

Telecom Program Funding Request - Best Practices for FY2027

Submitting the FCC Form 466 in RHC Connect

November 18, 2026

Universal Service Administrative Co.

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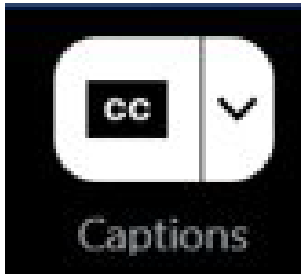
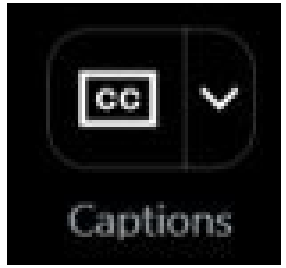
- Toggle CC off and on at your preference.



Captions ON



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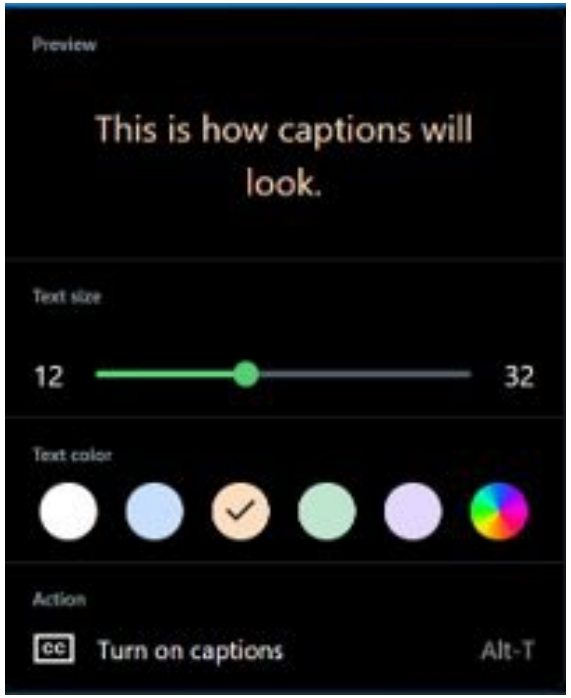

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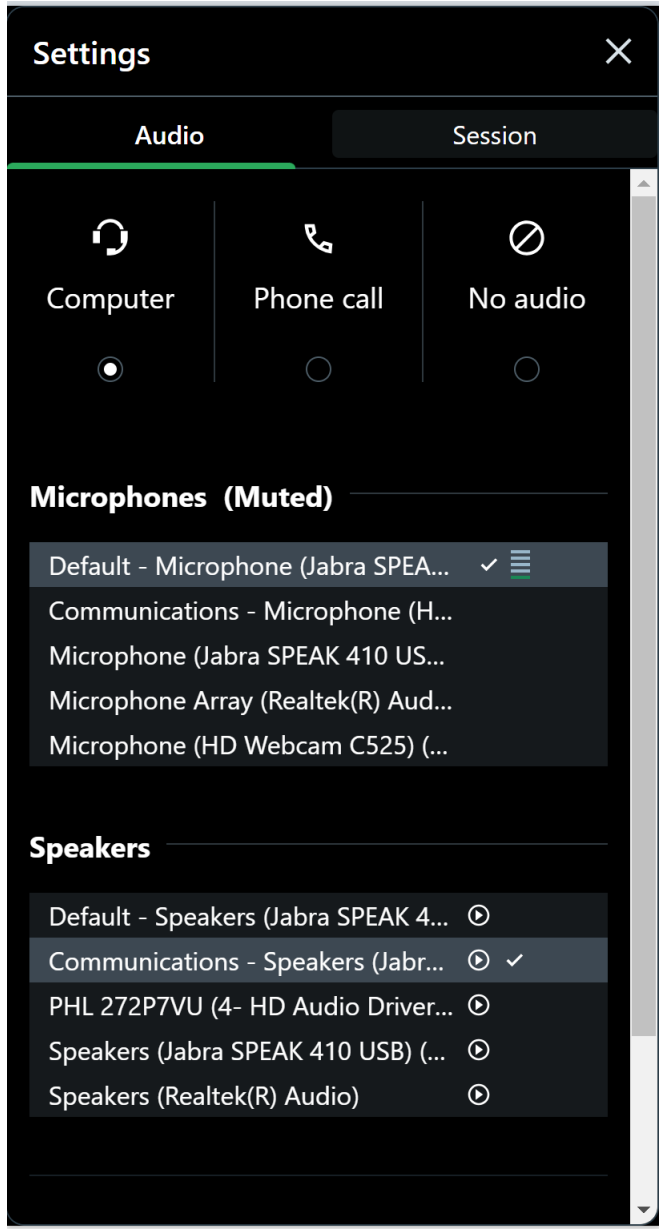
- Audio is available through **your** computer's speakers.
- Use the "Audio" section of your control panel to select an audio source and connect to sound.
  - Turn on your computer's speakers, or
  - Use the call-in instructions in your confirmation email
- All participants are on mute. To ask questions, submit questions at any time using the "Questions" box.
- If your audio or slides freeze, restart the webinar.



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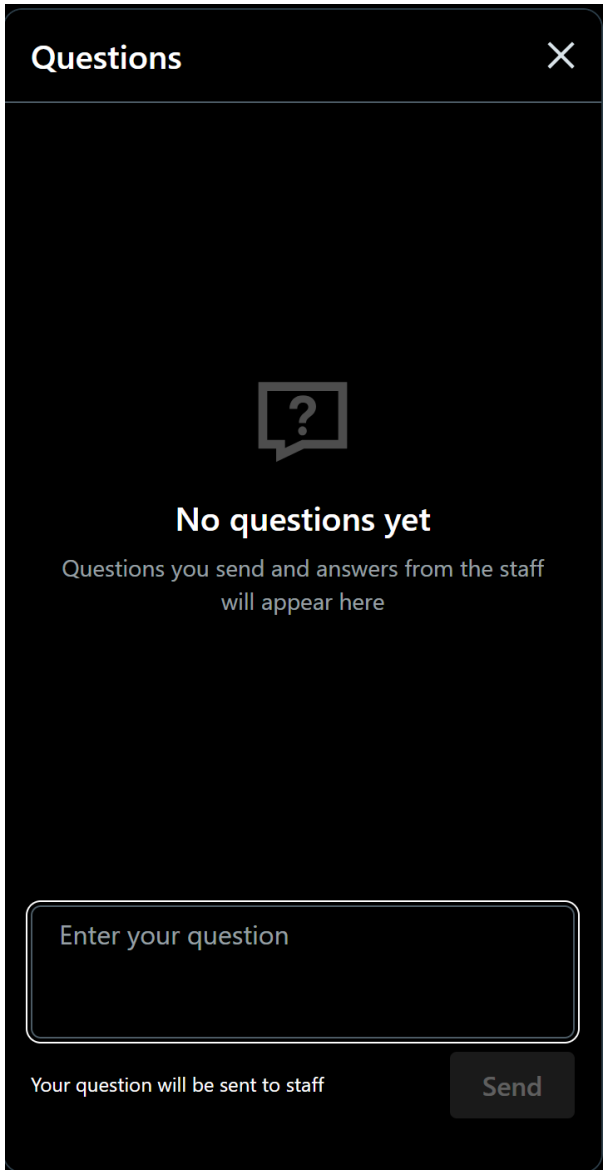
- A copy of the slide deck is in the **Materials** section of the webinar panel.
- Enter questions at any time using the **Questions** box.
- **This webinar is being recorded.** A copy of the webinar slides and recording will be posted to our Webinars webpage.







Meet Our Team



Blythe Albert

Advisor of Program Management | RHC Outreach

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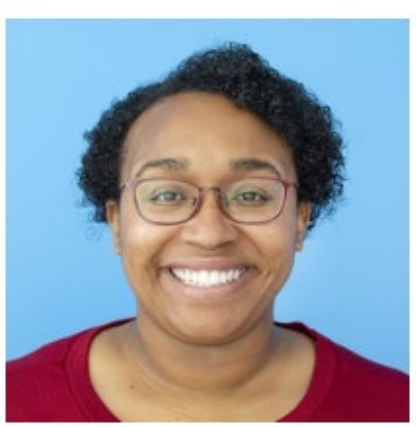

Ecatarina Grant

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Agenda

- Overview
- Program Updates
- Submitting the FCC Form 466 in RHC Connect
  - RHC Connect Walkthrough
  - Competitive Bidding Exemptions
  - Urban/Rural Rate Updates
- Best Practices and Resources

By the end of the webinar, you will be able to…

- *Understand what a funding request is, who must submit, and when to submit*
- *Complete and submit an FCC Form 466 in RHC Connect*
  - *Avoid common errors*
  - *Upload a contract for evergreen designation*
  - *Submit your funding request before the deadline*
- *Respond to Information Requests*
- *Locate important resources on the USAC website*

Glossary

Acronym	Definition
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FY	Funding Year
HCP	Health Care Provider (your site)
HCP Number	Number associated with your site
PAH	Primary Account Holder
ACSD	Allowable Contract Selection Date
SPIN/498 ID	Service Provider Identification Number

Funding Request Overview

Telecom Program Funding Request
Best Practices for FY2027

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 eligible facility types

HCF Program: **FCC Form 460**
Telecom Program: **FCC Form 460**

2 Develop Evaluation Criteria and Request Services

Describe the services you need and develop scoring criteria to evaluate bids. Your request for competitive bids 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 Invoice

Submit invoice before deadline:

- **HCF Program:** Applicant initiates invoicing process by submitting FCC Form 463 to service provider for review and submission to USAC.
- **Telecom Program:** Service provider initiates invoicing process by submitting FCC Form 469 to applicant for review and submission to USAC.

HCF Program: **FCC Form 463**
Telecom Program: **FCC Form 469**

Funding Year 2027 Calendar



What is a Funding Request?

- After the competitive bidding period has ended and a service provider is selected; the next step is to submit a funding request to USAC.
- Applicants request Telecom funding using an FCC Form 466 (Funding Request Form).
- The FCC Form 466 collects information about the services selected and applicants certify that those services are the most cost-effective option of the offers received.
  - Specifies the type of service(s) ordered, cost, name of service provider(s), and terms of the service agreement(s).

When to Submit a Funding Request

- Funding Year (FY) 2027 Filing Window:
  - December 1, 2026 – April 1, 2027, 11:59 p.m. ET.
- Applicants are unable to submit funding request forms outside of a filing window.
  - Draft FCC Forms 466 may be created in RHC Connect but cannot be submitted before the filing window opens.
- USAC suggests that applicants submit funding requests as early as possible during the filing window.
- The FCC Form 466 must be submitted by the close of the filing window to be considered for funding.

Information Requests

- Forms with missing or incomplete information or documentation cannot be processed.
- If USAC requires information that cannot be located on the submitted supporting documentation, this will result in an Information Request.
- All account holders will receive all Information Requests.
- Applicants are given 14 calendar days to provide a response to the Information Request.
  - 11:59 p.m. ET on the 14th day would be the last time to respond to the Information Request.
- Information Requests not responded to within 14 calendar days **will result in a denial** of that form.

Submission Checklist

- ❑ Document(s) confirming the monthly cost for your services (e.g., a copy of your bill dated within the requested funding period) or the most currently available bill as the filing window closes before the funding year opens.
- ❑ Rural and urban rate documentation.
- ❑ A copy of all bids that were received for your request for service including the winning bid, all bids that were rejected and any bids that were disqualified and why.
- ❑ A list of the bid evaluation criteria and copy of the bidding evaluation matrix.
- ❑ A list of people who evaluated bids including title, role, and their relationship to the applicant.
- ❑ Internal documents related to the selection of the service provider (if applicable).
- ❑ Copies of any correspondence with service providers prior to and during the competitive bidding process (if applicable).
- ❑ A copy of any new contract signed for your services.
- ❑ Contact information for the service provider and all responsible account holders.
- ❑ The start and end location of your services.

*** Any information that cannot be located on the submitted supporting documentation will result in an Information Request.**

Submission Tips

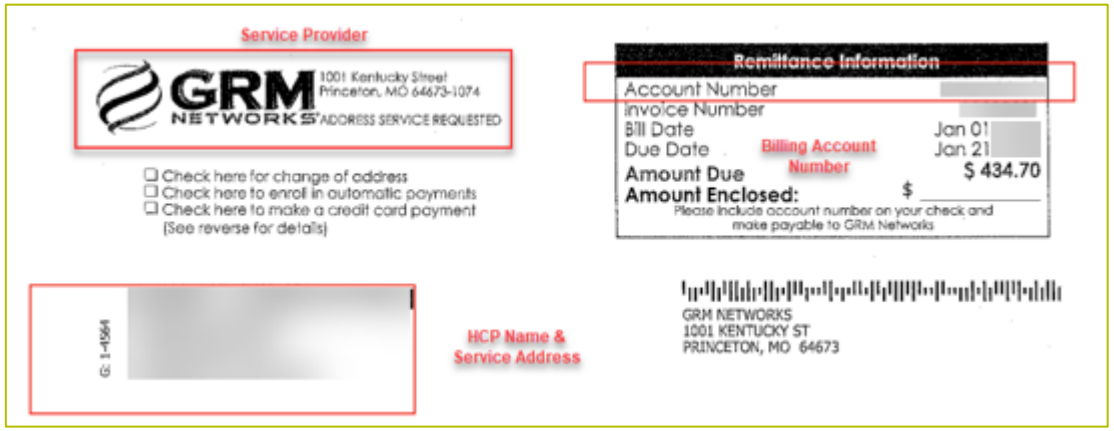
- Use the information on the original documentation (bill, contract, or service order) to enter the data into the FCC Form 466 and upload that document into RHC Connect with your submission.
- Remember you must also submit:
  - **Copies of all bids received** including winning, losing and disqualified,
  - **List of the people who evaluated the bids** with their names and titles,
  - **Evaluation documents** including the scores received by bidders based on the weighted criteria posted in the FCC Form 465; and
  - **Award letter** to the winning vendor (if applicable).
- Per program rules, you must have all supporting documents on hand at the time of submission, and they must be uploaded when you submit your forms.

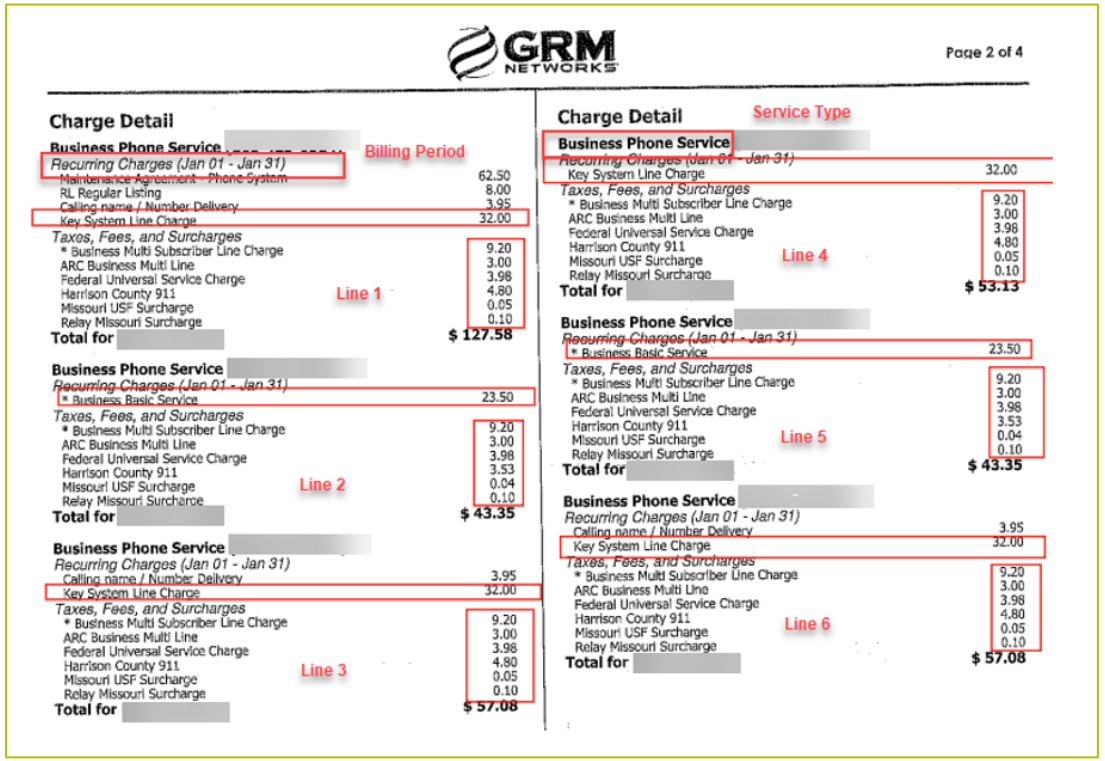
Submission Tips (continued)

- It is helpful to submit a cover letter that includes a summary of your submission.
- Recommended things to include in your cover letter:
  - Where to find information about your circuit in the supporting documentation (i.e., Ethernet 20M - $XX.XX – Page 5 of Invoice).
  - Highlight/label any documentation that is submitted.
- Information that isn’t clearly identified via supporting documentation must be confirmed by the service provider.
  - It is the HCP’s responsibility to reach out to the service provider to get any missing information.
  - USAC cannot reach out to the service provider on an HCP’s behalf.

