



RHC Program News for March 2021

March 4, 2021

Latest News

New! FY2021 Filing Window Deadline Extended to June 1

On February 12, 2021, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released [Order 21-168](#), waiving section 54.621(a)(1) of the Commission's rules and extending the close of the funding year 2021 application filing window for the Rural Health Care (RHC) program until June 1, 2021.

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 [Forms 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](#).

Use the following helpful 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](#)
- Register for April Funding Request Office Hours – Friday, April 30 – [Register](#) (Please note that the session is limited to 75 registrants)

New! Effective March 15, 2021: 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 will become 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.

New! Service Provider Best Practices Webinar March 31

Join the RHC program team on Wednesday, March 31 for a Service Provider Best Practices Webinar for the FY2021 filing window. This webinar will cover tips and best practices for service providers participating in the RHC program.

- Wednesday, March 31 at 2:00 -- 3:00 p.m. - [Register](#)

Reminder: FY2019 HCF Invoicing Deadlines Approaching

In 2020, 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](#).

New! Seeking Volunteers to Provide Feedback about the RHC Program Website!

The RHC program is committed to providing valuable and timely program resources, and we rely on communication and comments from our RHC participants. If you are interested in providing website and resource feedback, please email RHC-Assist@usac.org with the subject line "RHC Website Feedback Volunteer" by March 10. We will reach out with additional feedback opportunities as they arise.

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

Supply Chain Order and Your Funding Request Forms

As a reminder, the FCC's [Supply Chain Order](#) became effective on January 3, 2020. The Order prohibits Universal Service support from being used to purchase, obtain, maintain, improve, modify, or otherwise support any equipment or services produced or provided by companies that pose a national security threat to the integrity of communications networks or the communications supply chain. Huawei Technologies Company and ZTE Corporation, their affiliates and subsidiaries are the two companies that have been officially designated as such threats by the FCC. New certifications concerning the supply chain will be added to the FCC Form 463 and the Telecom invoice with an effective date beginning April 30, 2021.

- FY2020 applicants: If you requested services or equipment provided or that contain components of products produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation, or any of their 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 Huawei Technologies Company and ZTE Corporation or any of their affiliates and subsidiaries.

Submit Your FY2021 Request for Services Today!

New for FY2021 and forward, the competitive bidding period begins 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 recent [Request for Services Webinars](#). Please keep in mind that it's best practice to submit these forms as early as possible in preparation for the upcoming filing window.

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.

Telecom 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 funding request 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.

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