



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Rural Health Care

September 2026 RHC Monthly Newsletter

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Latest News

FY2027 Urban and Rural Rates – Telecommunications (Telecom) Program

On August 7, 2026, the FCC released an order, FCC 26-54. This order waives the FCC's rules to permit the use of previously approved rural rates from funding years (FYs) 2024 through 2026 for FY2027 that would otherwise require approval of a cost-based justification using Method 3.

For more information on rural rates and the waiver, please review [FCC 26-54](#) and USAC's [FY2027 Urban and Rural Rate Information](#) tip sheet.

FCC RHC Program Rulemaking

The FCC also adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on efforts to streamline and improve the RHC program as part of [FCC 26-54](#). Specifically, the Commission is seeking comments on defining the scope of "similar services" and "comparable rural areas" for purposes of determining rural rates in the Telecom Program; measures to lessen the burdens resulting from the cost study option of determining rural rates and the associated evidentiary requirements proposed previously; ways to encourage the use of lower-cost back-up services; and establishing an eligible services list for the RHC Program. Comments may be filed in the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System ([ECFS](#)) in WC Docket No. 17-310 on or before September 30, 2026, and reply comments on or before October 30, 2026.

September 8 Transition Date to SAM.gov

On September 8, 2026, USAC will start using SAM.gov banking information to remit payment for all Universal Service Fund (USF) invoices. Service providers who have an active SAM.gov registration and have added their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to the FCC Form 498 do not need to take any additional actions. All invoices paid after September 8 will be disbursed to the bank account associated with their SAM.gov registration.

- **Payments Will Be Held for Service Providers Without an Active SAM.gov Registration and UEI**
 - All service providers who invoice USAC and receive USF disbursements must have their current SAM.gov UEI on their FCC Form 498 and must have a valid bank account associated with their SAM.gov registration.
 - Service providers who have not registered with SAM.gov or added their UEI to the FCC Form 498 should do so promptly. Once USAC transitions to SAM.gov banking information, service providers without a UEI in their FCC Form 498 can submit invoices, but their payments will be held until these steps are completed.
 - If a payment is held, USAC will send an email to the remittance contact for that USF program notifying them of the hold with the subject line "Action Required: Your Payment is on Hold."

For questions about a held payment, contact the USAC Customer Service Center at CustomerSupport@USAC.org.

- **Maintaining SAM.gov Registrations**
 - SAM.gov requires users to renew their registration annually. The renewal process is conducted through the SAM.gov website. Once users complete their renewal, SAM.gov will inform USAC; service providers do not need to take any action with their FCC Form 498.
- **More on USAC's Transition to SAM.gov Banking Information**
 - For background about USAC's requirement to use SAM.gov registration, see [this USAC newsletter](#). To learn more about USAC's transition to using SAM.gov payment data for USF invoices, visit USAC's [SAM.gov UEI Requirement](#) website.

Commitments for FY2026

To deliver funding decisions quicker, the RHC team began reviewing funding requests before the FY2026 filing window closed. The first FY2026 funding commitments were issued on June 18, 2026. To date, RHC's FY2026 processing status is as follows:

- HCF Program: 65.72 percent of FCC Forms 462 are committed (Approved, Denied, or Withdrawn)
- Telecom Program: 91.73 percent of FCC Forms 466 are committed (Approved, Denied, or Withdrawn)

As of August 28, 2026, RHC has processed 68.4 percent of applications received and 51.1 percent of total funds requested for both the Telecom and HCF Programs.

My Portal is No Longer Available to External Users

As a reminder, as of July 31, 2026, My Portal is no longer available to external users. User data has been migrated to RHC Connect, the RHC online application system. Prior to that date, users were advised that all documents and information needed from My Portal should have been saved to their device or local site. For information for the last ten years, please continue to use [Open Data](#) as a resource. If you need to request documents from My Portal, please reach out to the [RHC Customer Service Center](#).

Upcoming RHC Dates and Deadlines

FY2025 HCF Annual Report Due September 30, 2026

Per [FCC Order 19-78](#), to supplement the information collected from forms filed by the healthcare provider (HCP), the FCC requires all HCF participants who received funding in funding year (FY) 2025 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) to submit information to USAC about the telehealth applications used during the funding year. All HCF Program participants, both individual and consortia, must submit an annual report for each funding year in which they receive HCF Program support and for the life of a supported facility or service for which the program participant received large upfront payments. Failure to submit the required annual report(s) by the deadline may result in the denial of RHC program funding.

For FY2025, annual reports should be submitted in RHC Connect. Please use the [RHC Connect Annual Report User Guide](#) and visit the [Submit Annual Report](#) webpage to assist you with your submission.