Identifying Applicable Charges on a Bill/Invoice - Example

- Annotated invoice clearly reflects HCP, Billing Account Number (BAN), Circuit Location(s), Service Type, and Monthly Recurring Charge (MRC)





Questions?

Program Updates

Telecom Program Funding Request Best Practices for FY2027

My Portal Decommissioning

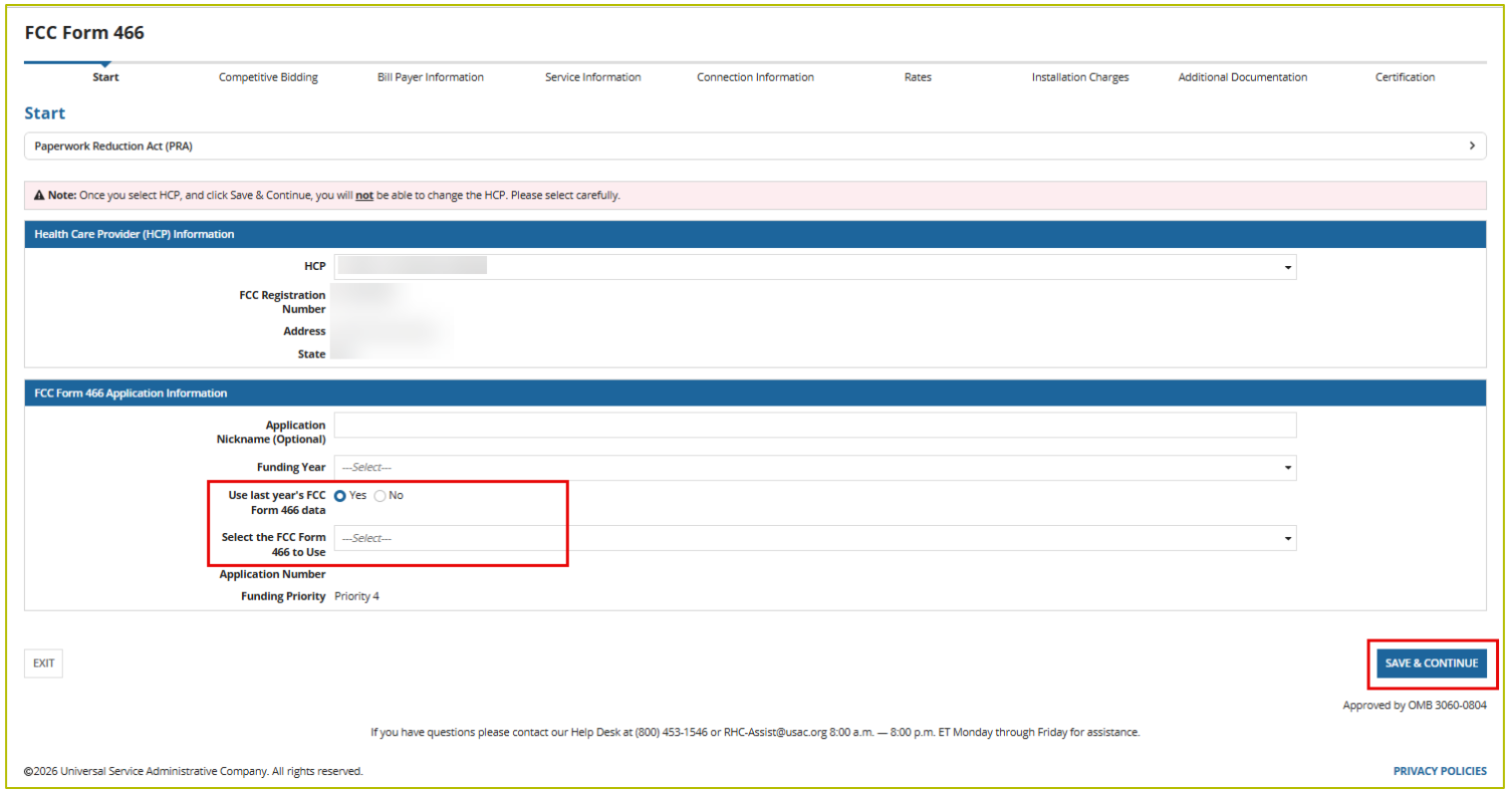
- As of July 31, 2026, My Portal is no longer available to external stakeholders.
- User data has been migrated to RHC Connect.
- For information for the last ten funding years, please continue to use Open Data as a resource.
- To retrieve documents from My Portal, please submit your request to the RHC Customer Service Center.

RHC Connect Updates - Duplicate Check FCC Form 466

- FCC Form 466 duplicate check on intake - FCC Form 466 displays a duplicate check on submission.
- This enhancement includes the following:
  - Applicants will see a **Potential Duplicates** table showing forms that match duplicate criteria.
  - Applicants can add comments when the system flags their FCC Form 466 as a potential duplicate.
  - Duplicate validation on the **Signature** page:
    - The FCC Forms 466 **Signature** pages validate against duplicate criteria and display a clear error message when a potential duplicate exists.
    - Applicants will be prevented from completing the FCC Forms 466 until they review and address duplicate warnings.

RHC Connect Update - Copy Prior Year Form

- Applicants now have the option to prepopulate FCC Forms 466 with data from the previous year using the copy prior year form option.
- Reduces manual entry, saves time, and helps prevent input errors by reusing validated information.
- All fields are editable so minor changes can be made.



Reminder – Conditional Eligibility

- Health care providers may be granted conditional eligibility, thus allowing them to initiate competitive bidding and request funding while awaiting a final eligibility determination.
- Applicants must disclose those sites that are approved for conditional eligibility on the FCC Form 465.
- Though funding may be requested on an FCC Form 466 for sites with conditional eligibility, no funding will be committed to HCPs until they are fully eligible per RHC program rules.
- For more information about conditional eligibility, please refer to 47 CFR. § 54.601(c).

FY2027 Urban and Rural Rates

- 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 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.

Supply Chain Order

- As a reminder, when service providers log in they will see two supply chain certifications included in the FCC Form 463 and FCC Form 469.
- The first certification affirms compliance with the Section 54.9 prohibition on USF for specified transactions with companies deemed to pose a national security threat. 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.
- As you proceed with competitive bidding, please ensure you are not requesting funding for services or equipment from listed covered companies or any of their parents, affiliates and subsidiaries.
- If you request 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, your request will be denied.
- Supply Chain webpage

Questions?

Submitting the FCC Form 466

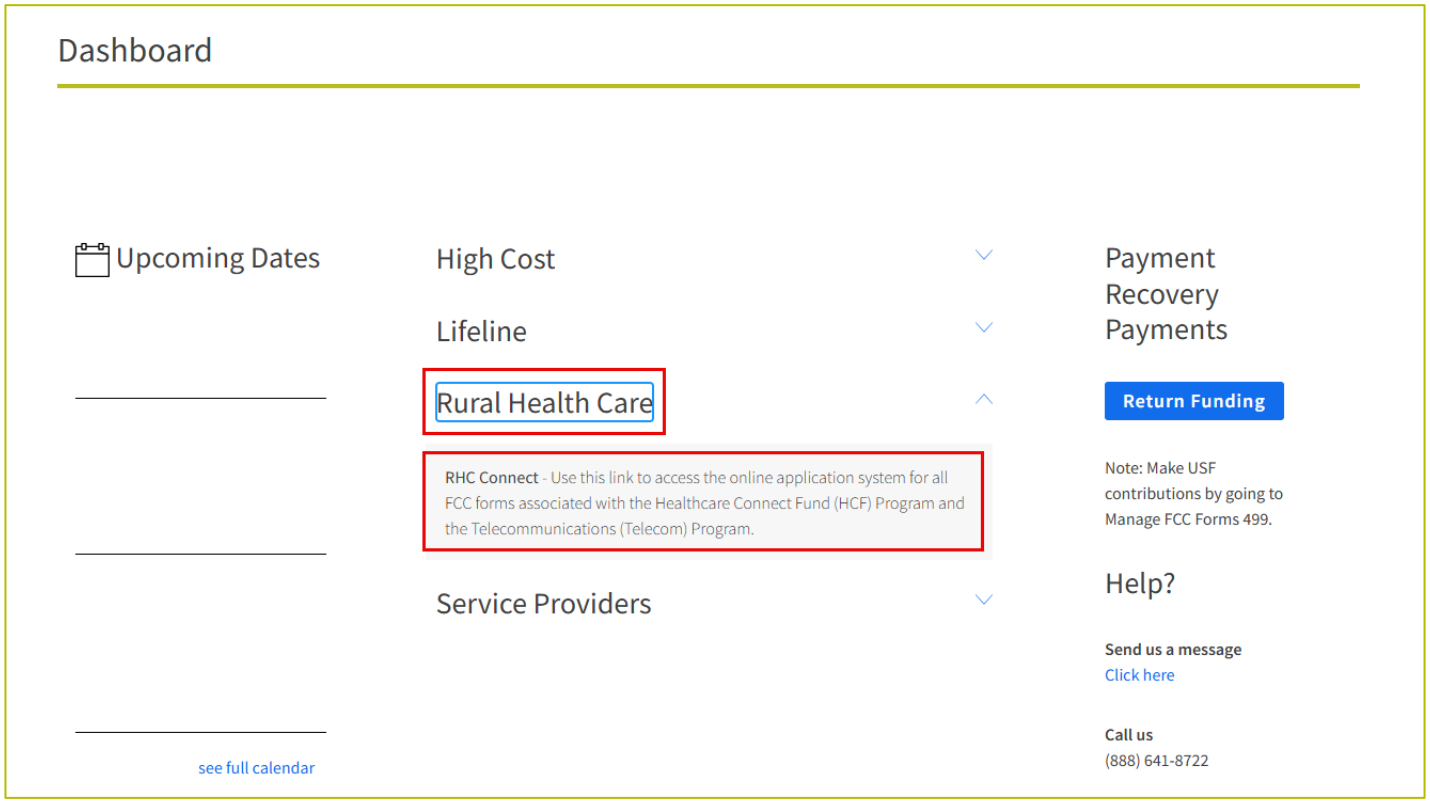
Telecom Program Funding Request
Best Practices for FY2027

Authorizations and User Management

- Consultant Registration – USAC will issue a unique registration number to the consultant or outside expert and that number will be linked to the HCP's organization.
- Manage Consultant Groups in RHC Connect.
- Submit all third-party authorizations (TPA) in RHC Connect using the following online resources:
  - Authorizations and User Management Webinar (April 15, 2026)
  - Third-Party Authorization webpage
  - RHC Connect User Guide – TPA

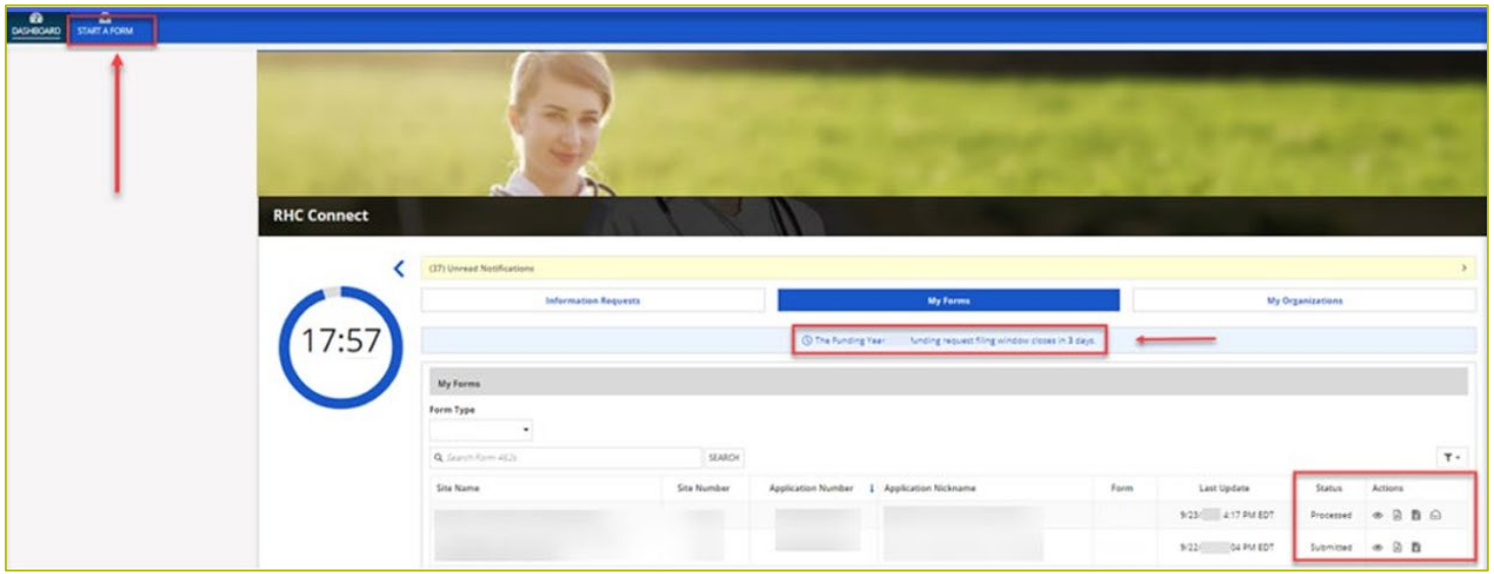
Landing Page

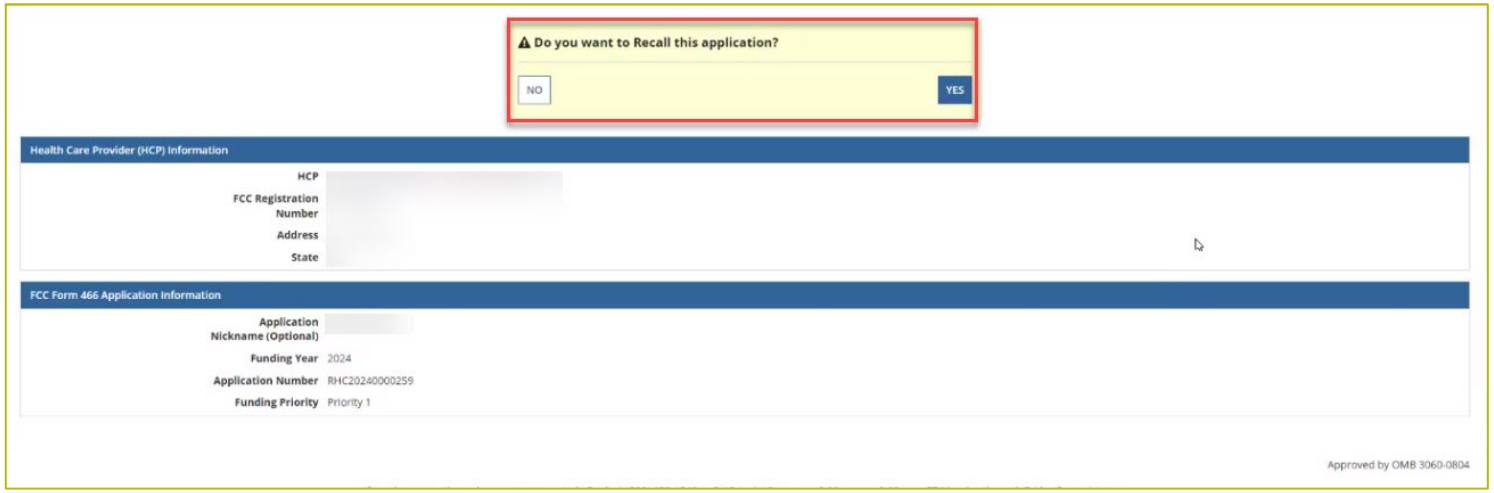
- Log in and click **Rural Health Care** then **RHC Connect**.



