March 2022 RHC Monthly Newsletter

March 3, 2022

Latest News

Important Reminders

Funding Year (FY) 2022 Filing Window Closes on June 1, 2022
On March 3, 2022, the FCC released FCC Order DA 22-221 extending the deadline for the FY 2022 Application Filing Window to June 1, 2022. Applicants now have a 61-day extension from the original filing deadline of April 1, 2022.

This means all funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET June 1, 2022 for the filing window period. We highly encourage you to submit your funding request as early as possible in the filing window period. Learn more about filing windows.

Important Dates and Deadlines
The following are recommended dates to submit the FCC Forms 461 and 465 with enough time to file funding requests before the end of the FY2022 filing window.

Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) and Telecommunications Program (Telecom) Forms	Last Day to Submit without using a Request for Proposal (RFP)
FCC Forms 461 and 465 - Request for Services	April 10, 2022 - Recommended Date
FCC Forms 462 and 466 - Funding Request	June 1, 2022 - Deadline to Submit

New! My Portal Platform Has a New Name!
The platform used to submit the FCC Form 462 (Funding Request Form) has been updated for FY2022 to improve user experience and has been named **RHC Connect**.

The name RHC Connect was selected because this new platform bridges the gap between our external stakeholders and the resources to obtain Universal Service Fund (USF) funding. This funding helps to connect rural communities with healthcare services. It represents USAC's commitment to transparency, customer service, and communication with our applicants. Providing these connections is the sum total of what the Rural Health Care Program was developed to support: healthcare provider (HCP) applicants, service providers, and the rural communities they represent.

Although the platform is changing, the information requested on the FCC Form 462 will not change. **This update applies to the FCC Form 462 ONLY**, but, over time, it will apply to all forms in both the HCF and Telecom Programs. Updates will be provided to program participants as the platform grows and all updates will be posted on the My Portal Platform Update webpage.

Note: FCC Form 462 drafts should not be created in the section of the My Portal landing page titled "RHC My Portal." If a draft of the FCC Form 462 has been created or submitted in that section of My Portal, download and save a copy to prevent loss of work. For additional information, view the Step-by-Step Guide posted on the USAC website.

The following resources have been posted to the [My Portal Platform Update](#) webpage:

- [My Portal Platform Update User Guide](#)
- [My Portal Platform Update](#) – Self-guided training module

Duplicate Funding Prohibited
Please remember, FCC rules prohibit duplicative funding for the same service for the same sites during the same time period from more than one FCC program. This includes the RHC programs (HCF and Telecom), the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, and the Connected Care Pilot Program (CCPP).

Upcoming Webinars
The RHC program Outreach team will host office hour's webinars throughout the filing window. Additional dates will be announced for both Telecom and HCF office hours as they are scheduled. During these webinars, subject matter experts will be available to answer questions live during the webinar. Register below for the March RHC Office Hours webinars:

- HCF Office Hours Webinar – March 9, 2022 at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- HCF Office Hours Webinar – March 16, 2022 at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- Telecom Office Hours Webinar – March 23, 2022 at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

The RHC program Outreach team will also host a training for service providers. The training is designed to allow service providers to ask questions, provide suggestions, and hear from subject matter experts. Register for the March Service Provider Training webinar:

- Service Provider Training Webinar – Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 2 p.m. ET - [Register](#)

FY2021 Funding Request Update
The RHC Program began issuing FY2021 commitments in July 2021, five weeks after the close of the filing window. This was the earliest rollout since filings windows were established in FY2016.

FY2021 workable funding requests completed as of February 18, 2022:

- HCF - 99% complete
- Telecom – 97% complete

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

On-line Tools Updates

Application Status Report and Invoicing Deadline Tools
On December 20, 2021, USAC launched new [Application Status Report](#) and [Invoicing Deadline](#) tools that utilize USAC's Open Data platform. Through integration with USAC Open Data, the tools replace spreadsheets with a cleaner user experience and real-time data updates. Note: While the spreadsheets will remain on the USAC website, the data on the spreadsheets will not be updated.

Application Status Report
The new [Application Status Report](#) tool replaces the Application Status Report spreadsheet. Similar to the spreadsheet, the new tool allows users to view whether USAC has:
- Confirmed submission of FCC Form 466,
- Received all of the necessary information to complete a review, and
- Made a decision on the submitted form.

USAC will refresh the tool daily. Users who need the data in formats such as .CSS still have the option to export the data. If the data is not available five days after submission, users are encouraged to contact the [RHC Help Desk](#). The Application Status Report tool and all other RHC tools can be found on the [Tools webpage](#). In addition, users who need to look up data from Funding Year 2004 through Funding Year 2021 can access the [archived spreadsheets](#).

Invoicing Deadlines
The new [Invoicing Deadline](#) tool replaces the Invoicing Deadline spreadsheet. The tool allows service providers and

health care providers to look up the deadline to submit invoices for funding commitments. As an upgrade to the spreadsheet, the tool allows users to avoid having to set up specific Excel configurations to find their deadlines.