FY2025 Invoice Filing Deadline

The invoice filing deadline for most single-year funding year (FY) 2025 funding commitments is October 28, 2026. Per [FCC Order 19-78](#), the invoice filing deadline is four months (120 days) from the later of the service delivery deadline, the date of a revised funding commitment letter (FCL) approving a post-commitment request, or a successful appeal of a previously denied or reduced funding request. This invoice filing deadline applies to both RHC programs.

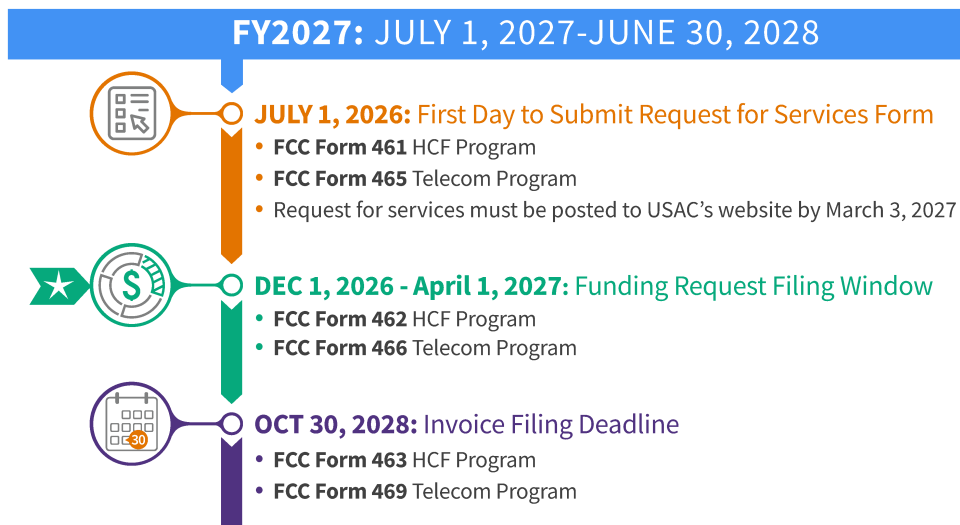
A single 120-day extension of the invoice filing deadline is available if the health care provider (HCP) or service provider is unable to meet the invoice filing deadline for any reason. The request for an extension must be submitted prior to the original invoice filing deadline. Thus, the deadline to request an extension of the invoice filing deadline for most single year FY2025 funding commitments is also October 28, 2026. Please submit invoice filing deadline extensions in RHC Connect. For more information, visit the following Post-Commitment Actions webpages:

- [Post-Commitment Actions](#) webpage – HCF Program
- [Post-Commitment Actions](#) webpage – Telecom Program

FY2027 Filing Window Dates

The FY2027 filing window will open on December 1, 2026, and close on April 1, 2027. As of today, applicants are welcome to submit their FCC Forms 461 and 465 to request services and begin the competitive bidding process. View the [FY2027 Program Calendar](#)

Rural Health Care Program: **Funding Year 2027**



Competitive Bidding for FY2027

The HCF Program's FCC Form 461 and the Telecom Program's FCC Form 465 (Request for Services Forms) may be submitted in RHC Connect along with any other competitive bidding documents, such as a Request for Proposal (RFP). Please use the following resources to submit these forms:

HCF Program FCC Form 461:

- [Prepare for Competitive Bidding & Request Services](#) webpage
- [Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 461](#) webpage

- [Competitive Bidding Exemptions](#) webpage
- [RHC Connect FCC Form 461 User Guide](#)
- [How to File the FCC Form 461](#) self-guided training video

Telecom Program FCC Form 465:

- [Prepare for Competitive Bidding & Request Services](#) – webpage
- [Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 465](#) webpage
- [Competitive Bidding Exemptions](#) webpage
- [RHC Connect FCC Form 465 User Guide](#)
- [Telecom Program Request for Services \(FCC Form 465\)](#) self-guided training video

Information Request Tips for the RHC Program

- For Information Requests, an auto-generated email will be sent directing HCPs to RHC Connect to respond. HCPs should respond through RHC Connect only. Please use the [Information Request Tip Sheet](#) to help you navigate Information Requests sent through RHC Connect.
- Use only Chrome, Firefox, or Microsoft Edge Internet browsers when using RHC Connect.
- When uploading a document as a response, the file must be limited to 10MB, and its file name should not contain any special characters – only letters and numbers.

Upcoming Webinars and Trainings

Please join the Rural Health Care (RHC) outreach team for the following webinars:

- Telecom Program Invoicing Best Practices Webinar – September 9, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- FY2026 Funding Requests Update Webinar – September 16, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
- Q3 Service Provider Training – September 23, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

RHC Wants to Hear from YOU!

