



October 2021 RHC Monthly Newsletter

October 7, 2021

Latest News

New! FCC Releases Order 21-1107 Granting Relief to RHC Participants Affected by Hurricane Ida

On September 3, 2021, the FCC released [Order DA 21-1107](#) waiving certain RHC rules and deadlines to assist participants and providers located in the areas affected by Hurricane Ida. This Order applies to healthcare providers and service providers located in all parishes and counties in Louisiana and Mississippi as of the date of release of this Order (September 3, 2021).

This Order grants the following waivers and extensions for all affected RHC program participants:

- Grants a 60-day extension to the deadline for appeals and requests for waiver for all USAC decisions dated August 30, 2021 through January 31, 2022
- Waives the 14-day Information Request deadline for Information Requests related to funding requests, appeals and waivers, invoices, audits and other documentation, and applies to all funding years
- Waives the September 30, 2021 deadline for HCF program consortia annual reports
- Waives the requirement that HCPs and service providers retain for five years documentation relating to RHC program participation, but only to the extent such documentation was destroyed by Hurricane Ida

New! Register for the FY2020 Invoicing Best Practices Webinar

On Thursday, October 21 at 2:00 p.m. ET, the RHC Program Outreach Team is hosting a webinar for applicants who have single-year approved FRNs (FCC Forms 462 or 466) for FY2020. We will go over FY2020 important reminders, best practices, and next steps for completing the FCC Form 463 for the HCF program, and the FCC Form 467 and Telecom invoice for the Telecom program. Please submit questions for the team when you [register](#).

FY2022 Filing Window Opens December 1, 2021 – Register for Upcoming Training Today!

The FY2022 filing window will take place from December 1, 2021 to April 1, 2022. This means that you must submit your funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) as early as December 1, 2021 and no later than 11:59 p.m. ET April 1, 2022. We highly encourage you to submit your funding requests as early as possible in the filing window period. Other forms for FY2022 (FCC Forms 460, 461, or 465) are accepted prior to December 1. Learn more about [filing windows](#).

Join the RHC Program Outreach team in November for the Funding Request Best Practices webinars. These webinars will cover any changes to the forms for FY2022 and include a walkthrough of the FCC Forms 462 and 466 in My Portal. Register below:

- HCF Program FCC Form 462 Best Practices – Wednesday, November 10, 2021 2:00 p.m. ET - [Register](#)
- Telecom Program FCC Form 466 Best Practices – Wednesday, November 17, 2021 2:00 p.m. ET - [Register](#)

FCC Announces Increase in Rural Health Care Program Cap for FY2021

On June 23, 2021, the FCC Wireline Competition Bureau directed USAC to carry forward up to \$379.97 million in unused funds from prior funding years to the extent necessary to satisfy FY2021 demand for the Rural Health Care program. For additional details, read [Public Notice DA 21-742](#).

USAC Releases FY2021 Funding Decisions Beginning in July

USAC began delivering decisions on FY2021 funding requests in July, five weeks after the close of the FY2021 filing window. RHC will continue to deliver funding decisions on a rolling basis until all funding requests have been reviewed. Due to the demand for RHC program funds, there will not be a second filing window for FY2021. The RHC program will not accept additional funding requests beyond those submitted in the filing window.

Important Reminders

FY2020 Invoicing Deadline Reminder

As a reminder, [FCC Order DA 21-394](#) granted an automatic 120-day extension of the HCF and Telecom program invoice filing deadline for FY2020 funding decisions. The 120-day extension only applies to FY2020 funding decisions with an original invoice deadline of October 28, 2021. This automatic extension will be applied to all FY2020 Funding Request Numbers (FRNs). With this extension, the new invoice filing deadline for HCF and Telecom program FY2020 commitments will be February 25, 2022. More information will be coming soon. Please check the [HCF](#) and [Telecom](#) program invoicing pages for additional information or visit the [Rural Health Care Commitments and Disbursements \(FCC Form 462/466/466A\)](#) webpage on the USAC [Open Data](#) platform to search by FRN.