Note: The tool does not contain any additional information such as form submissions, payment status, or funds remaining. Contact the RHC Help Desk for questions about those topics. The Invoicing Deadline tool and all other RHC tools can be found on the Tools webpage.

Eligible Rural Areas Search Tool
The Eligible Rural Areas Search tool has been removed from the Tools webpage and the HCF and Telecom eligibility webpages pages. HCP rurality and priority tiers can be searched using the Rurality Tier Search Tool. For more information about how to use this tool, please use the How to Use the Rurality Tier Search Tool tip sheet on the USAC website.

Note: This tool is for information purposes only. Rurality tiers are formally assigned during the review and approval of the FCC Form 460 in the HCF Program and FCC Form 465 in the Telecom Program. Applicants should check approved forms for assigned rurality tier.

News You Can Use

What to Do When You Receive an Information Request?
As part of their review of any eligibility, request for services, funding request, and invoicing form, RHC reviewers will contact all account holders (the primary and all secondary and tertiary account holders associated with the HCP with a request for additional information ("Information Request") to collect any missing documentation, address deficiencies, or to ask clarifying questions about the FCC form.

Information Request Tips for the Telecom Program

- HCPs can receive Telecom Program Information Requests through My Portal or by email.
  - For Information Requests received through My Portal, HCPs should respond through My Portal only.
  - For Information Requests received by email, HCPs should "Reply All" to respond to the Information Request by email.
- Use only Chrome or Firefox internet browsers when using My Portal.
- When uploading a document as a response, the document must 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

- HCPs that receive HCF Program Information Requests through email should "Reply All" to respond to an Information Request by email.

Changes to a Commitment after Funding has been Approved
If a Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) is received, it is the responsibility of the applicant to confirm that the information contained therein is accurate. Applicants should contact USAC to request changes to an HCP site or service for any of the circumstances listed:

- If the site address changes or the primary account holder no longer works for the HCP, an FCC Form 460 revision for HCF or a new FCC Form 465 for Telecom must be submitted within 30 days of the change. The 30-day requirement applies at all points during the funding lifecycle including all post-commitment activities.
- If not all approved funds will be used, a request to decrease funding may be submitted by sending an email to RHC-Invoicing@usac.org. The HCP name and number, the affected Funding Request Number (FRN), and the amount reduced in the commitment must be included. USAC will complete a partial de-commitment for the FRN in that amount.
  - In the Telecom Program, the approved FRN can be revised prior to invoicing using the FCC Form 467.
  - If any additional changes are required after submitting the FCC Form 467, a FCC Form 467 revision can be submitted prior to invoicing.
- If funds within an FRN need to be re-allocated, a site and service substitution must be submitted. Learn more about site and service substitutions.
- If no funds will be used in the approved or disbursed funding commitment, the disbursed funds must be returned to USAC. Learn more about voluntary return of funds by visiting the Returning Program Funding webpage.

Certifications Requirements for National Supply Chain
As a reminder, when service providers log in to My Portal, two new Supply Chain certifications included in the FCC Form 463 and Telecom Program invoice will be displayed.

The first certification affirms compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 47, 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 CFR 47 Section 54.10, which prohibits the use of any federal subsidies on any communications equipment and services on the Covered List.

- Funding Year 2020 Applicants: If 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 Funding Year 2020, were requested, invoicing for the funds is prohibited. Instead, a service substitution should be submitted prior to invoicing to ensure complete program compliance.
- Funding Year 2021 Applicants: If the use of covered equipment or services are identified on the submitted funding request form, please email RHC-Assist@usac.org with the FRN and description of issue. USAC will work to take corrective action to ensure compliance.
- Funding Year 2022 Applicants: During competitive bidding, requesting funding for services or equipment from any company on the Covered List, or any of their parents, affiliates, and subsidiaries is prohibited.

USAC updated the Supply Chain webpages to include three new subpages: COVID-19 Broadband Programs, Audits, and FAQs.

Let's Plan a Virtual Site Visit!
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RHC will not be on the road during calendar year 2022. In prior years, USAC has gone to conferences and visited sites to connect with program participants to see first-hand how HCPs benefit from the RHC programs. RHC would like to continue to learn more about the people and communities who benefit from RHC program support by holding a virtual event. This is a great opportunity to introduce RHC staff to participating HCPs and to deepen the relationship between RHC staff and applicants. If you are interested in having your HCP or Consortia featured in an upcoming virtual site visit, please send a request to RHC-Assist@usac.org with "Virtual Site Visit" in the subject line. Once the request has been received, RHC will reach out with more information.

Need Help? Contact Us!
For questions about the Rural Health Care program, contact RHC-Assist@usac.org or the RHC Help Desk at (800) 453-1546 from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. ET Monday through Friday for assistance. Use the RHC Help Desk Tip Sheet to learn about what the RHC Help Desk can and cannot help you with.