Dashboard

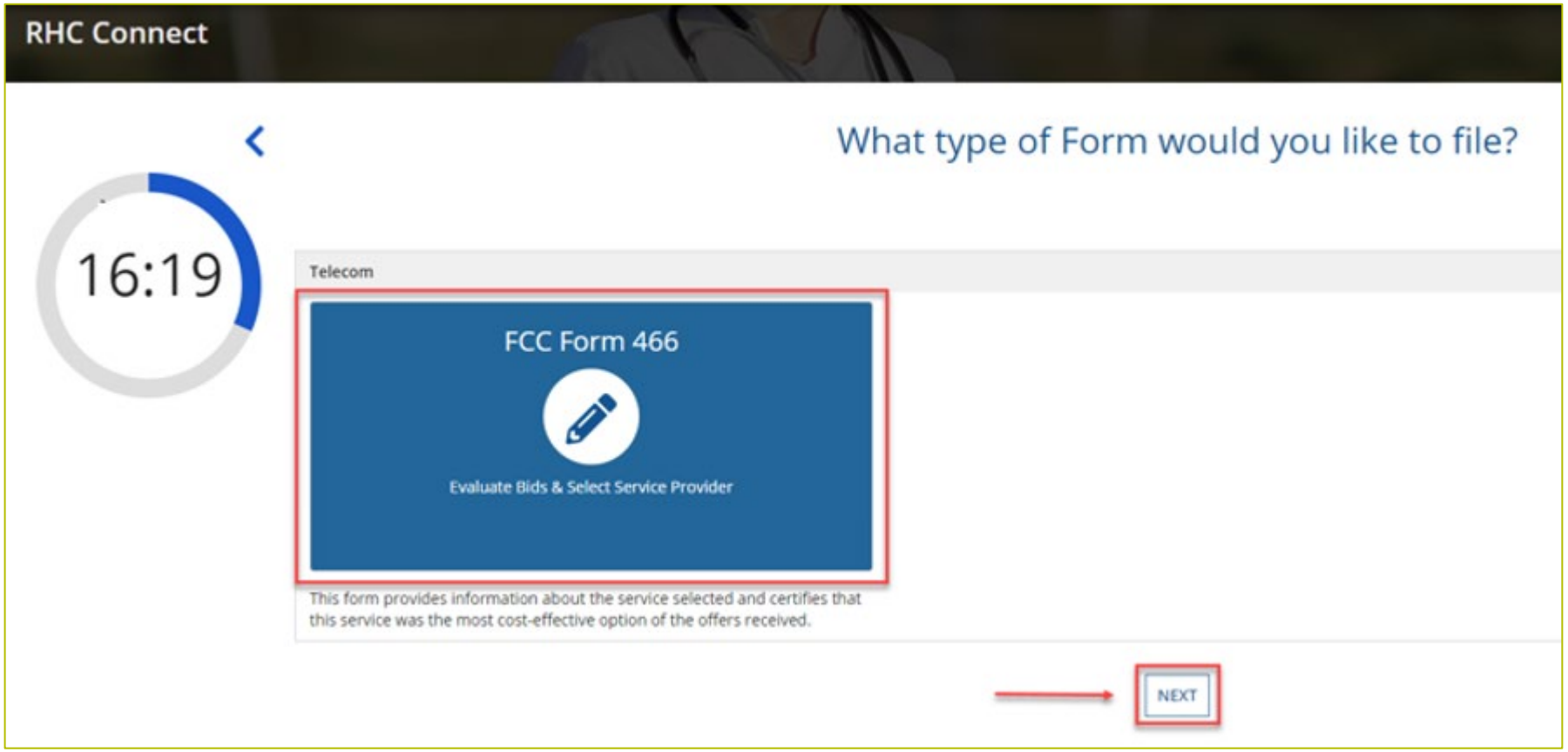
- Here you can start a new form, view the status of submitted and processed applications, resume working on a draft or delete a draft FCC Form 466.
- If the form is recalled, the bottom screen will appear, and an email will be sent to all account holders.
- There's a countdown banner displaying the days remaining in the filing window.





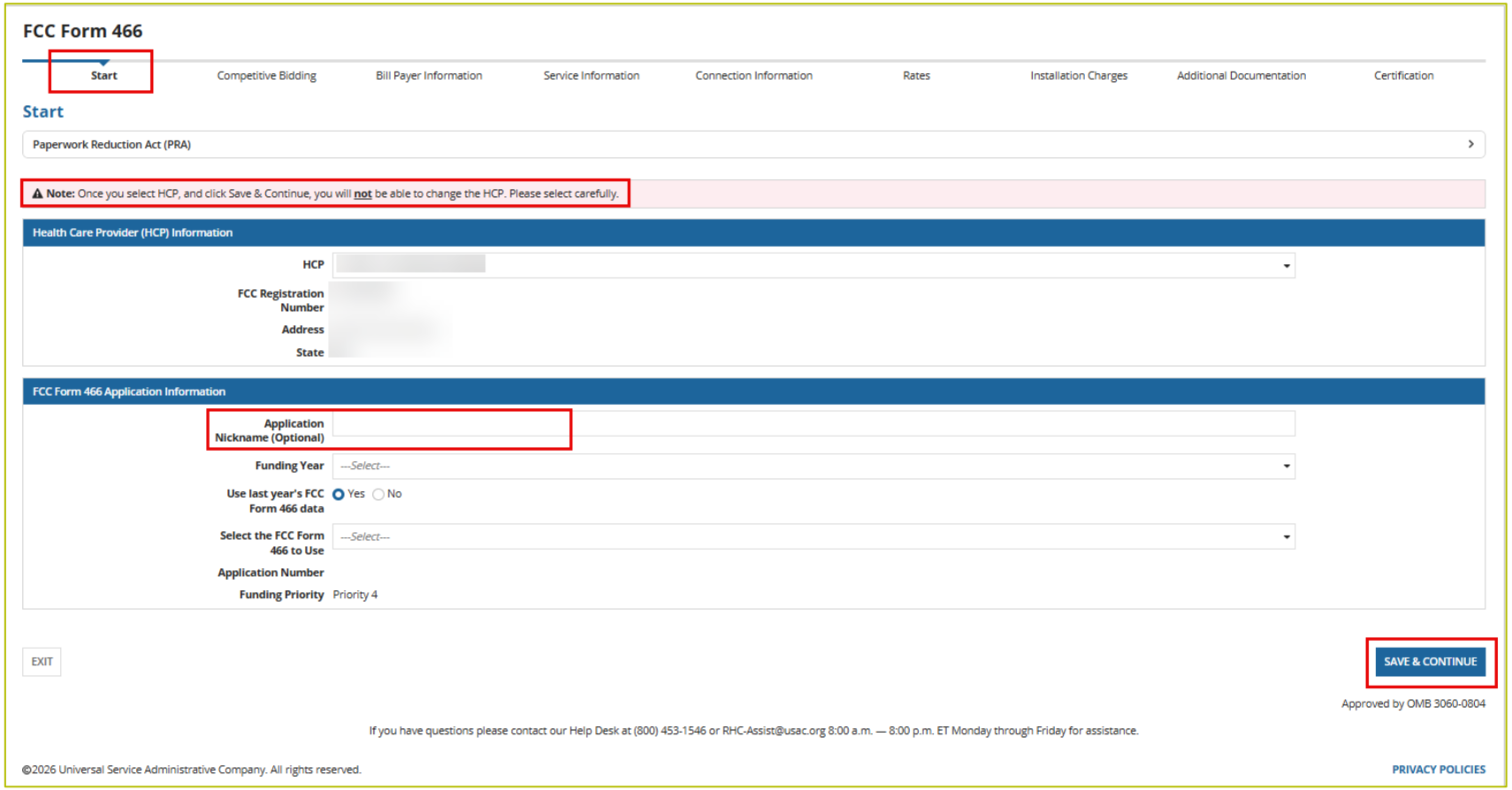
Start Form

- Click **FCC Form 466** then click **Next**.



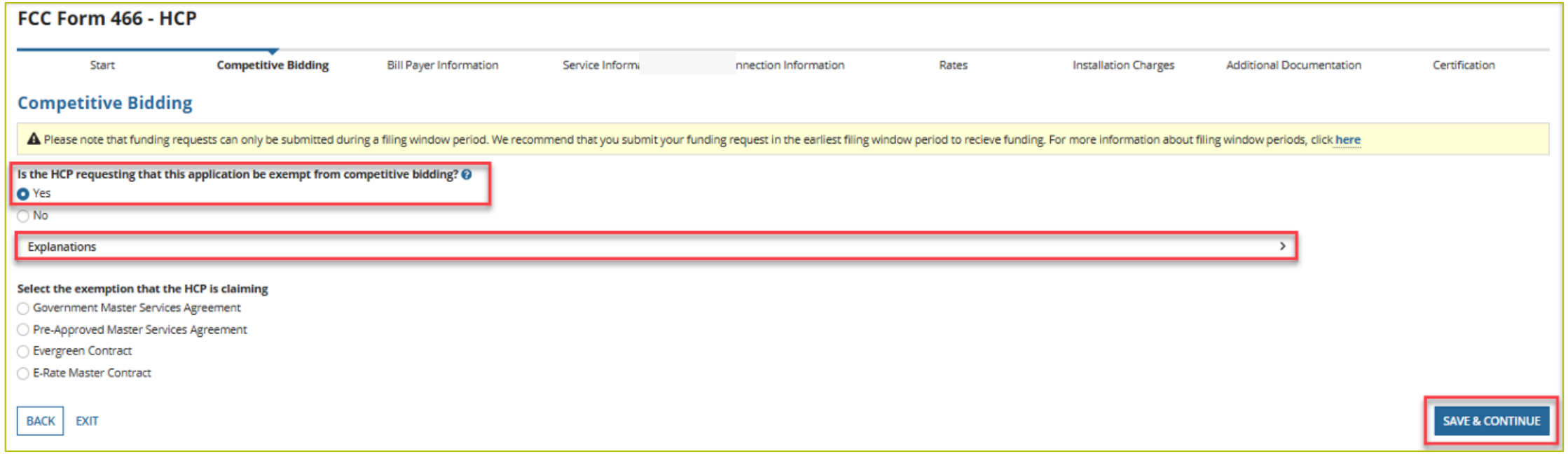
Start Page

- Select HCP from the drop-down menu.
- Enter an **Application Nickname**.



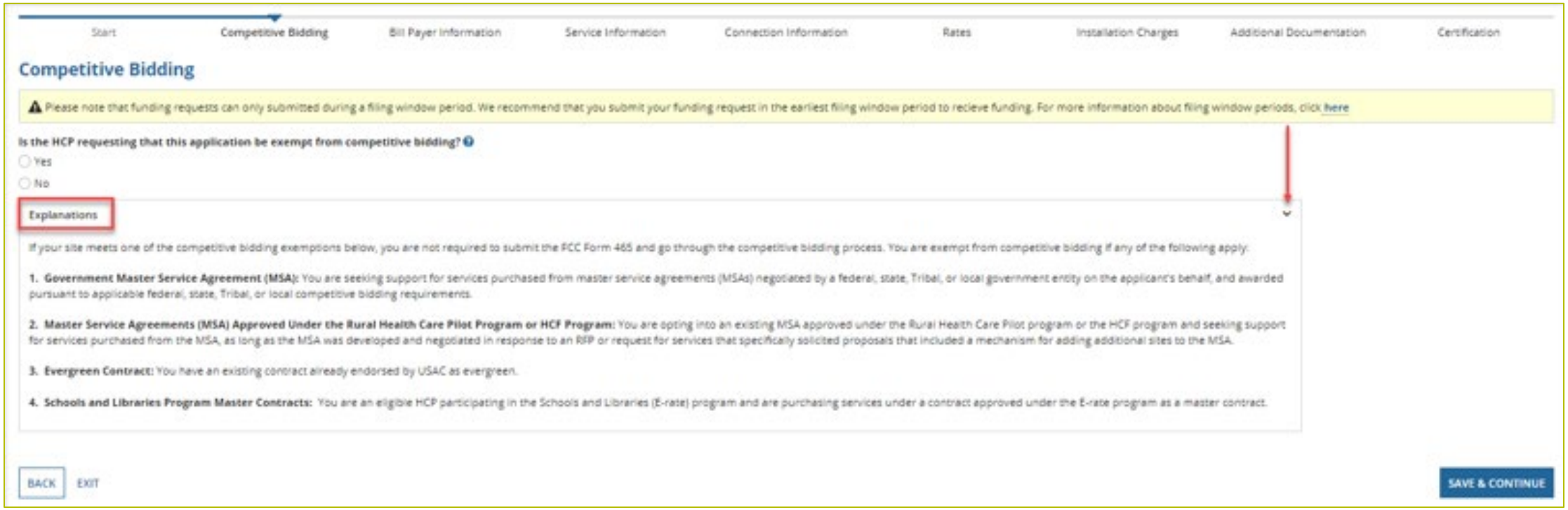
Competitive Bidding Page

- Select **Yes** if you are exempt from competitive bidding and **No** if you completed your competitive bidding process.



Competitive Bidding Page(continued)

- Click the arrow beside **Explanations** to view a description of each competitive bidding exemption.



Competitive Bidding Exemptions

- Purchasing services from a government master service agreement (GMSA) negotiated by a federal, state, Tribal, or local governmental entity which was awarded pursuant to applicable competitive bidding requirements;
- Requesting support using contracts previously approved by USAC (MSA under the RHC Pilot Program or the HCF Program);
- Using an active multi-year contract designated as “evergreen” for the RHC program (exemption applies for the life of the contract); or is
- Using a contract approved under the E-rate program.

Evergreen Contracts

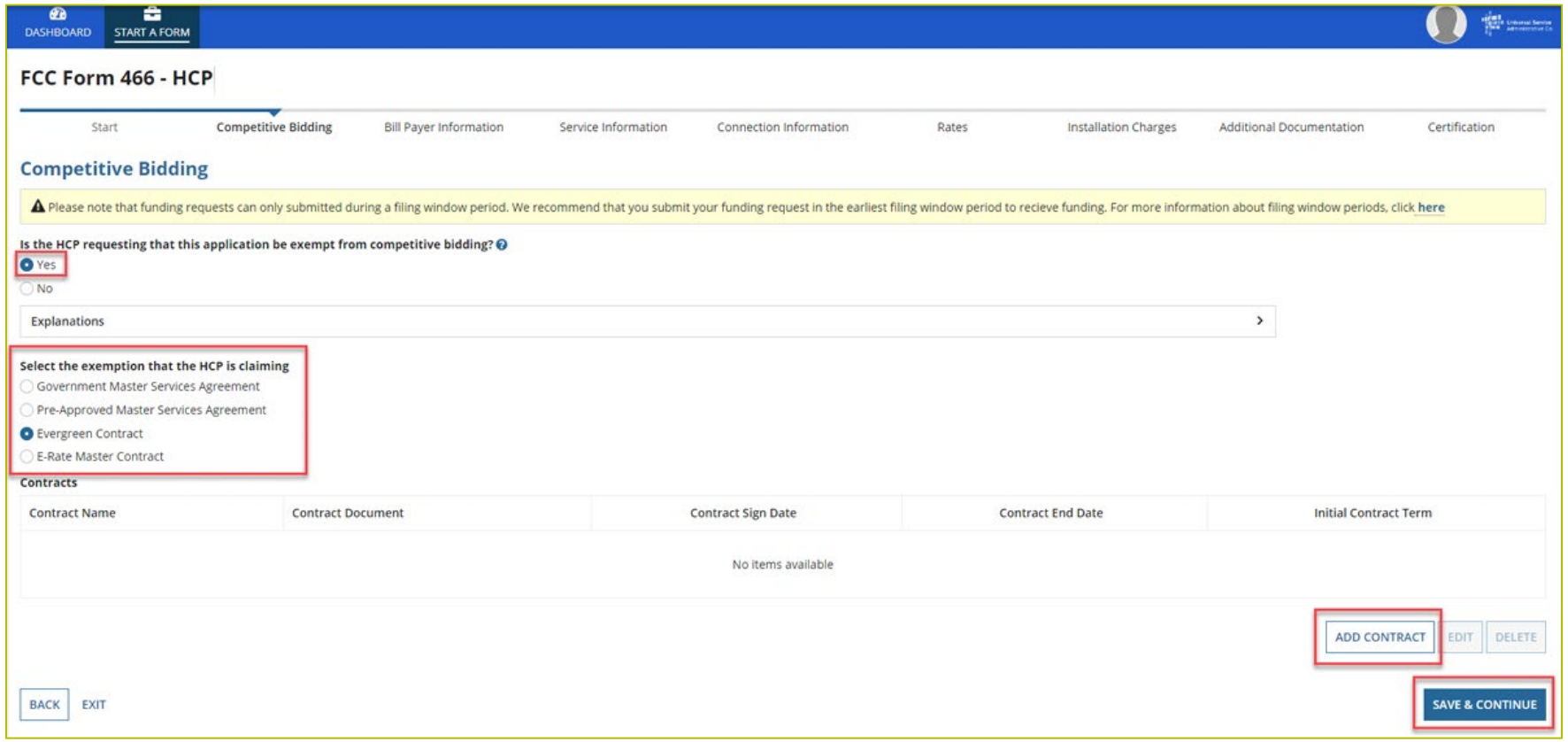
- An **evergreen contract** is a multi-year contract between an HCP and a service provider that has been reviewed by USAC in a prior funding year request and endorsed as evergreen, which allows an applicant to bypass competitive bidding for the life of the contract.
- Applicants who will be exercising voluntary extensions for an approved evergreen contract should list the remaining expense periods as one expense and the length of the extension as another expense.
  - Voluntary extensions must be memorialized in the contract and must have been included in the original evergreen endorsement.
  - The decision to extend the contract must have been made before a funding request is filed.
  - Voluntary extensions cannot exceed five years in aggregate.

