September 2021 RHC Monthly Newsletter

September 2, 2021

Latest News

New! Register for the FY2021 Update Webinar!
On Thursday, September 23, at 2:00 p.m. ET, the RHC Program Outreach Team is hosting a webinar for applicants who submitted funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) during the FY2021 filing window. We will go over FY2021 important reminders, best practices, and next steps once you receive a funding request decision. Please submit questions for the team when you [register](#).

USAC Releases FY2021 Commitments in July
USAC began issuing decisions on FY2021 funding requests in July, five weeks after the close of the FY2021 filing window. RHC will continue to issue funding decisions on a rolling basis and will communicate any updates via the email addresses the applicant submitted in My Portal. 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 (FCC Forms 462 or 466).

FCC Announces Increase in Rural Health Care Program Funds 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. Read [Public Notice DA 21-742](#).

Important Reminders

New! FY2020 Consortia Annual Report Due September 30, 2021
Per Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program rules, all consortia receiving Rural Health Care (RHC) program funding are required to submit an annual report to USAC using the provided [Excel template](#) to supplement information collected in RHC program application forms. The reports for FY2020 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021) are due September 30, 2021.

Who Needs to Submit the Annual Report? HCF program consortium leaders must submit an annual report for each funding year in which they received HCF program support and for the life of a supported facility or service for which the consortium received large upfront payments. Email the completed report to RHC-Outreach@usac.org by September 30, 2021.

For instructions on how to complete and submit the FY2020 Annual Report, please visit our [website](#).

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 approved commitments. The 120-day extension only applies to FY2020 approved funding requests 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.

Begin to Submit Your FY2022 Requests for Services
July 1, 2021 was the first day that RHC program applicants could begin to submit their FCC Forms 461 and 465 to initiate competitive bidding for FY2022, five months before the opening of the filing window. The FY2022 funding request filing window will open on December 1, 2021 and close on April 1, 2022. View the FY2022 Program Calendar. We highly encourage you to submit your application forms as early as possible in preparation for the upcoming FY2022 filing window.

Learn about best practices for FY2022 as well as the FCC Form 461 and 465 competitive bidding process on the RHC webinar page.

What to do if You Receive an Information Request
All 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 its 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 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

What to Do if You Need Changes After Your Funding Commitment
If you have an approved Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) please keep in mind that it is your responsibility to confirm that the information contained in it is accurate. You may need to reach out to USAC to make changes to your site or services if you encounter 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 approved 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 you would like to reduce in the commitment. USAC will complete a **partial** de-commitment for that FRN in that amount.
- If you'd like to re-allocate funds within your approved 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 funding commitment, you can return the approved 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 provided or 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 in order 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.

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.

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.