FY2024 RHC Program Kickoff Webinar

July 05, 2023

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DISCLAIMER:

To accommodate all attendees, real-time closed captions will be present during this presentation. This is a new feature we are testing out to improve webinar accessibility for all. We understand it is a significant change and appreciate your patience. We apologize in advance for any transcription errors or distractions. Thank you for your support.

Housekeeping

- Use the "Audio" section of your control panel to select an audio source and connect to sound.

  - Turn on your computer's speakers, or

  - Use the call-in instructions in your confirmation email

- All participants are on mute.

- Submit questions at any time using the "Questions" box.
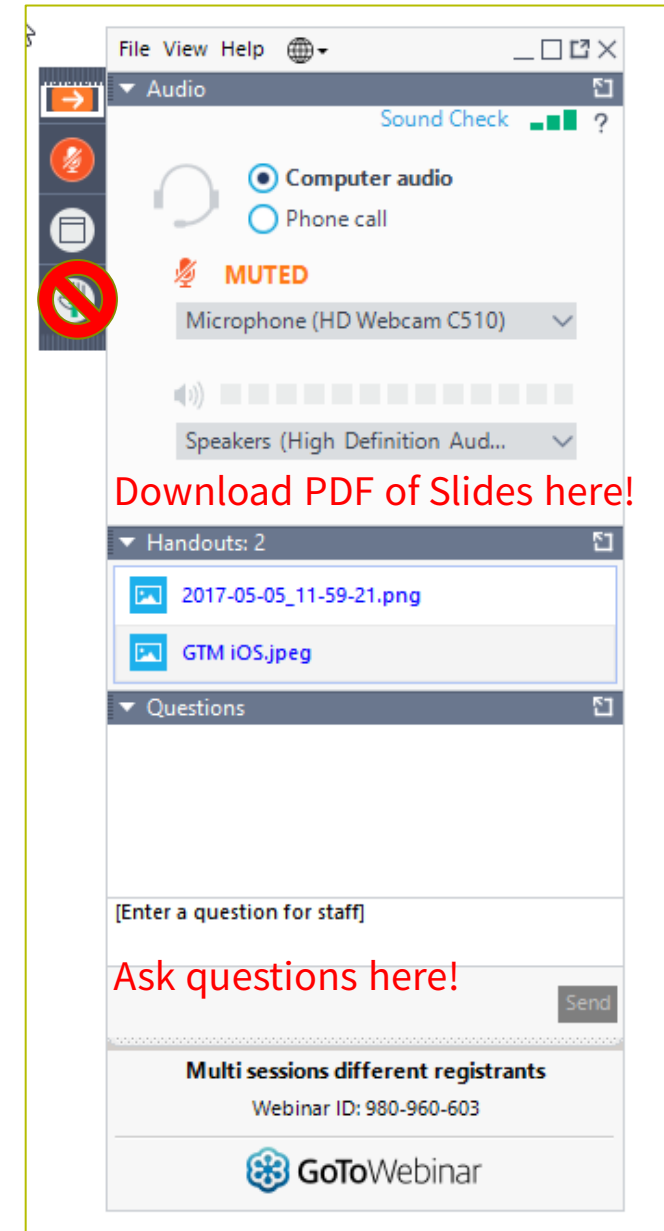
Meet Our Team

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Agenda

- Program Updates

- FY2024 Overview

- RHC Connect Updates

- Next Steps for Account Holders

- Best Practices
  - Managing Account Holders
  - Authorizations
  - Resources

RHC Program Glossary

Acronym	Definition
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
HCF	Healthcare Connect Fund
FY	Funding Year
HCP	Health Care Provider (your site)
HCP Number	Number associated with your site
PAH	Primary Account Holder
LOA	Letter of Agency (HCF program only)
TPA	Third Party Authorization

Program Updates

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FY2023 Funding Requests

- The FY2023 filing window closed on May 1, 2023.

    - No further FY2023 funding requests (FCC Forms 462 and 466) will be accepted.

- Funding Requests Reviews Started Earlier Than Ever!

    - RHC began funding request reviews before the filing window closed.