The RHC outreach team strives to provide useful and timely online resources. Your feedback is crucial to ensure our systems are user-friendly, and that applicants and service providers have appropriate resources available. Would you take a moment to share your thoughts in response to the following question:

- Please provide feedback on the RHC Connect Enhancements described on the new [RHC Connect Updates](#) webpage. Have you used this webpage, and do you find it helpful?

Please send your feedback, questions, and/or insights to RHC-Outreach@usac.org. We appreciate your commitment to the RHC program's continued success.

Online Tools

Open Data Platform

As part of USAC's Open Data initiative, RHC program data is open and accessible to the public. Anyone is free to access and utilize the raw data submitted by Universal Service participants. Please note, data sets are regularly updated to include 10 years of information to avoid lowering the performance of USAC systems. The following data sets are available on the Open Data platform:

- [Rural Health Care Commitments and Disbursements Dataset \(FCC Form 462/466/466A\)](#)– This dataset contains data about funding decisions, total committed amounts, and total disbursement amounts for the RHC program.
- [RHC Posted Services Tool](#) – This tool allows service providers to search and filter service request information by individual HCPs and consortia seeking competitive bids.
- [Rural Health Care Posted Services Dataset \(FCC Form 461/465\)](#) – This dataset allows service providers to view and download all service request information provided by individual HCPs and consortia seeking competitive bids pursuant to the RHC program rules. The data is collected from FCC Forms 461 and 465, which collect the service request information.

- [SPIN Lookup Tool](#) – This tool can be used to view and export service provider profile data found in RHC Connect. This data includes important information regarding the service provider, such as contact information and details regarding the FCC Forms 498 and 499.
- [RHC Invoice Filing Deadline Tool](#) – This tool allows service providers and HCPs to look up the deadline to submit invoices for funding commitments.

If you have a problem downloading or opening information, please try to copy and paste the URL into a new tab in your browser. If the new browser window does not resolve the problem, please reach out to the [RHC Customer Service Center](#).

RHC Connect Reminders

Submit Third Party Authorizations in RHC Connect

If you are an HCP participating in the HCF or Telecom Program, and a consultant or other third party (i.e., anyone who is not employed by the HCP) will file forms on behalf of your site, you must file a Third-Party Authorization (TPA) with USAC. A TPA provides written authorization to USAC, allowing the third party to complete and submit forms on behalf of the HCP or consortium in the HCF or Telecom Programs. RHC program participants may now submit third party authorizations in RHC Connect. Please use the following resources to submit your TPAs:

- [Third Party Authorization webpage](#)
- [RHC Connect - Third Party Authorization User Guide](#)

Submit LOAs and LOEs in RHC Connect

As a reminder for consortia applicants, Letters of Agency (LOA) and Letters of Exemption (LOE) are also submitted in RHC Connect. Please use the following resources to submit LOAs and LOEs:

- [Letter of Agency](#)
- [Letter of Exemption](#)
- [RHC Connect LOA/LOE User Guide](#)
- [Sample LOA](#)

RHC Connect Updates – FCC Form 469

The FCC Form 469 is the Telecom Program invoicing form. Per [FCC Order 23-6](#), the Telecom Program invoicing process is like the invoicing process in the HCF Program. One key difference is that the service provider submits the FCC Form 469 to RHC Connect, the applicant receives an email alerting them of the submission, and the applicant officially submits the form to USAC by certifying and signing the form.

RHC Connect for Service Providers

As you submit the FCC Form 463 and FCC Form 469, please keep in mind that the General Contact on the FCC Form 498 is the only user for the company who can create additional logins for other users in that company. This is done within RHC Connect.

If you have trouble accessing RHC Connect, it may be a result of outdated information on the FCC Form 498 (Service Provider and Billed Entity Identification Number and General Contact Information Form). To correct the issue, please update your FCC Form 498 as soon as possible and, if applicable, your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on the [SAM.gov](#) webpage. For more information, please visit the [Manage Your 498 ID](#) webpage on the USAC website.

An [FCC Form 463](#) user guide as well as an [FCC Form 469](#) user guide, both specifically for service providers, are now available on the [Step 5: Invoice USAC](#) webpage in the RHC service provider section of the USAC website.

Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about the Rural Health Care Program, email RHC-Assist@usac.org or contact the RHC Customer Service Center (CSC) at (800) 453-1546 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET Monday through Friday for assistance. Use the [RHC CSC Tip Sheet](#) to learn about how the RHC CSC can and cannot help you.