Evergreen Contracts (continued)

- Applicants will be notified of an evergreen determination on their **Funding Commitment Letter (FCL)**. To be considered evergreen, the multi-year contract must meet the following criteria:
  - Both parties are identified,
  - Contract is signed and dated by the HCP or consortium leader,
  - Contract specifies the bandwidth, type, quantity, and terms of service,
  - Contract has a specific duration,
  - Contract specifies the cost of services to be provided,
  - Contract includes the physical addresses or other identifying information of the HCP sites purchasing from the contract; and
  - Contract must be entered into as a result of competitive bidding.

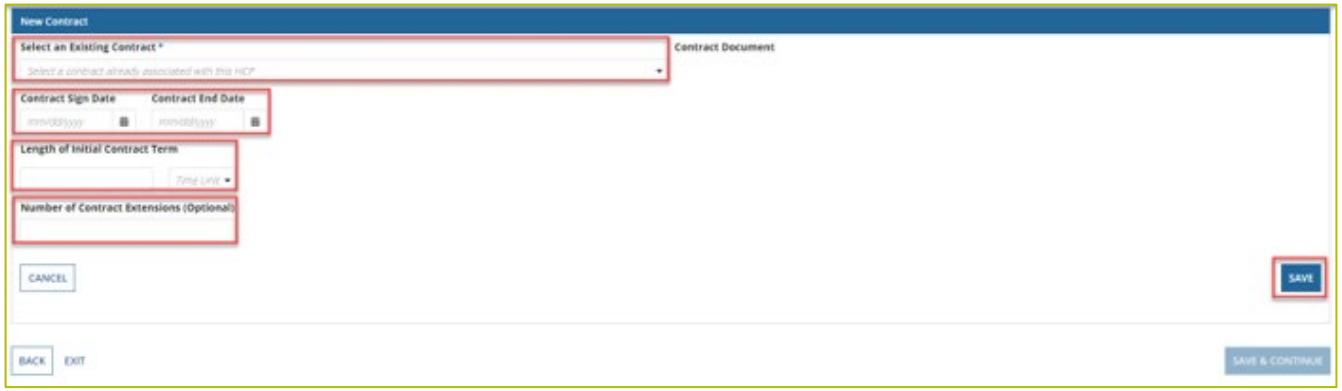
Competitive Bidding Page – Exemptions (continued)

- Select the exemption from the list of eligible exemptions.
- Click **Add Contract** at the bottom right on the screen.



Competitive Bidding Page – Exemptions (continued)

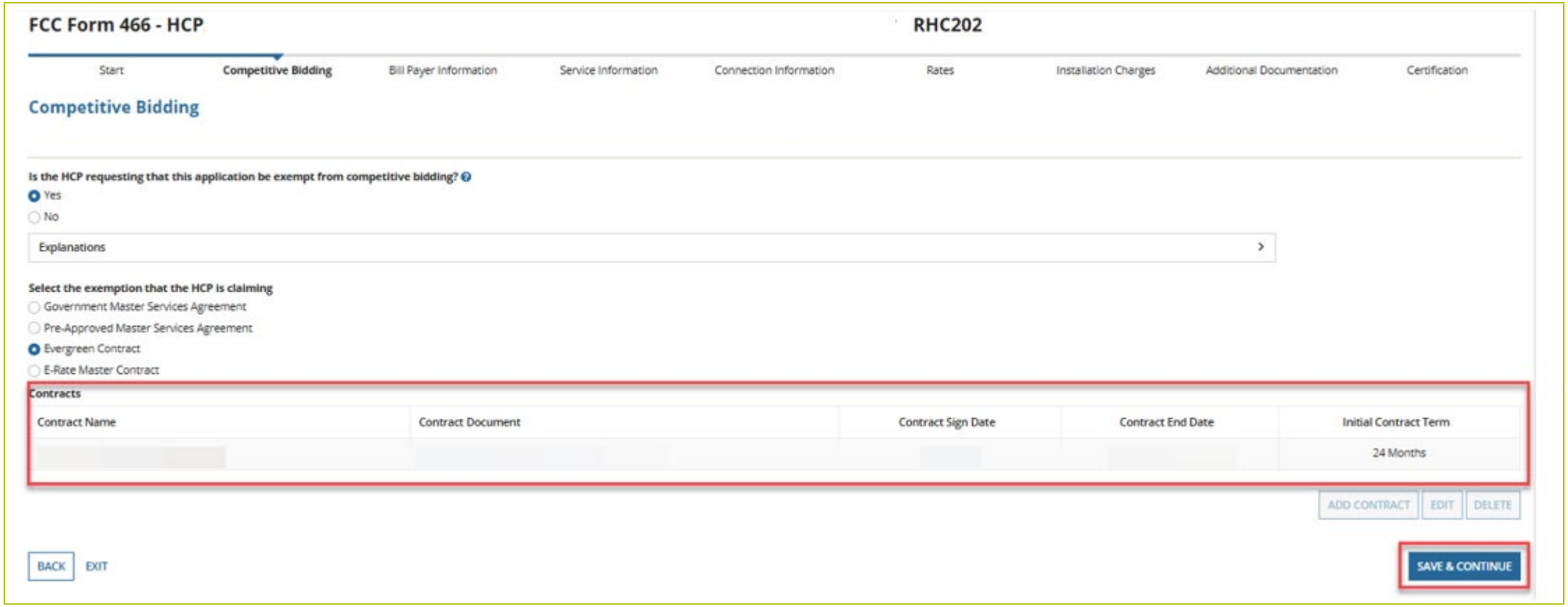
- If using an evergreen contract, an existing contract must be selected from the drop-down menu.
- For all other exemptions, upload a new contract or choose an existing contract.
- Enter the relevant information about the contract in the fields and click **Save**.





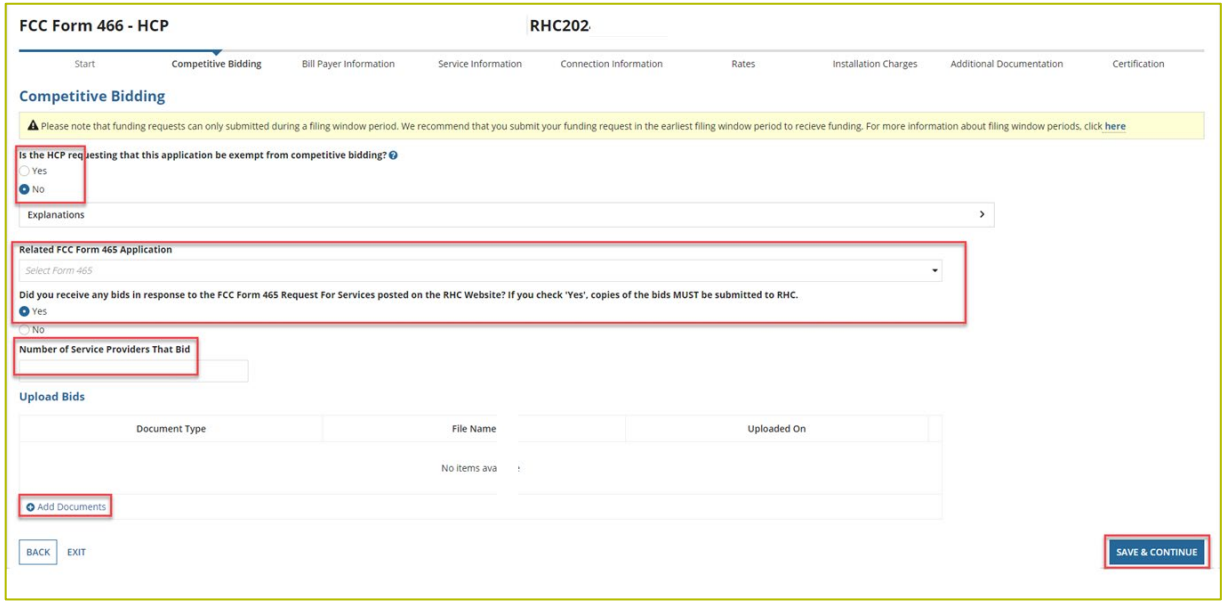
Competitive Bidding Page – Exemptions (continued)

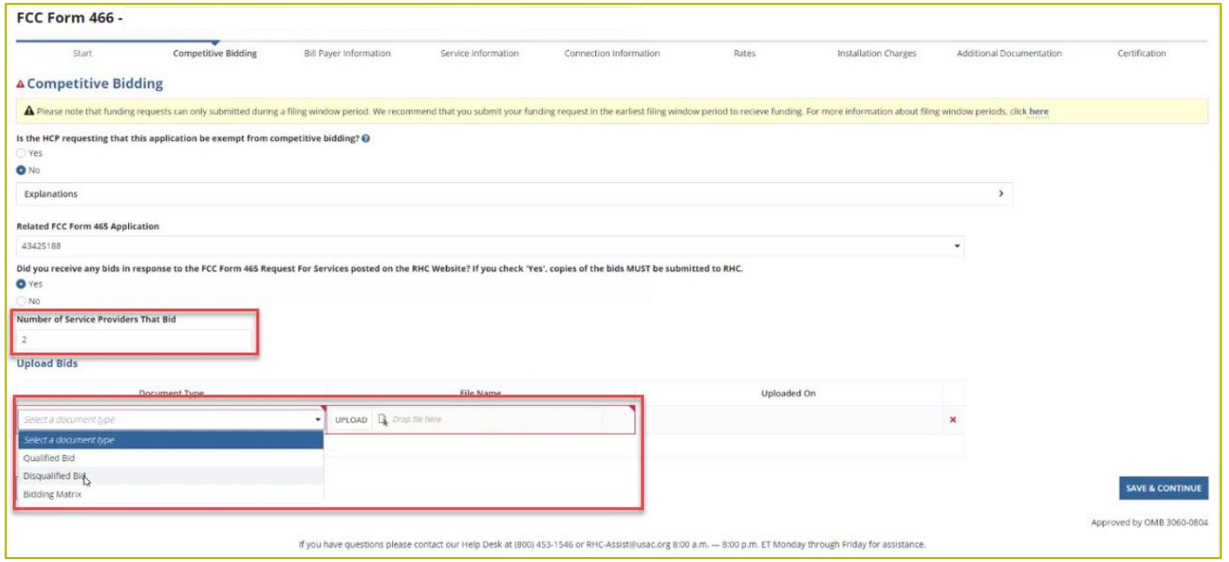
- Once the contract is selected, click **Save and Continue**.



Competitive Bidding Page - Non-Exempt

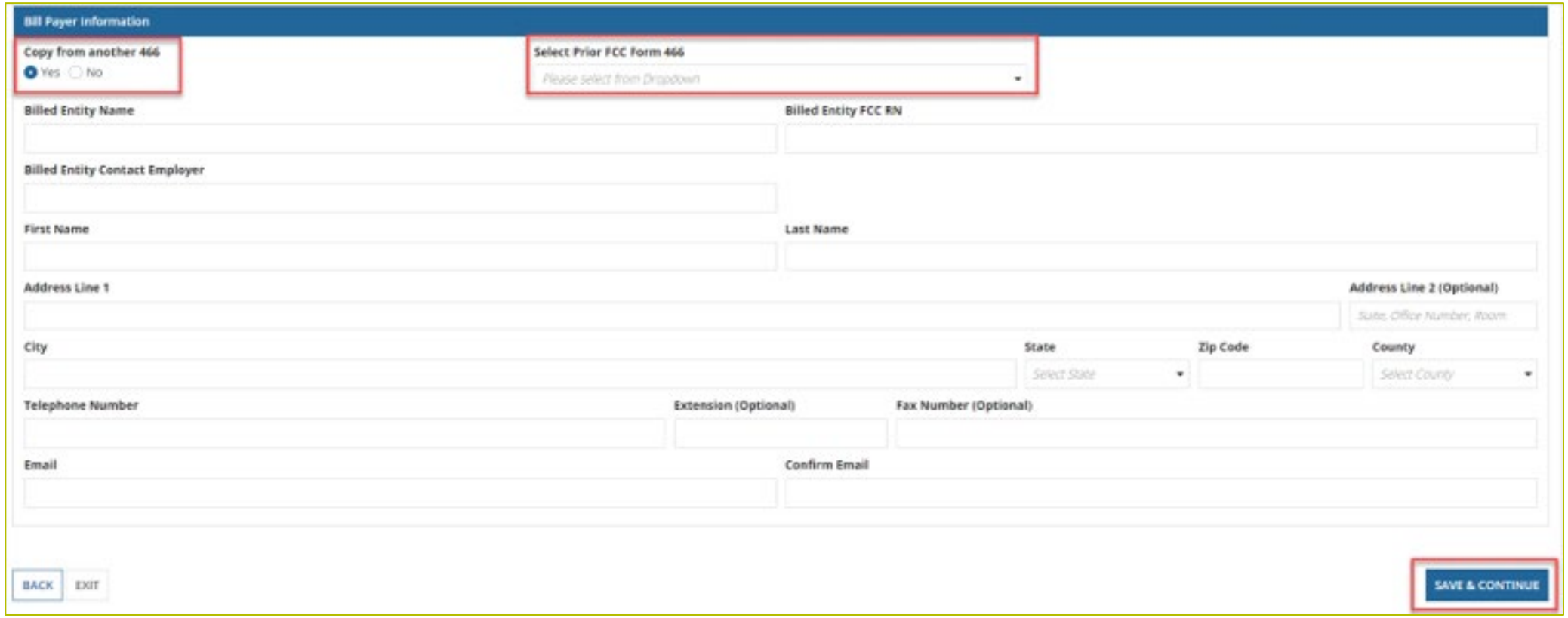
- Click **No**.
- Choose related FCC Form 465 from drop-down menu.
- Enter number of bids received.
- Upload copies of bids by clicking **Add Documents** hyperlink.
- Select the document type from the drop-down menu, then click **Save & Continue**.





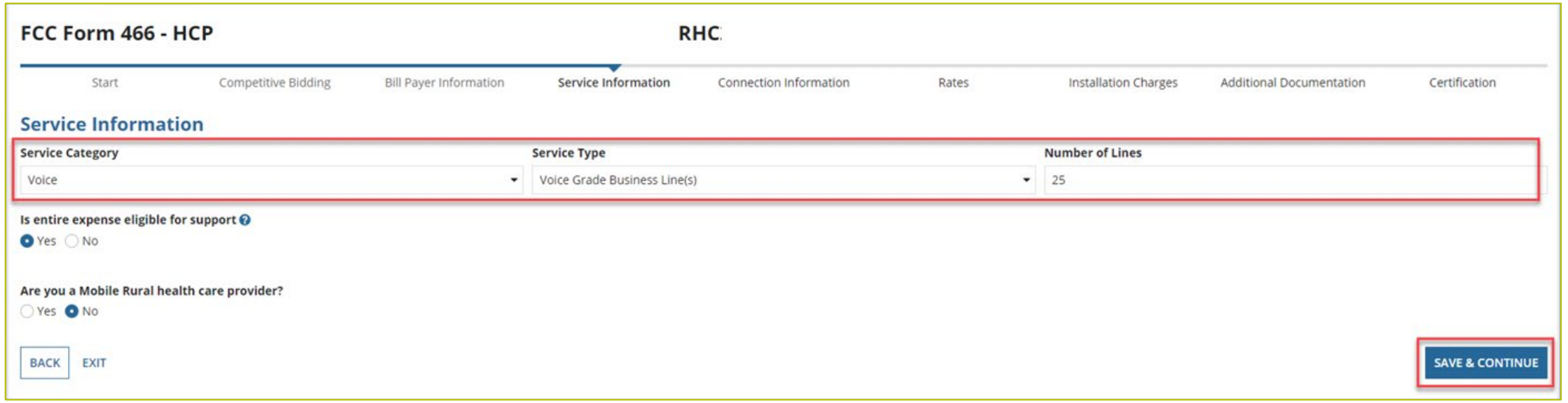
Bill Payer Information Page

- Click **Yes** to copy **Bill Payer Information** from another FCC Form 466.
- Click **No** to enter required information, then click **Save & Continue**.