    - This means that you may have received an Information Request before May 1, 2023.

    - The first FY2023 funding commitments were issued on June 1, 2023, four weeks after the close of the filing window!

Information Request Reminders

- Forms with missing or incomplete information or documentation cannot be processed.

- If required information cannot be located on the submitted supporting documentation, USAC will send an **Information Request.**

- Information Requests are sent to all account holders.

- Account holders are given 14 calendar days to provide a response to the Information Request.

  - 11:59 p.m. ET on the 14th day is the deadline to respond to the Information Request.

- Information Requests not responded to within 14 calendar days **will result in a denial** of that form.

Information Request Reminders – RHC Connect (HCF Program)

- Account holders can receive HCF Program Information Requests through RHC Connect or by email.

- For forms that have been migrated to RHC Connect (FCC Forms 461, 462, and 463), an auto-generated email will be sent directing account holders to log into RHC Connect to respond.

  - **Account holders should respond through RHC Connect only.**

  - Please use the Information Requests in RHC Connect tip sheet as a resource.

- If an Information Request is received by email, click "Reply All" to respond.

RHC Connect Update

- RHC Connect is the new platform used to submit FCC forms for the RHC program
  - Forms for prior funding years and the Connected Care Pilot Program (CCPP) will remain in My Portal.
  - All forms for the Telecom program will eventually be migrated to RHC Connect.
- FCC Form 461 – FY2023 and forward
  - RHC Connect User Guide – FCC Form 461
- FCC Form 462 – FY2022 and forward
  - RHC Connect User Guide – FCC Form 462
- FCC Form 463 – FY2022 and forward
  - RHC Connect User Guide – FCC Form 463
- Post-Commitment Change Requests
  - RHC Connect User Guide – Post Commitment Change Requests

Supply Chain Order

- As a reminder, when service providers log in to <u>My Portal,</u> they will see two new <u>supply chain certifications</u> included in the FCC Form 463 and Telecom program invoice.

  The first certification affirms compliance with the <u>Section 54.9 prohibition</u> 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. The second certification affirms compliance with <u>Section 54.10</u>, which prohibits the use of any Federal subsidies on any communications equipment and services on the <u>Covered List</u>, which includes those offered by Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, and Dahua Technology Company, AO Kaspersky Lab, China Mobile International USA Inc., China Telecom (Americas) Corp. and their affiliates and subsidiaries.

- **FY2022 and FY2023 Account Holders**: If you requested services or equipment provided or that contain components of products produced by any of the listed covered companies or any of their parents, affiliates and subsidiaries in FY2023, you cannot invoice for these funds. Instead, you should immediately request a <u>service substitution</u> prior to invoicing in order to ensure complete program compliance.

- **FY2024 Account Holders:** As you proceed with competitive bidding beginning in July, please ensure you are not requesting funding for services or equipment from listed covered companies or any of their parents, affiliates and subsidiaries

Supply Chain Web Page

- [Supply Chain webpage](#)

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Connected Care Pilot Program (CCPP)

- Provides up to $100 million over a three-year period to support the provision of connected care services, with an emphasis on supporting these services for low-income Americans and veterans.

- The CCPP application window closed on December 7, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. ET and no further applications are currently being accepted.

- As of March 16, 2022, a total of 107 applications serving patients in 40 states plus Washington, DC were chosen.

- Pilot projects use the same forms as the HCF Program.

- Please visit the [FCC Connected Care Pilot Program](#) website for more information about the program.

Questions?

Funding Year 2024 Overview

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Funding Years and Filing Windows

- Funding Year
  - Starts July 1 and ends June 30 of the following calendar year
  - FY2024 = July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025
- Filing Window
  - A fixed period during which all submitted funding requests (FCC Forms 462 and 466) are treated as having been filed simultaneously for purposes of making funding decisions.
  - FY2024 Filing Window begins December 1, 2023, and ends April 1, 2024.

