-78 Tip Sheet](#).

Important Reminders

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 (HCPs) 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. Account holders 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 use this [step-by-step guide](#) to check if your HCP site has previously registered with the RHC Program.

Telecom 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 number 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.