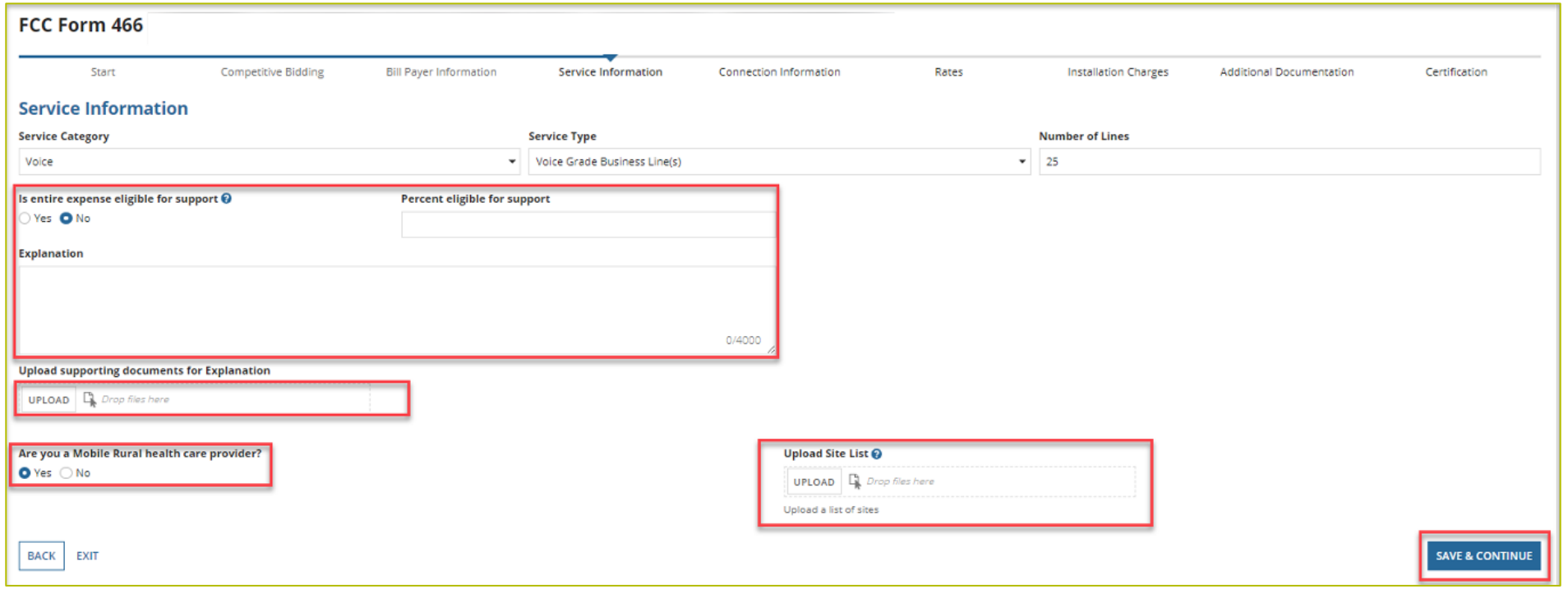
Service Information Page

- Select the **Service Category** and the **Service Type** from the drop-down menus.
- For voice services, enter **Number of Lines, then** click **Save and Continue**.



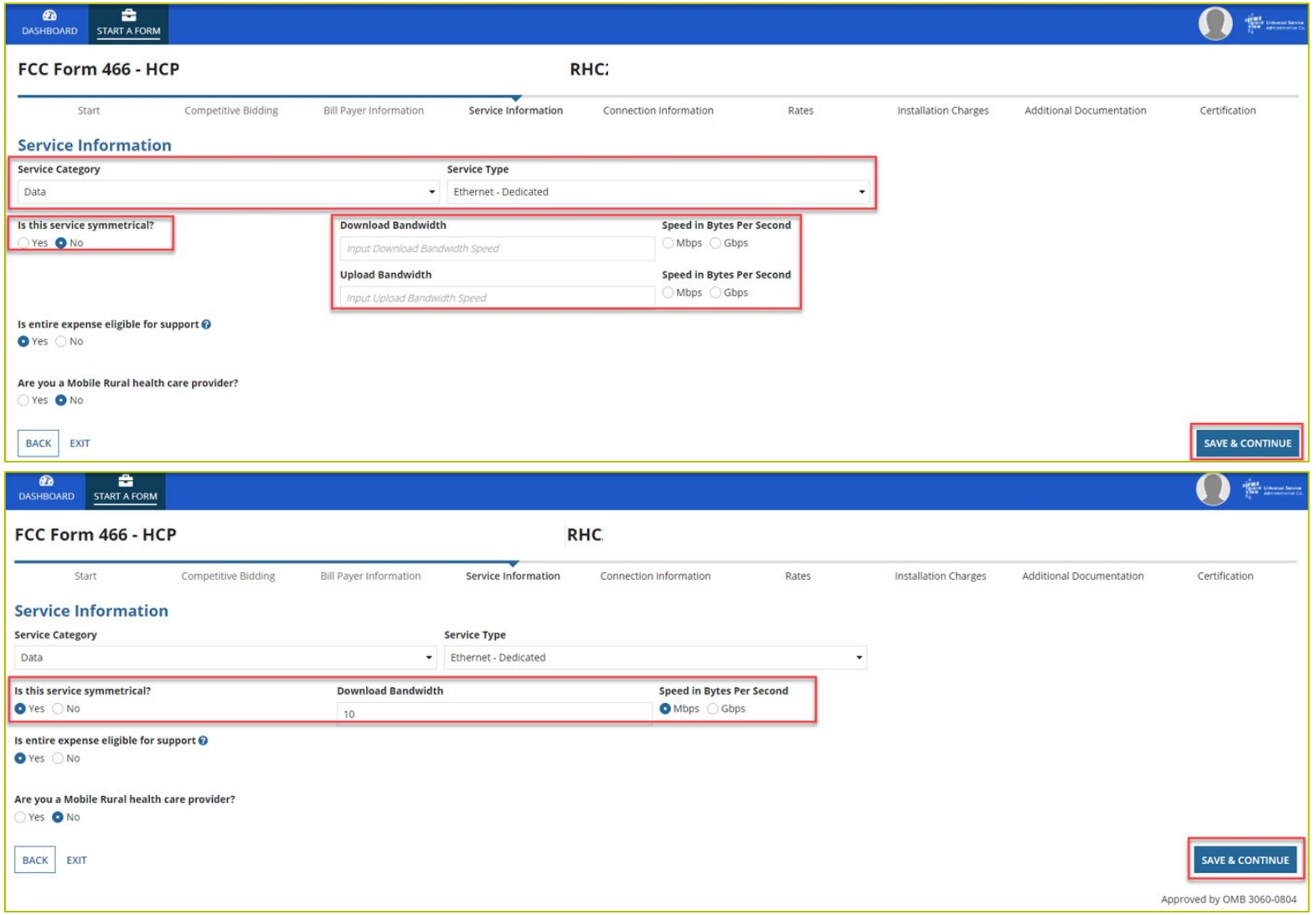
Service Information Page (continued)

- Answer **Yes** or **No** for the question **Is entire expense eligible for support?**
  - If the expense is shared with an ineligible site, or the usage isn't 100% for the provisioning of healthcare, answer **No** and upload description of the cost-allocation method.
- Answer **Yes** or **No** for question **Are you a Mobile Rural health care provider?**
  - If **Yes**, upload the required lists of sites the mobile clinic visits, then click **Save and Continue**.



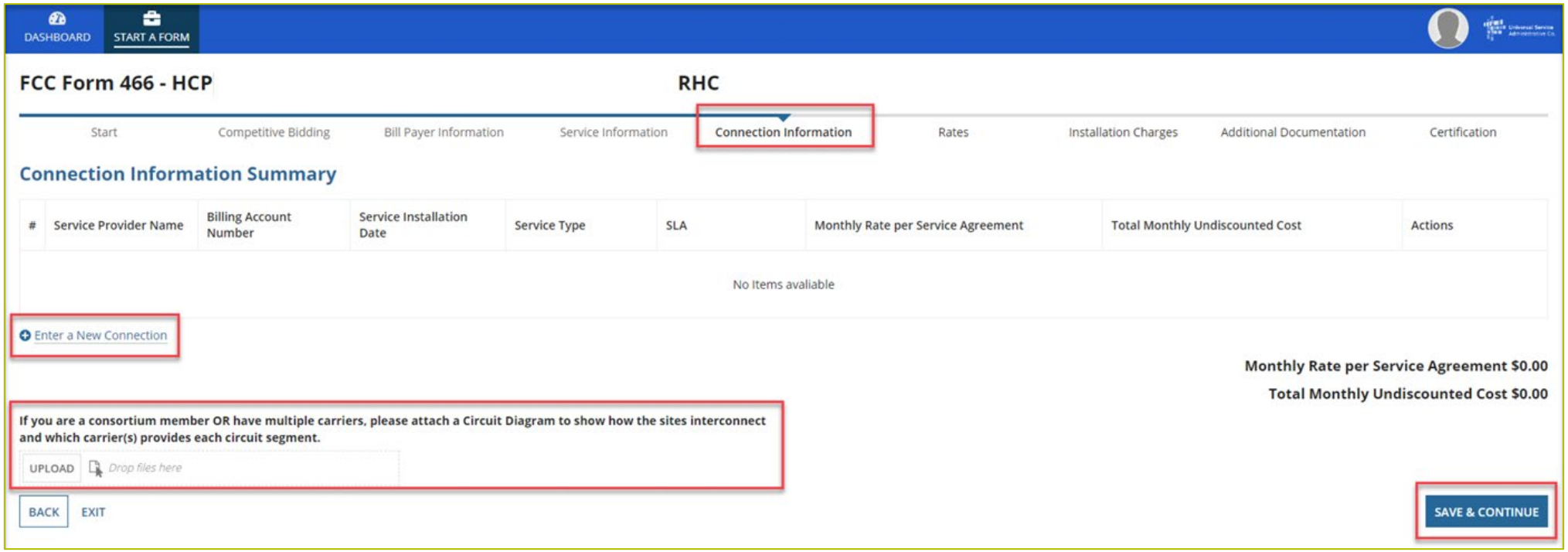
Service Information Page (continued)

- For data services, answer the question **Is this service symmetrical?** and enter bandwidth.
- If **No** is selected, enter **Download Bandwidth** and **Upload Bandwidth**.
- If **Yes** is selected, only one bandwidth is required, then click **Save & Continue**.



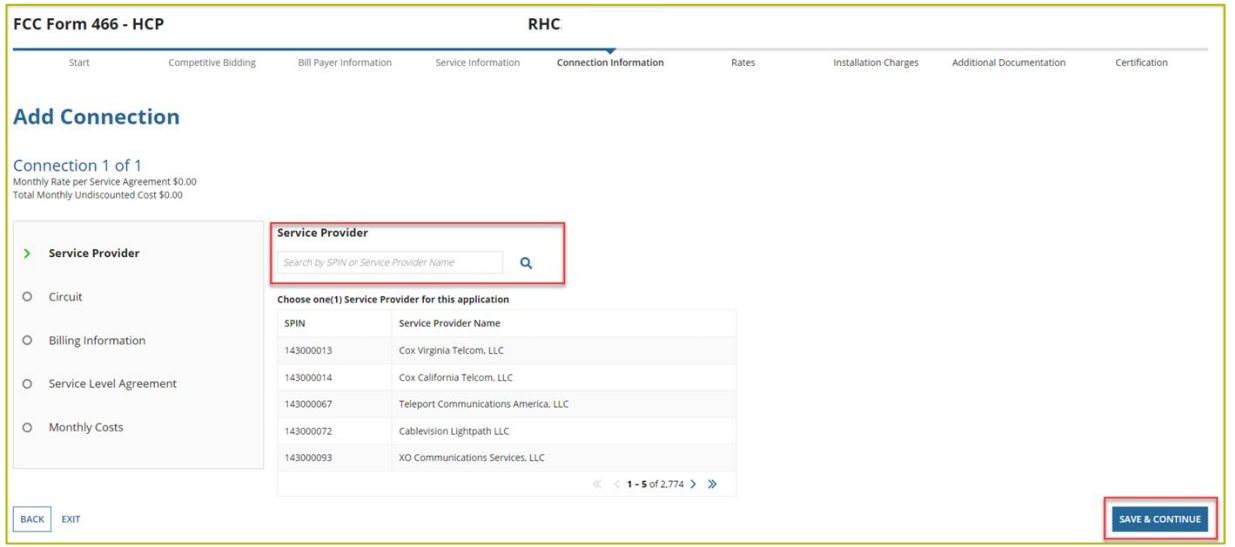
Connection Information Page

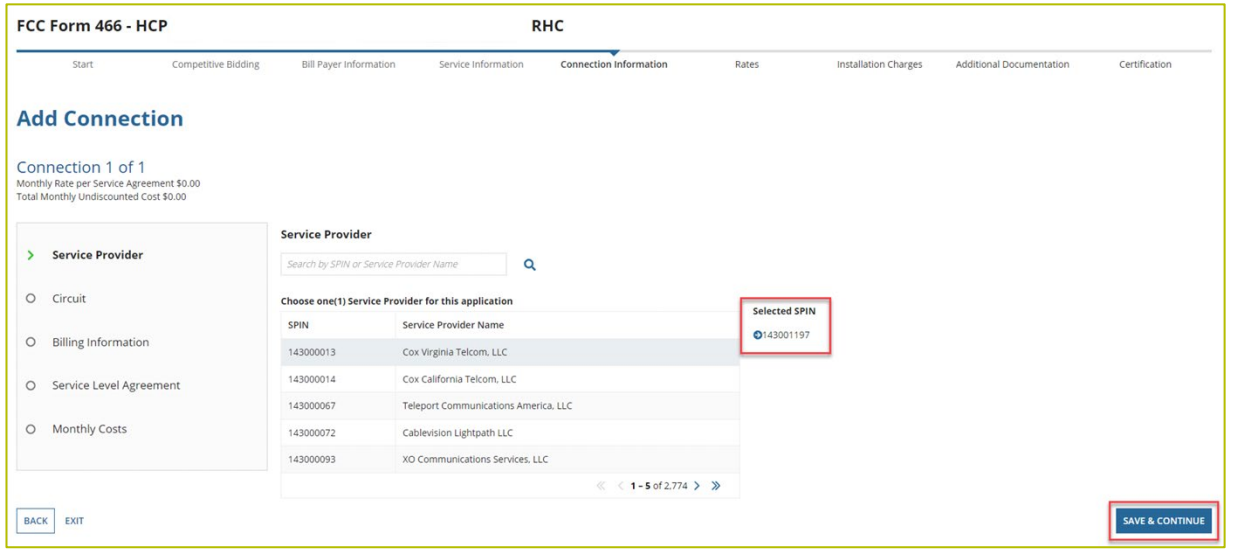
- On the **Connection Information** page, click the hyperlink titled **Enter a New Connection**.
  - If the service is a multi-carrier connection, each connection should be added using that hyperlink.
- If the HCP is a consortium member or the circuit uses more than one carrier, please attach a circuit diagram as indicated on this page, the click **Save & Continue**.



Add Connection Page – Service Provider

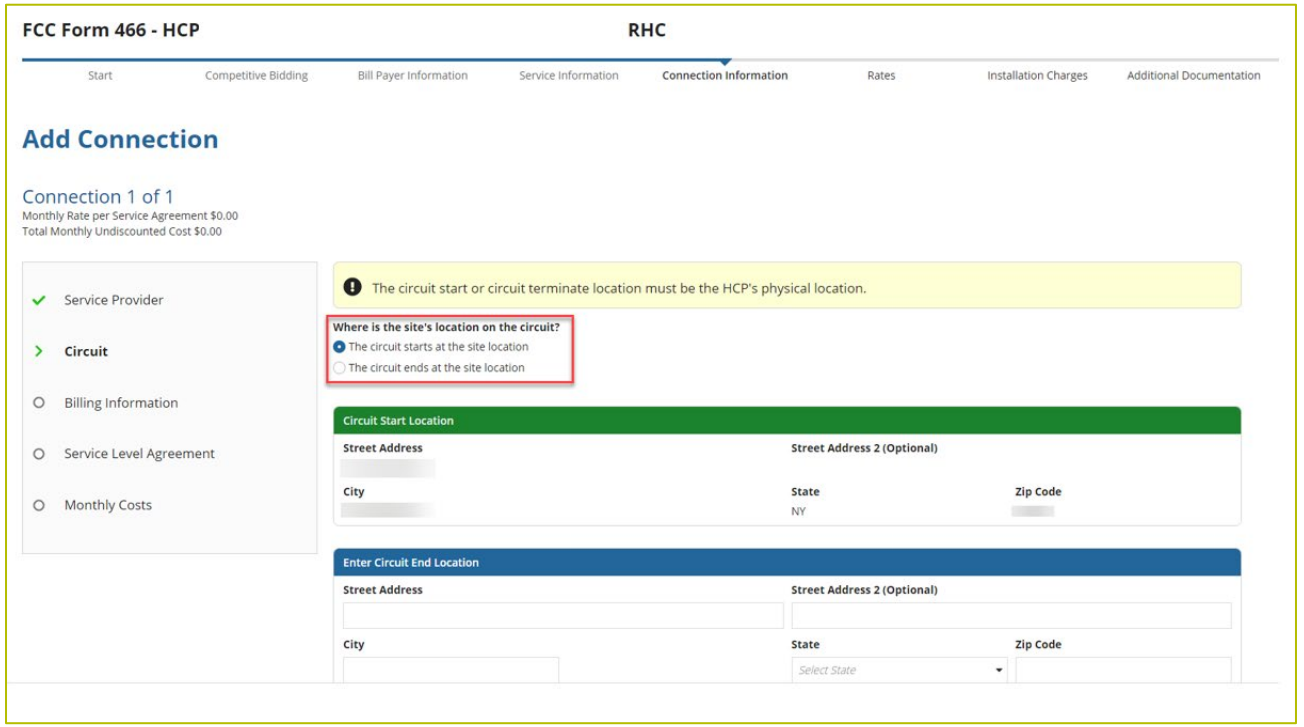
- Select your service provider's 498 ID/SPIN.
- You can search by service provider name or the 498 ID/SPIN.
- Click **Save & Continue**.