Rural Health Care Program: **Funding Year 2024**

FY2024: JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025

JULY 1, 2023: First Day to Submit Request for Services Form
- **FCC Form 461** HCF Program
- **FCC Form 465** Telecom Program
- Request for services must be posted to USAC's website by March 3, 2024

DEC 1, 2023 - April 1, 2024: Funding Request Filing Window Period
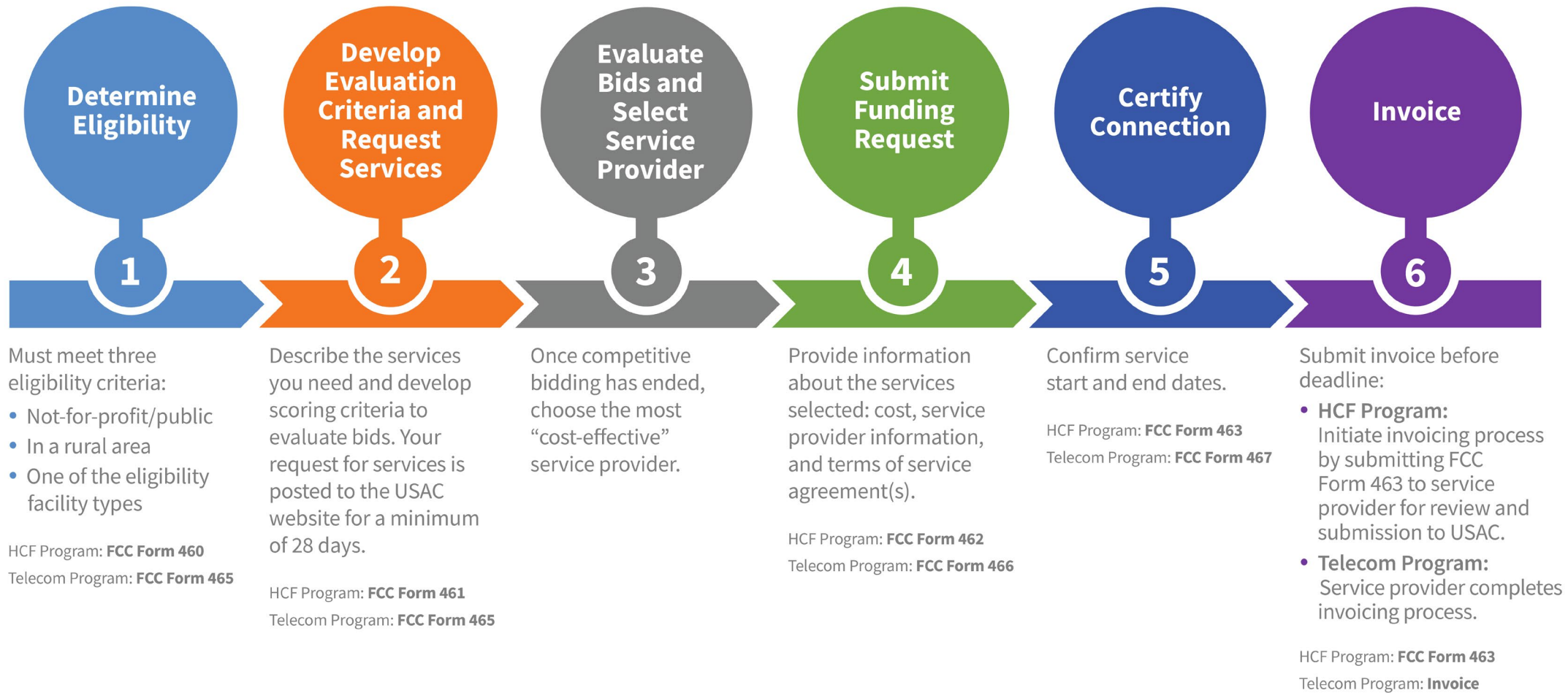- **FCC Form 462** HCF Program
- **FCC Form 466** Telecom Program

OCT 28, 2025: Invoicing Deadline
- **FCC Form 463** HCF Program
- **Telecom Invoice**

RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM
Application Process

1 Determine Eligibility

Must meet three eligibility criteria:
- Not-for-profit/public
- In a rural area
- One of the eligibility facility types

HCF Program: **FCC Form 460**

Telecom Program: **FCC Form 465**

2 Develop Evaluation Criteria and Request Services

Describe the services you need and develop scoring criteria to evaluate bids. Your request for services is posted to the USAC website for a minimum of 28 days.

