



RHC Program News for April 2021

April 1, 2021

Latest News

Deadline Approaching! FY2021 Filing Window Deadline Closes on June 1: Register for Office Hours

The FY2021 filing window opened on January 4 and will now close 11:59 p.m. ET on Tuesday, June 1. This means that you must submit your funding requests (FCC [Forms 462](#) or [466](#)) no later than 11:59 p.m. ET June 1, 2021. We highly encourage you to submit your application forms as early as possible in the filing window period. Other forms for FY2021 (FCC Forms 460, 461, or 465) were accepted prior to January 4 to begin the application process. Learn more about [filing window periods](#).

Join the RHC outreach team on Friday, April 30 for Funding Request Office Hours. Join any time between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. ET to ask your questions about completing and submitting your funding request form(s): April Funding Request Office Hours – Friday, April 30 – [Register](#) (*Please note that the session is limited to 75 registrants*)

Below are additional resources to help you submit your funding request by the June 1 deadline:

- [Funding Request Best Practices for FY2021 Webinars](#)
- [Funding Request Summary](#)
- [Information for FY2020 Applicants Applying in FY2021](#)
- [FY2021 Recommended Submission Dates](#)

New! RHC Program Inflation-Adjusted Cap Announced

The RHC program funding cap for funding year 2021 is \$612,016,418. The internal cap for upfront payments and multi-year commitments under the HCF program is \$154,532,400. These new caps represent a 1.2% inflation-adjusted increase in the \$604,759,306 RHC program funding cap and the \$152,700,000 internal cap on multi-year commitments and upfront payments from funding year 2020. [Read the announcement.](#)

New! Watch the Service Provider Best Practices Webinar

On March 31, RHC held a webinar for service providers participating in the RHC program covering tips and best practices at every stage of the process. [Watch the webinar and download the slides.](#)

New! New Certifications Requirements for National Supply Chain

When service providers log in to [My Portal](#) beginning April 30, 2021, they will see two new supply chain certifications included in the FCC Form 463 and Telecom invoice.

The first certification affirms compliance with the [Section 54.9 prohibition](#) on USF support to purchase, obtain, maintain, improve, modify, operate, manage, or otherwise support equipment or services produced or provided by the covered companies. The second certification affirms compliance with [Section 54.10](#), which prohibits the use of any Federal subsidies on any communications equipment and services on the [Covered List](#).

- FY2020 Applicants: If you requested services or equipment provided or that contain components of products produced by any of the above-named companies, or any of their parents, affiliates and subsidiaries in

FY2020, you cannot invoice for these funds. Instead, you should immediately request a [service substitution](#) prior to invoicing in order to ensure complete program compliance.

- FY2021 Applicants: As you proceed with competitive bidding and submitting funding requests forms, please ensure you are not requesting funding for services or equipment from any of the above-named companies, or any of their parents, affiliates and subsidiaries.

Upcoming Audits: In addition, beginning this summer, USAC will conduct audits of compliance with the supply chain rules. To help you prepare, USAC will host a series of webinars so that you can learn more about what to expect if you are selected for an audit.

Service providers who participate in multiple USF programs must also complete these annual certifications for each other program (i.e., E-rate, High Cost, and Lifeline) in which they participate. For additional information and FCC form due dates, visit USAC's [Supply Chain](#) webpage.

Reminder: Invoicing Best Practices

Please keep in mind that once you receive an approved funding commitment you should follow the necessary steps to invoice prior to your invoicing deadline(s):

- **FY2019 applicants:** Last year, the FCC released two invoicing deadline waivers to HCF program applicants, resulting in many FY2019 FRNs having March or June invoicing deadlines (read [Order 20-345](#) and [Order 20-1092](#)). To see if your HCP has an upcoming FY2019 invoicing deadline, use the [Invoice Deadline Lookup Tool](#) or view your deadline in My Portal. As a reminder, the HCF invoicing process is a joint process between the HCP and its service provider. For information on how to file your FCC Form 463, watch the FY2019 Invoicing Best Practices Webinar.
- **FY2020 applicants:** New invoicing guidelines adopted in FCC [Report and Order 19-78](#) became effective beginning with FY2020 applicants. The invoicing deadline will be four months (120 days) from the service delivery deadline in both the HCF and Telecom programs. Please be sure to respond to any invoicing Information Requests by the 14-calendar day deadline listed in the email. For more information please see the [HCF invoice page](#) and [Telecom invoice page](#).

New for FY2021

Reminder for Telecom Program Applicants in the State of Alaska

On January 19, the FCC released [DA 21-83](#), waiving the requirement for health care providers located in Alaska to use the Telecom program Rates Database for determining rural rates. FY2021 applicants will submit their FCC Form(s) 466 using the prior Telecom program rules for determining the rural rate (e.g., selecting [Methods 1, 2, or 3](#)). The FCC will also allow the use of the most recent rural rate that has been approved for the same service at the same facility for rates approved within the past three funding years. For details on how to file an FCC Form 466 using the prior methods, watch our [FY2020 Telecom Funding Request Best Practices Webinar](#).

Please note, this waiver does not apply to urban rate calculations, and applicants in Alaska must still use the Rates Database to determine urban rates for health care providers.

Important Reminders

Effective Now: FCC DA 20-1420 Certain Rule Changes to be Implemented in FY2020

FCC [Order DA 20-1420](#) implemented certain rule changes mid-funding year (FY) 2020 that were previously slated for FY2021. The FCC recognizes that making these rules effective mid-FY2020 will provide helpful flexibility to health care providers during the current funding year. Please note, this Order became effective on March 15, 2021, read more in the [Federal Register](#). The Order accelerates the effective dates of the following rule changes:

- Extending site and service substitutions to Telecom program applicants
- Amending the SPIN change process to allow for corrective and operational changes across both the HCF and Telecom programs
- Establishing a service delivery deadline of June 30 while permitting a one-year extension of the service delivery deadline for non-recurring services
- Permitting a one-time 120-day invoice filing extension

To request any of the above actions on your approved FY2020 funding commitment, please email RHC-Assist@usac.org with your Funding Request Number (FRN) and the desired request in the subject line of your email.

Tip: Rurality Tier Search Tool

When using the Rurality Tier Search Tool, it is important to put in your site's exact address for best results. If the site's exact address does not yield results, you may also use the latitude and longitude coordinates for your site. Please note, this tool is for informational purposes only and is not an official determination of a site's rurality from USAC. For more information about rurality tiers and terms used in the search results, please visit the [Rurality Tier Search Tool homepage](#).

To find your site's latitude and longitude coordinates:

1. Go to [Google Maps](#)
2. Type in your site's address
3. Right click on the marker pinpointing to your site on the map and select "What's Here?"
4. The coordinates (a pair of numbers, each with a decimal point) will appear on the screen

Use these coordinates to "Search with geographic coordinates" in the Rurality Tier Search Tool. Be sure to include the negative sign when entering the negative longitude coordinate.

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, but are not limited to:

- 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) or public documents if the health care provider is owned by a local or state government
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) accreditation to verify a community health center.

Please note that submission of this supporting documentation does not guarantee form approval. 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](#) to check if your HCP site has previously registered with the RHC program.

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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