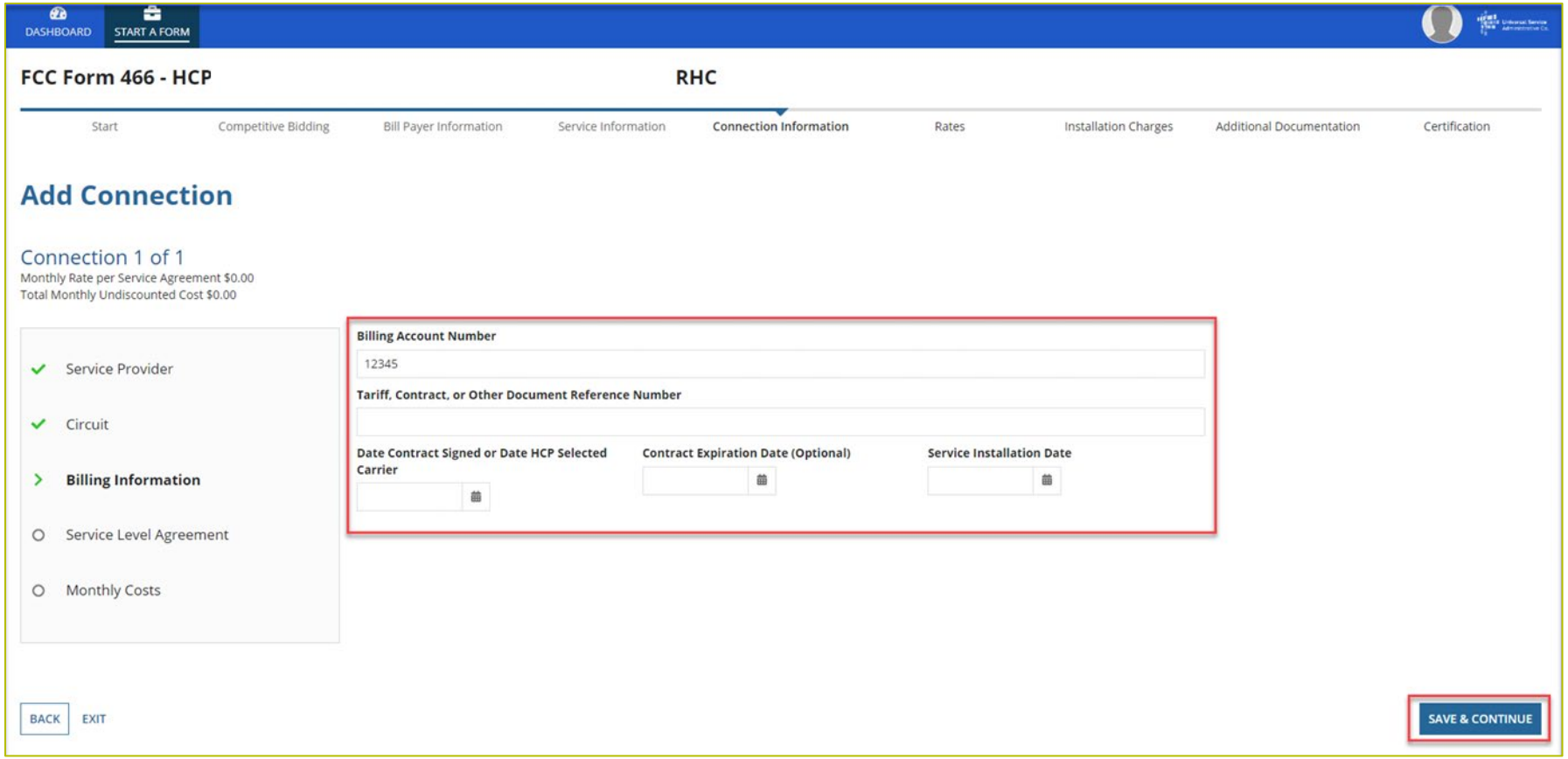
Add Connection Page - Circuit

- Select the radio button that describes where the site is located on the requested circuit.
- This should align with submitted service provider confirmed documentation.
- Information will pre-populate based on information in the FCC Form 460.



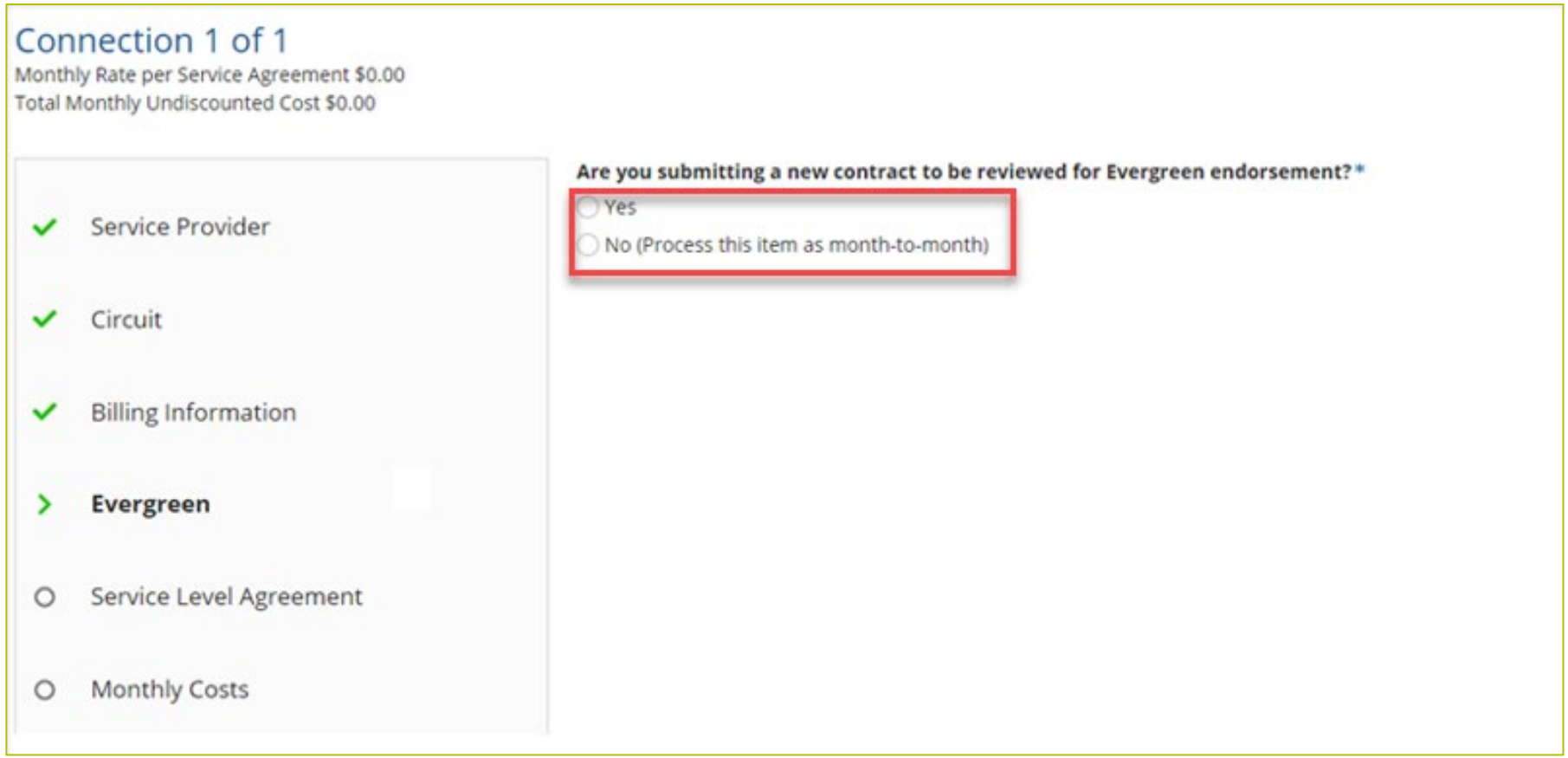
Add Connection Page – Billing Information

- Enter **Billing Information** in fields shown.
- Click **Save & Continue**.



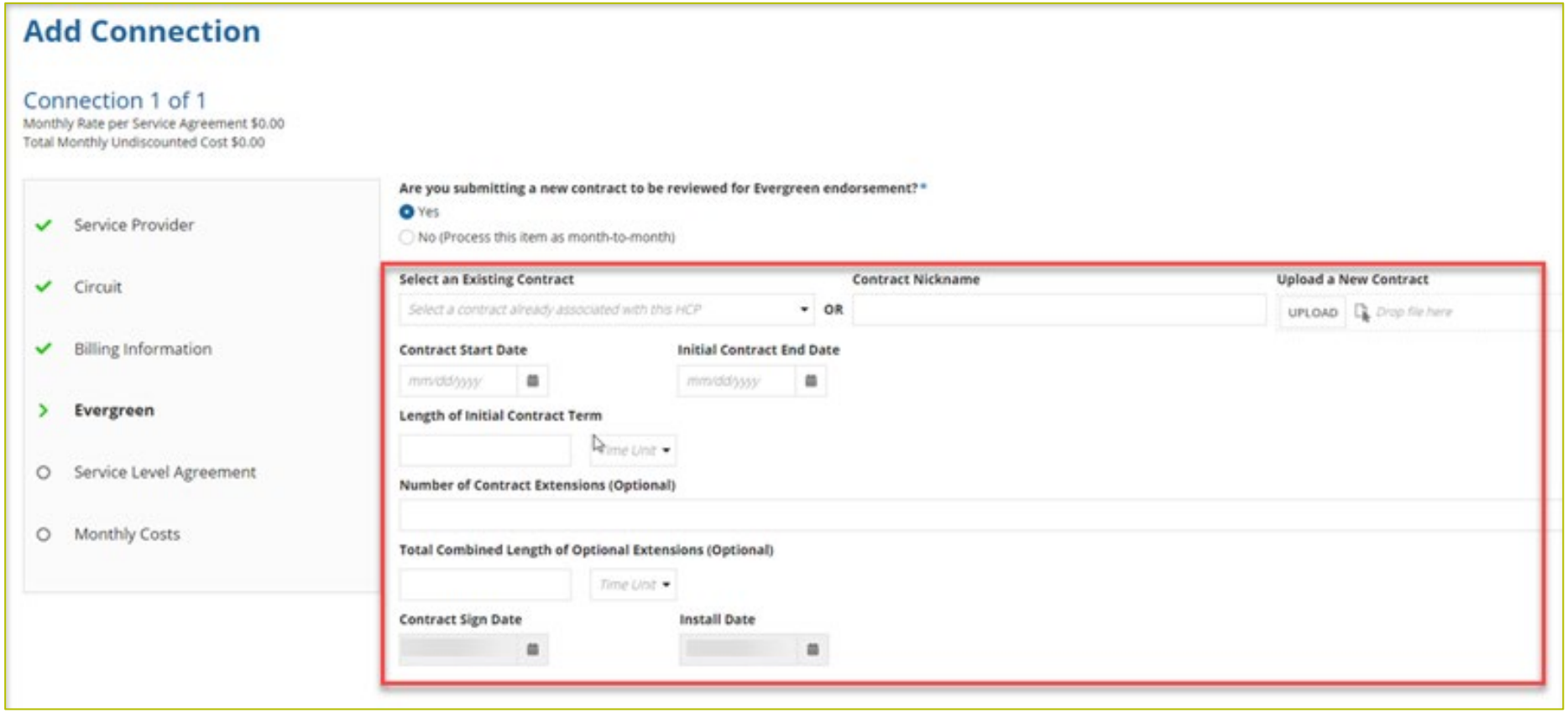
Add Connection Page – Evergreen

- Select **Yes** to the question **Are you submitting a new contract to be reviewed for Evergreen endorsement?**
- Select **No** if submitting as a month-to-month application.



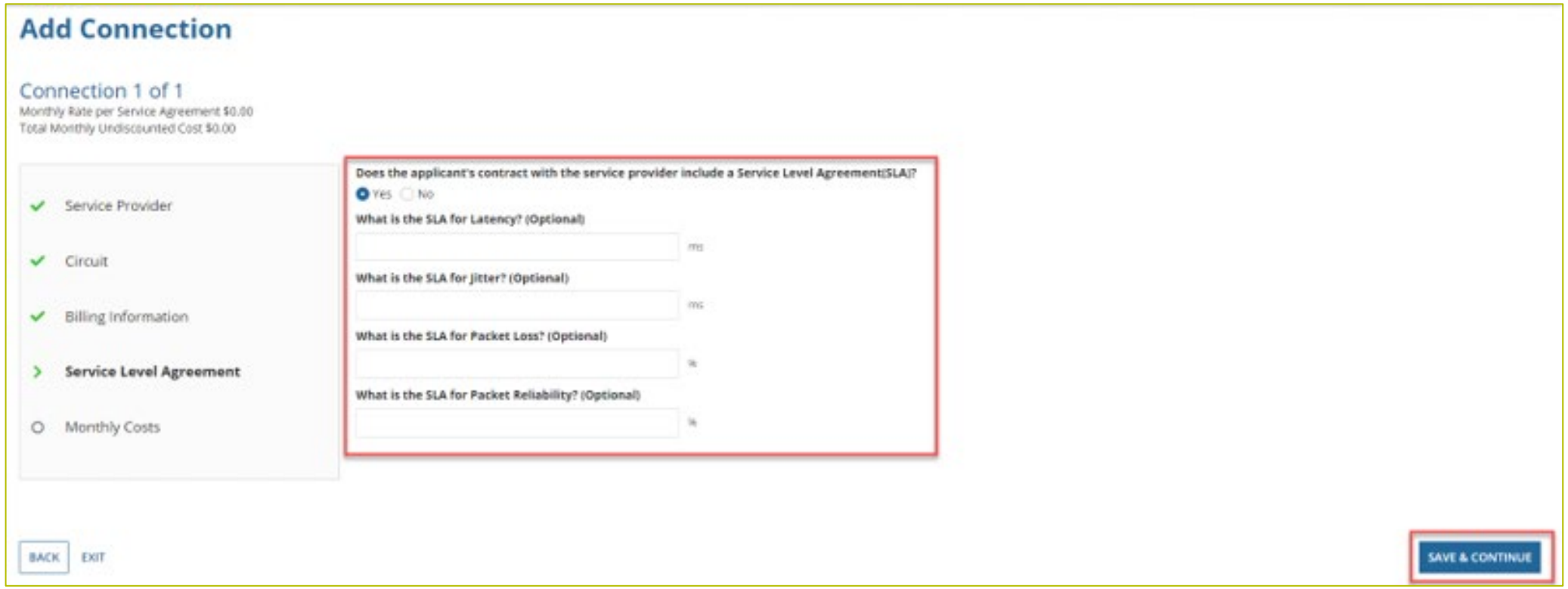
Add Connection Page – Evergreen (continued)

- If **Yes,** enter information about the contract in the fields as shown.
- Click **Save & Continue**.