HCF Program: **FCC Form 461**

Telecom Program: **FCC Form 465**

3 Evaluate Bids and Select Service Provider

Once competitive bidding has ended, choose the most "cost-effective" service provider.

4 Submit Funding Request

Provide information about the services selected: cost, service provider information, and terms of service agreement(s).

HCF Program: **FCC Form 462**

Telecom Program: **FCC Form 466**

5 Certify Connection

Confirm service start and end dates.

HCF Program: **FCC Form 463**

Telecom Program: **FCC Form 467**

6 Invoice

Submit invoice before deadline:
- **HCF Program:** Initiate invoicing process by submitting FCC Form 463 to service provider for review and submission to USAC.
- **Telecom Program:** Service provider completes invoicing process.

HCF Program: **FCC Form 463**

Telecom Program: **Invoice**

Upcoming Training

- Get ready for the FY2024 filing window by joining our *Request for Services Best Practices* webinars.

- We will focus on the FCC Forms 461 and 465 submission and competitive bidding. Participants will be able to ask questions.

    - HCF Program – August 2, 2023, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

    - Telecom Program– August 16, 2023, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

Resources

- Examples of Common Products and Services
  - [HCF Program](#)
  - [Telecom Program](#)
- [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – HCF program FCC Form 461
- [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – HCF program FCC Form 462
- [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – HCF program FCC Form 463
- [RHC Connect FCC Form 461](#) – training module
- [RHC Connect FCC Form 462](#) – training module
- [RHC Connect FCC Form 463](#) – training module
- [Information Requests in RHC Connect](#) – tip sheet

FCC 23-6: Order on Reconsideration, Second Report and Order, Order, and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

- On January 26, 2023, the FCC released an Order on Reconsideration, Second Report and Order, Order, and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking strengthening the procedures for RHC. These actions resolve petitions for reconsideration on issues from FCC Report and Order 19-78, adopt proposals from the February 2022 Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and propose and seek comment on further reforms to RHC program rules. These actions include:

  - Rule Changes

  - Potential Future Rule Changes

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FCC 23-6: Rule Changes

Rates determination in the Telecom Program:

- Eliminates rules requiring use of the Rates Database to determine urban and rural rates.

- Waivers allowing the use of previously approved rates for all urban and rural rates remained in place for FY2023.

- Beginning in FY2024, rules requiring rural rates to be calculated using Methods 1 through 3 and the pre-Rates Database calculation method for urban rates will be reinstated with the following minor changes:

  - For FY2024 and 2025, service providers will be permitted to use previously approved rates for rural rates that would otherwise be calculated under Method 3.

  - If there are no comparable rural rates within 30 percent of the speed of the requested service, service providers may use the rate for a higher bandwidth service that is otherwise similar to the requested service to justify a rural rate.

  - Similarly, if there are no comparable urban rates within 30 percent of the speed of the requested service, health care providers may use the rate for a higher bandwidth service that is otherwise similar to the requested service to justify an urban rate.

  - Affirms the decisions in FCC Order 19-78 that a non-telecommunications service that is functionally similar to a service requested in the Telecom Program should be considered similar to it when calculating rates and that services with advertised speeds 30 percent above or below the speed of the requested service be considered functionally similar to the requested service.

FCC 23-6: Rule Changes (continued)

Invoicing in the Telecom Program:

- Eliminates the use of the Health Care Provider Support Schedule (HSS) and moves invoice submission until after services have been provided.

Internal cap on upfront costs and multi-year commitments in the HCF Program:

- Limits the application of the internal cap on upfront costs and multi-year commitments in the HCF Program to when the total support available for the funding year is exceeded.
- When the internal cap applies, funding requests for upfront costs and the first year of multi-year commitments will be prioritized over the second and third year of multi-year commitments.