Submit Your FY2022 Requests for Services

July 1, 2021 was the first day that RHC program applicants could submit their FCC Forms 461 and 465 to initiate competitive bidding for FY2022, five months before the opening of the FY2022 funding request filing window. The FY2022 funding request filing window will open on December 1, 2021 and close on April 1, 2022. Additional program dates and deadlines can be found on the [FY2022 Program Calendar](#). We highly encourage you to submit your forms as early as possible in preparation for the upcoming FY2022 filing window.

Learn about best practices for FY2022 as well as the FCC Forms 461 and 465 competitive bidding process on the [RHC webinar](#) page.

What to do if You Receive an Information Request

Any eligibility, request for services, funding request, and invoicing 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.

Due to [FCC Order DA 21-394](#), applicants who receive Information Requests between April 8, 2021 and December 31, 2021 may request a 28-day extension of this deadline, but must do so before the 14-day deadline in the Information Request. An applicant with a 28-day extension will have a total of 42 calendar days to respond to the information request. **If you receive an Information Request, you must respond to it or request an extension within 14 calendar days. Failure to respond or request an extension within the 14 calendar days will result in a denial of funding, so be sure to meet that deadline. If you need to request an extension, please do so as soon as possible.**

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 only Chrome/Firefox Internet browsers 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

Do You Need to Make Changes to a Commitment After Your Funding is Approved?

If you have a Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) please keep in mind that it is your responsibility to confirm that the

information contained therein is accurate. You may need to contact USAC to request changes to your site or services if you encounter any of the below circumstances:

- If the address of your site changes, or the primary account holder no longer works for the HCP, you must submit an FCC Form 460 revision for HCF or a new FCC Form 465 for Telecom within 30 days of the change. This is for all changes including those that occur post-commitment.
- If you will not be using all of your approved funds, you can request a decrease in your funding request by sending an email to RHC-Invoicing@usac.org. Please be sure to include your HCP name and number, the affected Funding Request Number (FRN), and the amount by which you would like to reduce the commitment. USAC will complete a partial de-commitment for the FRN in that amount.
- In the Telecom program, you can revise your approved FRN prior to invoicing using the [FCC Form 467](#). If you have already submitted the FCC Form 467 and you need to make another change, you can submit an FCC Form 467 revision prior to invoicing.
- If you'd like to re-allocate funds within your FRN you can submit a site and service substitution. For more information about site and service substitutions, click [here](#).
- If you will not be using any of the funds in your approved or disbursed funding commitment, you can return the approved and disbursed funds to USAC. For more information about voluntary return of funds, click [here](#).

Certifications Requirements for National Supply Chain

As a reminder, when service providers log-in to My Portal they will see two new Supply Chain certifications included in the FCC Form 463 and Telecom program 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 deemed to pose a national security threat to the integrity of the communications network or communications supply chain. Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, and Dahua Technology Company, and their parents, affiliates, and subsidiaries, are the five companies that have been officially designated as such threats by the FCC and placed on the Covered List. 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 that contain components of products produced by any company on the Covered List, or any of their parents, affiliates and subsidiaries in FY2020, you cannot invoice for these funds. Instead, you should immediately submit a [service substitution](#) prior to invoicing to ensure complete program compliance.
- FY2021 Applicants: If you identify the use of covered equipment/services on your submitted funding request form, please email RHC-Assist.org with your FRN number. We will work with you to take corrective action to ensure compliance.
- FY2022 Applicants: As you proceed with competitive bidding, please ensure you are not requesting funding for services or equipment from any company on the [Covered List](#), or any of their parents, affiliates and subsidiaries.

New! USAC updated the [Supply Chain](#) webpage to include three new pages: [COVID-19 Broadband Programs](#), [Audits](#), and [FAQs](#).

You're Invited: Supply Chain Audit Webinar – Nov. 9

Beginning Q1 2022, USAC will conduct audits of compliance with the supply chain rules. If your company is selected for an audit, you will receive an audit announcement letter closer to the start date of the audit that will provide information about the audit and next steps. To help you prepare, USAC will host a [supply chain audit webinar](#) on Tuesday, November 9, 2021 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET that highlights how to prepare and what to expect if you are selected for an audit. [Register here](#).

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.

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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