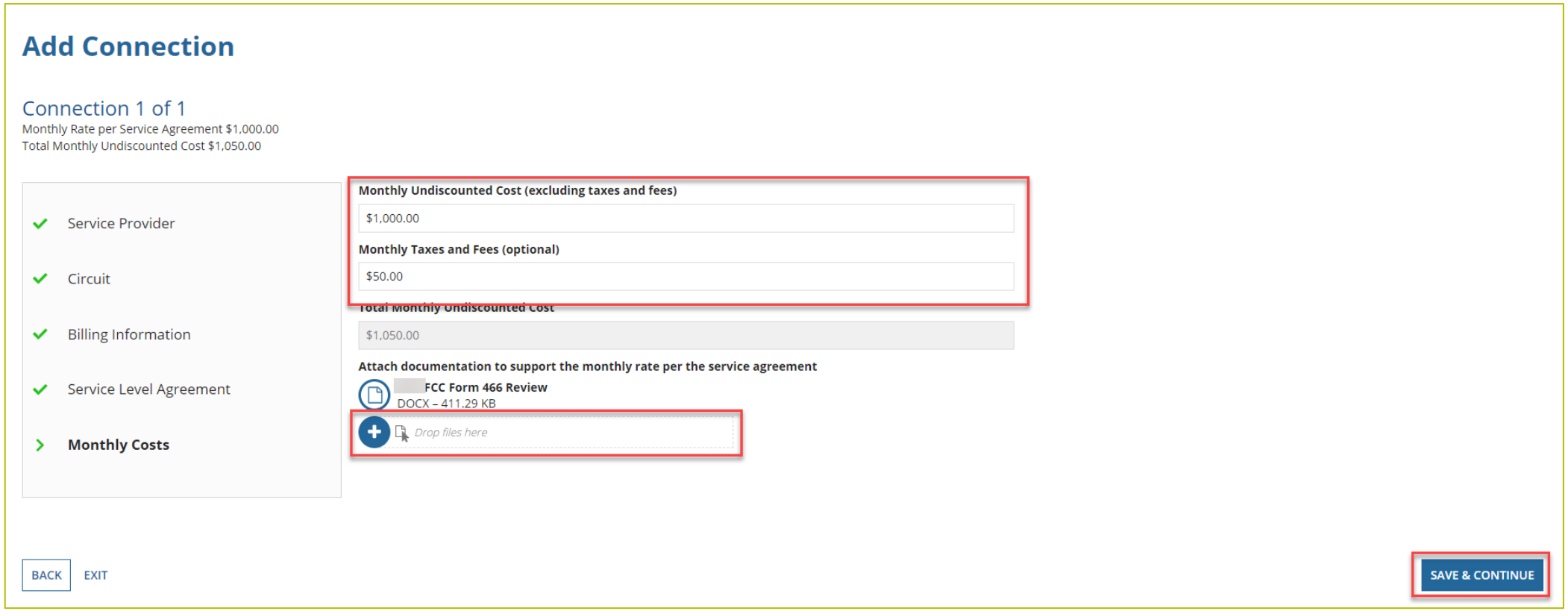
Add Connection Page – Service Level Agreement

- Select **Yes** or **No** to answer the question about a service level agreement.
- If **Yes**, enter the information shown. **Click Save & Continue**.



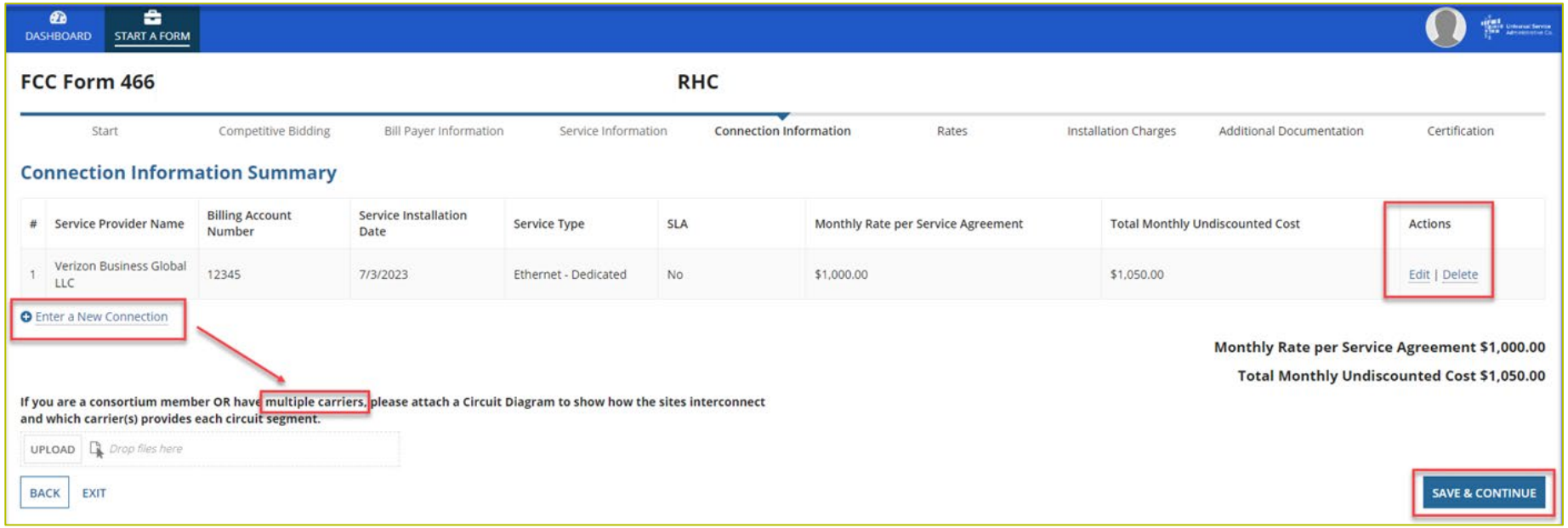
Add Connection Page – Monthly Costs

- Enter the **Monthly Undiscounted Cost** and **Monthly Taxes and Fees** listed on the bill or invoice.
- Upload the documentation that supports these costs.
- Click **Save & Continue**.



Connection Information Summary Page

- Enter each section of the service as a new connection by clicking **Enter a New Connection**.
- Upload a Circuit Diagram to support the data entered.
- Connections may be edited or deleted by clicking the hyperlinks under the **Actions** column.
- Click **Save & Continue**.



FY2027 Urban and Rural Rates

- 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 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.

FY2027 Rural Rates - Definitions

- **Method 1:** The FCC has determined that that "[t]he rural rate shall be the average of the rates actually being charged to commercial customers, other than health care providers, for identical or similar services provided by the telecommunications carrier providing the service in the rural area in which the health care provider is located." (47 CFR § 54.605(a))
- **Method 2:** If the telecommunications carrier does not provide similar or identical service in the rural area where the HCP is located, "the rural rate shall be the average of the tariffed and other publicly available rates, not including any rates reduced by universal service programs, charged for the same or similar services in that rural area over the same distance as the eligible service by other carriers." (47 CFR § 54.605(b))
- **Method 3:** If there are no such tariffed or publicly available rates in the HCP's rural area, or the service provider "reasonably determines that this method for calculating the rural rate is unfair," the service provider must submit cost-based rates to the state commission (for intrastate rates) or the FCC (for interstate rates) for approval.
- **Note:** Per FCC Order FCC 26-54, preapproved rates from FY 2024-2026 may be used for Method 3 rates.

FY2027 Rural Rates – Key Points

- **Method 1**, the key points are:
  - Rates must be for similar services e.g., that they are functionally equivalent from the perspective of the end user with respect to bandwidth and symmetry.
  - Actual rates charged by your telecommunications service provider to commercial customers that are not healthcare providers.
  - Services must be services in the same rural area as the HCP.
- **Method 2**, the key points are:
  - Rates must be for similar services e.g., that they are functionally equivalent from the perspective of the end user with respect to bandwidth and symmetry
  - The applicant must submit tariff(s) and/or publicly available rate(s) from which to derive an average, and the documentation must be dated prior to the submission of the relevant FCC Form 466.
  - It must be evident that any documentation and information supplied was available to the applicant or service provider at the time the applicant submitted its FCC Form 466.
  - It must be clear to USAC which rate in the documentation was used to calculate the rural rate.
- **Method 3**, the key points are:
  - Supporting documentation must show that the rates were submitted to the state commission or FCC before the applicant submitted the FCC Form 466.
  - The applicant must demonstrate that the rate submitted to the FCC or state commission for approval matches the rural rate listed on its FCC Form 466 or explain any discrepancy.

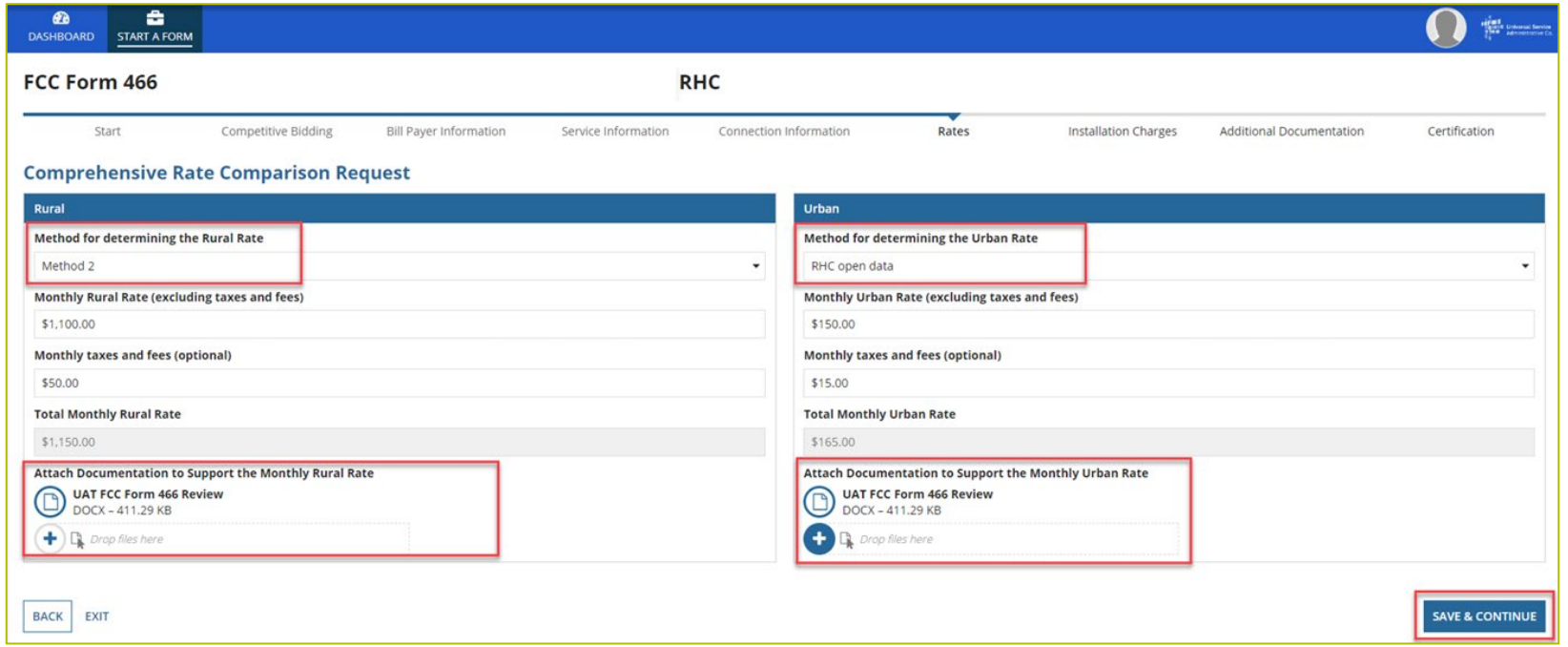
FY2027 Urban Rates

Urban Rate Definition: "As of funding year 2025, if a rural health care provider requests support for an eligible service to be funded from the Telecommunications Program the "urban rate" for that service shall be a rate no higher than the highest tariffed or publicly-available rate charged to a commercial customer for a functionally similar service in any city with a population of 50,000 or more in that state, calculated as if it were provided between two points within the city." (47 CFR § 54.604(b))

- Documentation provided must show that the proposed urban rate conforms to the rule. Examples of rates that may be used to calculate the urban rate include:
  - Rates in a current state, federal or NECA tariff for a functionally similar service in a city with a population of 50,000 or more in the state where the HCP is located.
  - Publicly available rates charged to a commercial customer.
- Elements that reviewers will look for when evaluating the urban rate include, but are not limited to:
  - Is the rate a functionally similar service e.g., a complete circuit?
  - Is the rate(s) used to calculate the urban rate charged in a city with a population of 50,000 or more in the HCP's own state.
- Please use the Urban and Rural Rate Information FY2027 tip sheet as a resource.

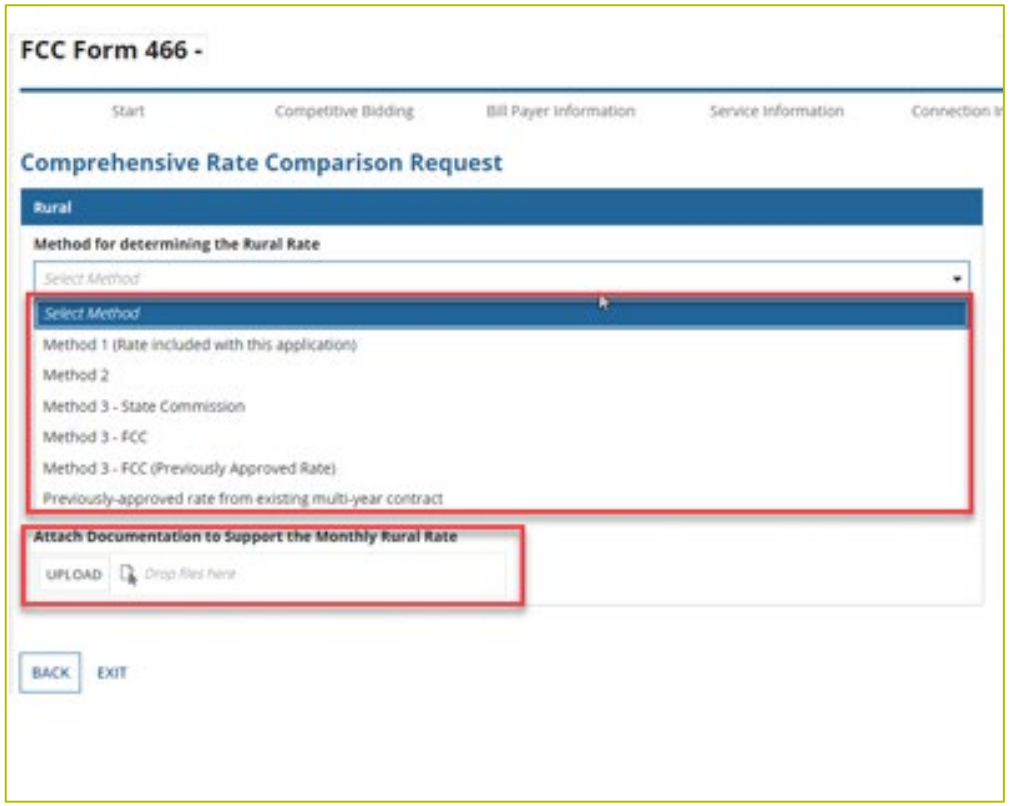
Rates Page

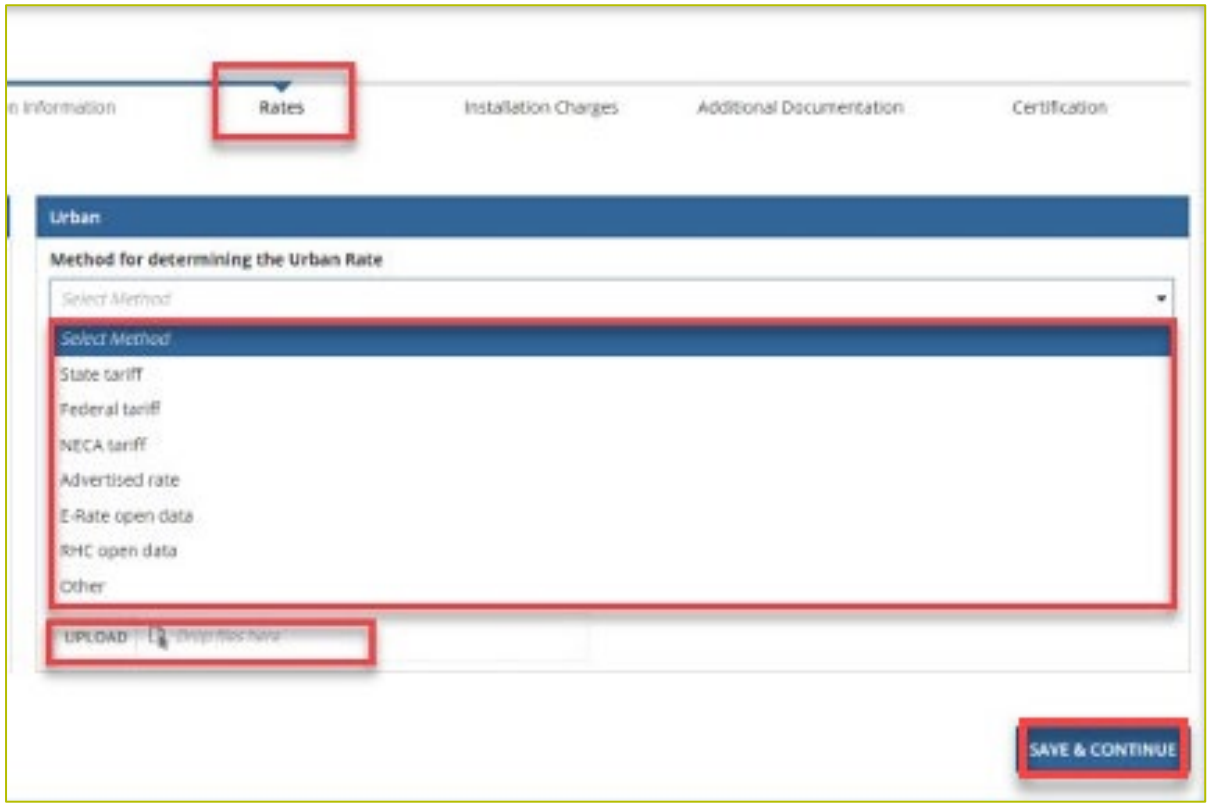
- Choose the **Method for determining the Rural Rate** and the **Method for determining the Urban Rate**.
- Enter the monthly calculated rural and urban rates that comply with the method per Telecom Program rules.
  - Use the Urban and Rural Rate Information FY20267 tip sheet.
- Upload documentation to support the rural and urban rates below the data fields on this page.
- Click **Save & Continue**.