FCC 23-6: Potential Future Rule Changes

The Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposes:

- Adjustments to the methods used to determine rural rates using the service provider's own rates or competitor's rates, a new process for determining cost-based rural rates, and changes to the process for determining urban rates.

- Allowing a conditional approval of eligibility to allow entities that will soon become eligible to participate in the RHC program to begin competitive bidding and file a Request for Services.

- Moving the Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) change deadline to align with the invoice deadline.

The Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks comment on:

- Reinstating the cap on satellite services in the Telecom Program.

- Funding in the HCF Program for equipment used for Telecom Program supported connections.

- Whether there should be a process for changing the dates of evergreen contracts after a funding commitment is issued.

- Revisions to data collected in the Telecom Program.

Questions?

Next Steps for Account Holders

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Next Steps for *New* Account Holders

- Complete your FCC Form 460 to determine eligibility (HCF Program only).

- You can submit your FCC Form 460 at any time during the funding year.
  - Watch the [RHC 101 Learning Module](#).
  - Watch the [HCF Eligibility Learning Module](#).
  - Watch the [How to Find an Existing HCP in My Portal](#) video.

- Ensure you have the necessary authorizations completed.
  - [Letter of Agency](#)
  - [Third Party Authorization](#)

- Register for the Request for Services Webinars.
  - HCF Program– August 9, 2023, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET - [Register](#)
  - Telecom Program– August 16, 2023, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET - [Register](#)

- Review [competitive bidding resources](#).

New Account Holders: Eligibility Best Practice

- When submitting an FCC Form 460, we recommend uploading supporting documentation necessary to validate form data to the "Supporting Documentation" section of the form.

- This includes any documentation that is relevant to the required fields of the FCC Form 460:

  - 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); and

  - Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) accreditation to verify a community health center.

Next Steps for *Current* Account Holders

- Ensure authorizations are up to date through FY2024

- Consortia account holders: Ensure consortium is majority rural

- Submit FCC Form 461 or 465 for competitive bidding

- Register for the Request for Services Webinars
  - HCF Program – August 9, 2023, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET – Register
  - Telecom Program– August 16, 2023, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ET - Register

- Review competitive bidding resources

Questions?

Managing Account Holders

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Three Types of Account Holders

- **Primary Account Holder (PAH)**
  - Must work for the legal entity of the HCP
  - Responsible for the accuracy of information submitted to USAC
  - Can only be one individual
  - Mandatory for every HCP

- **Secondary Account Holder**
  - Must work for the legal entity of the HCP
  - Responsible for the accuracy of information submitted to USAC
  - "Back up" for PAH
  - Can have multiple Secondary Account Holders for one HCP

- **Tertiary**
  - Hired by HCP to file forms on behalf of the HCP (e.g., consultants)
  - Must have a valid Third-Party Authorization (TPA)

- Download guidance for updating account holders: HCF Program, Telecom Program

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Consultant Registration Process

- Once the HCP provides the consultant's or outside expert's contact information to USAC, USAC will issue a unique registration number for that consultant or outside expert.

- The consultant's or outside expert's assigned registration number will be linked to the HCP's organization.

- No further action is required from the HCP or consultant.

Primary Account Holder – HCF Program

- In HCF, the Primary Account Holder is responsible for managing all other account holders in the "Account Holders" tab of My Portal including removing Tertiary Account Holders with expired TPAs.

Primary Account Holder – HCF Program

Primary Account Holder – Telecom Program

- In Telecom, the Primary Account Holder is responsible for adding or removing all other account holders in the "My Account Settings" tab in My Portal.

Primary Account Holder – Telecom Program

Consultant Account Holder Rights

- Consultants must have tertiary rights in the HCF Program.

- Consultants must have secondary rights in the Telecom Program.

- Consultants gain account holder rights through a Third-Party Authorization (TPA)
  - The TPA can be uploaded to an FCC Form 460 or 465 before submission or added by the Primary Account Holder in My Portal.
  - Information and a sample template for the TPA can be found on our website.

Documents Available in My Portal

HCF	Telecom
• Submitted and approved FCC Forms 460, 461, 462, 463	• Submitted and approved FCC Forms 465, 466, 467
• HCF Funding Commitment Letters (FCL)	• Telecom Funding Commitment Letters (FCL)
• PAH Account Holder Management	• PAH Account Holder Management
• Network Cost Worksheet (NCW)	• Copies of submitted contracts
• Copies of automated emails from USAC (form approvals)	• Supporting documentation
	• Copies of automated emails from USAC (info requests, form approvals)

Questions?

Authorizations

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Authorizations

- **Letter of Agency (LOA):** Provides authorization to the consortium project coordinator to act on behalf of each participating member HCP within the consortium. This is mandatory for HCP member sites not owned and operated by the consortium.

- **Letter of Exemption (LOE)**: Provides authorization to the consortium project coordinator to file forms for sites that are owned and operated by the consortium lead entity or Consortium Leader.

- **Third Party Authorization (TPA):** Provides authorization to a third party/consultant to complete and submit forms on behalf of an HCP.

- **Note:** The Primary Account Holder is responsible for ensuring that expired LOAs and TPAs are updated or removed from My Portal.

Consortium Member
Owned by entity other than consortium leader

FILE **LOA**
LETTER OF AGENCY

Consortium Member
Owned and operated by consortium leader

FILE **LOE**
LETTER OF EXEMPTION

Consultant
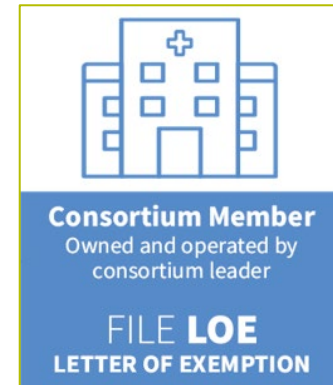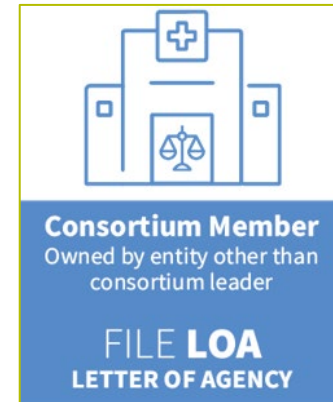
Authorizations for FY2024

- Eligibility for funding in FY2024 requires Letters of Agency (LOA) and Third Party Authorizations (TPA) authorized through FY2024, at a minimum.

- Before submitting a form, please check to ensure authorization documents are up to date.
    - FCC Forms 462 and 466 submitted with expired LOAs or TPAs will result in Information Requests.

- Download a Sample TPA or Sample LOA.

- For more information about submitting LOAs, please see the submission guide.

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Resources

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Resources

- Examples of Common Products and Services
  - HCF Program
  - Telecom Program
- RHC Connect User Guide – HCF program FCC Form 461
- RHC Connect User Guide – HCF program FCC Form 462
- RHC Connect User Guide – HCF program FCC Form 463
- RHC Connect FCC Form 461 – training module
- RHC Connect FCC Form 462 – training module
- RHC Connect FCC Form 463 – training module
- Information Requests in RHC Connect – tip sheet

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RHC Learn

- [Webinars](#)

- [RHC Monthly Newsletter](#)

- [Videos](#)

RHC Program Customer Service Center

Email: RHC-Assist@usac.org

- Include in your email
  - HCP Number
  - FRN Number
- Phone: **(800) 453-1546**
  - Hours are 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET
  - Monday- Friday

RHC Customer Service Center

The RHC Customer Service Center CAN	The RHC Customer Service Center CANNOT
Answer general questions regarding both programs	Determine eligibility of a specific site or service before an official form submission
Provide account holder information for an HCP	Review a form or document for accuracy before an official submission
Provide clarity regarding FCC Report and Order 19-78	Contact a service provider or other account holder on someone else's behalf
Provide helpful resources and best practices for forms	Provide documents that are not already accessible in My Portal
Assist with My Portal	Transfer a call to a specific form reviewer

Questions?

Thank You!