Rates Page (continued)

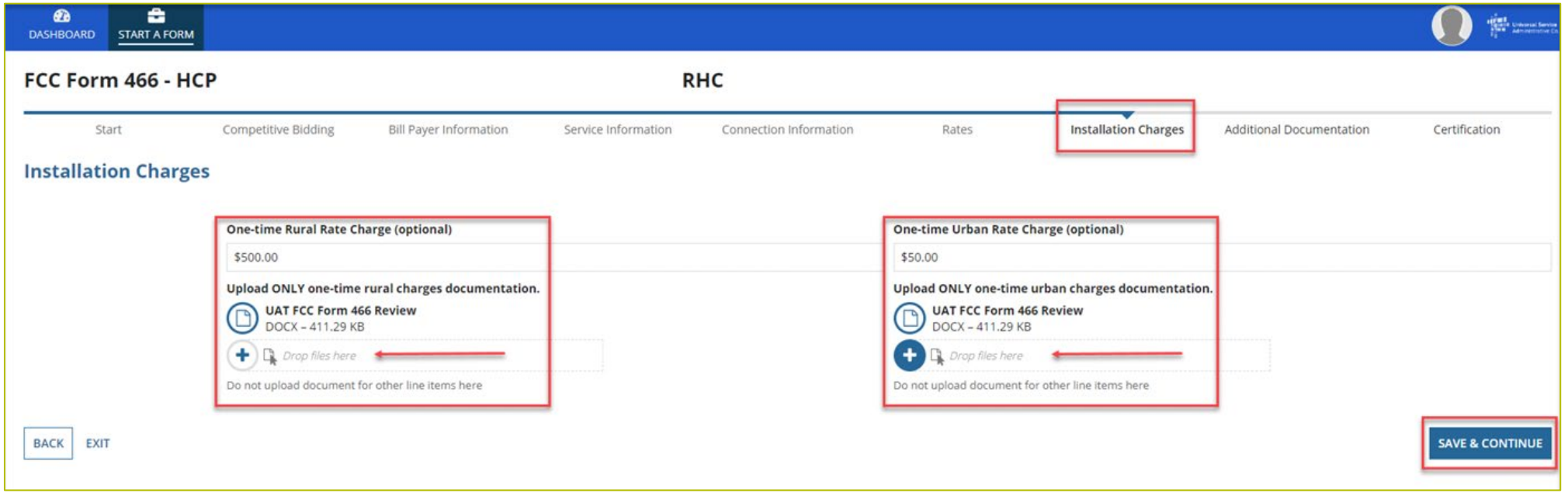
- Select methods for determining the rural and urban rates from the drop-down menus.
- Upload the documentation, then click **Save & Continue**.





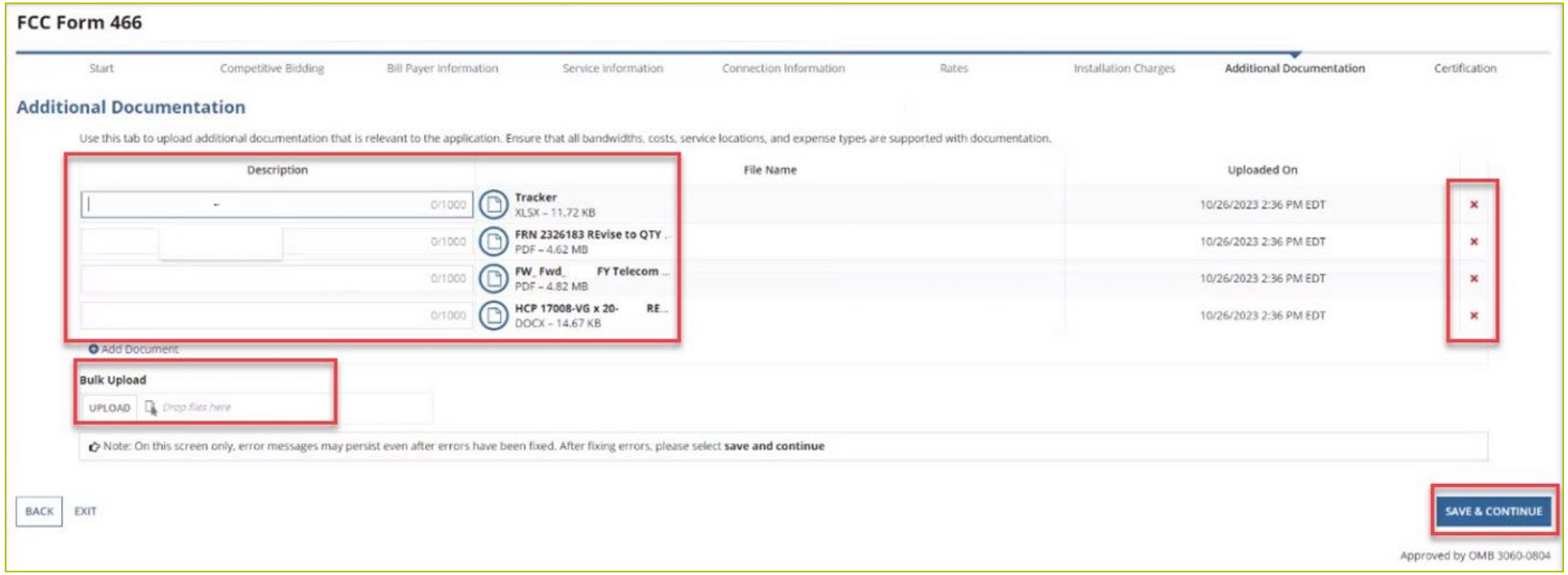
Installation Charges Page

- Enter **One-time Rural Rate Charge** and **One-time Urban Rate Charge**, if applicable.
- This is optional and can be skipped if no installation costs were incurred.
- Upload supporting documentation.
- Click **Save & Continue**.



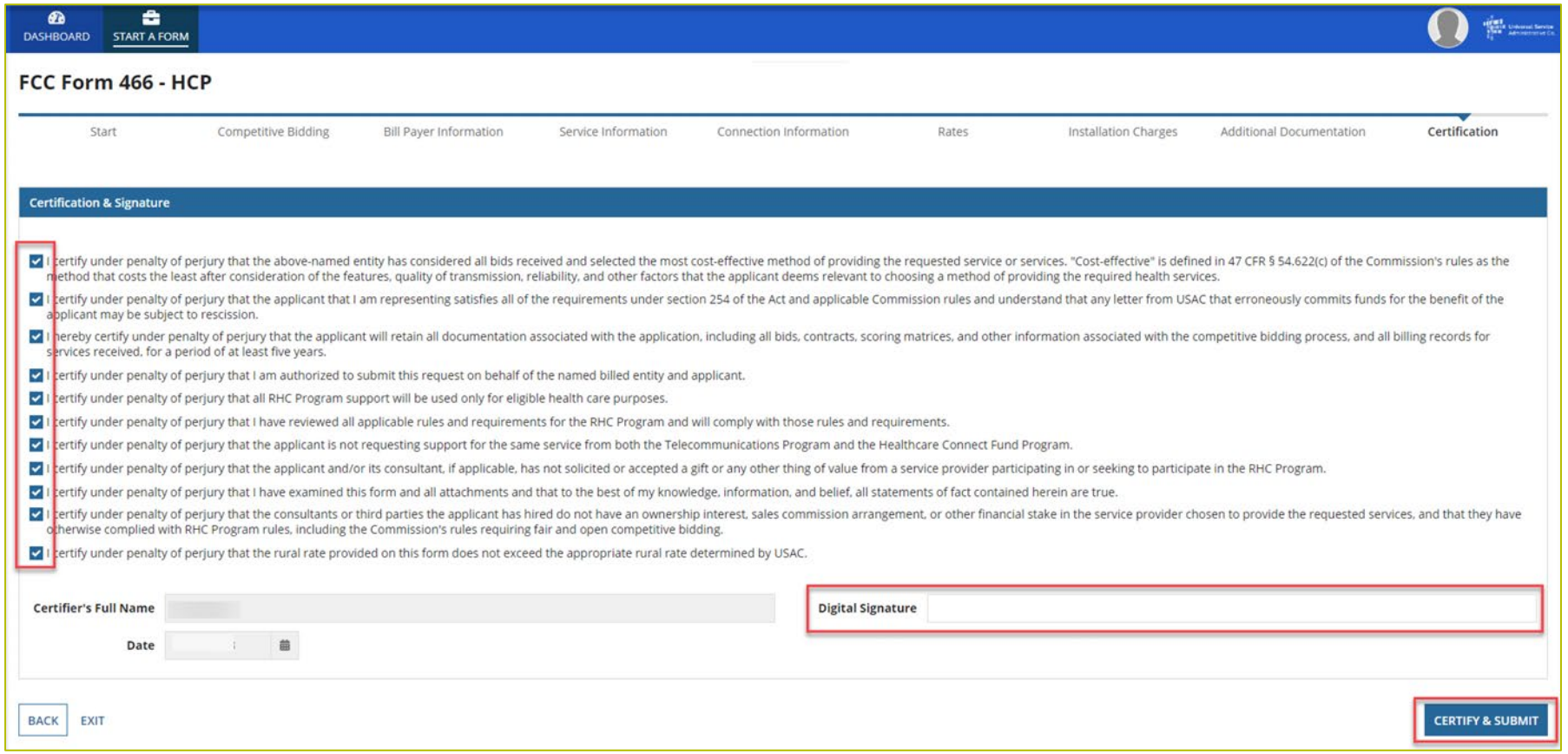
Additional Documentation Page

- Upload any additional supporting documentation.
- Add a description of the document in the required field.
- Click **Save & Continue**.



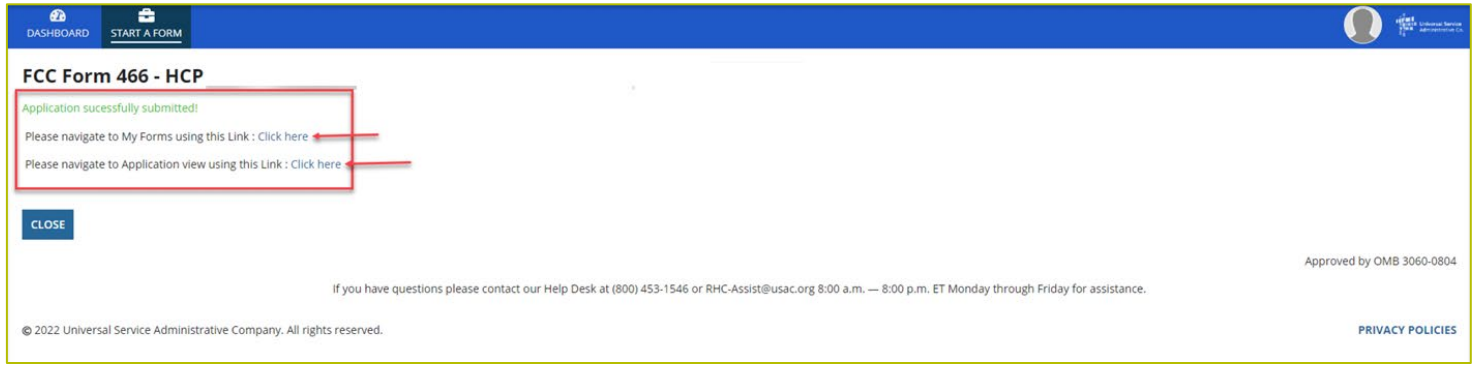
Certifications Page

- Each certification must be checked to continue.
- Enter your first and last name as it appears in RHC Connect in the **Digital Signature** field.
- Click **Certify & Submit**.

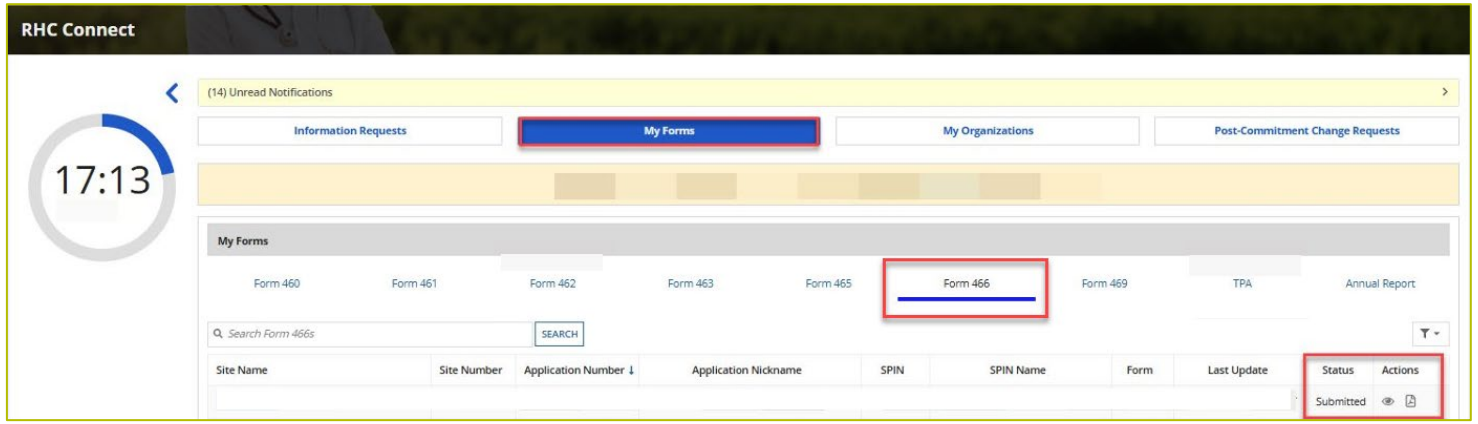


After Submitting

- Once submitted, this screen will appear with a link to the **My Forms** tab and a link to view the submitted form.



- The submitted form with all other FCC Forms 466 will appear on the **My Forms** tab.



After Submitting

- An email will be sent confirming that your form was submitted along with a copy of the PDF form.
  - If you do not receive an email, please go back into RHC Connect and be sure that you signed and submitted the form.
- **Applicants should respond through RHC Connect only**
- A reviewer will reach out if additional information is needed.
- Respond to Information Requests within 14 calendar days or by the deadline listed in the email.
  - Failure to respond to the Information Request will result in a denial.
- No funding decisions will be issued until after the close of the filing window.
- Once your funding request has been approved, you will receive a funding commitment letter (FCL) that will include all corresponding information to your funding request including evergreen contract endorsement.

Questions?

Best Practices and Resources

Telecom Program Funding Request
Best Practices for FY2027

Best Practices: Communicating with Your Service Provider

- Ensure your service provider is aware of all the necessary documentation needed for future steps in the application process.
- Include your service provider when you reply to Information Requests via email.
- HCPs and service providers are required to retain documentation for a period of at least five years.

Milestones to Apply for Funding for FY2027: RHC Program Recommended Last Day to Submit for HCPs NOT using a Request for Proposal (RFP)

RHC Program Form	Last Day to Submit for HCPs NOT using a Request for Proposal (RFP)
FCC Form 460 (Eligibility)	January 8, 2027 Recommended Date
FCC Form 465 (Request for Services)	February 10, 2027 Recommended Date
FCC Form 466 (Funding Request)	April 1, 2027 **Deadline to Submit**

*Please note that the FCC Form 460 and 465 submission dates are not mandatory deadlines, but rather recommended milestones to ensure that the FCC Form 465 is posted to USAC's website early enough for a 28-day competitive bidding period before the deadline to submit an FCC Form 466.

Milestones to Apply for Funding for FY2027: RHC Program Recommended Last Day to Submit for HCPs using a Request for Proposal (RFP)

RHC Program Form	Last Day to Submit for HCPs using a Request for Proposal (RFP)
FCC Form 460 (Eligibility)	January 5, 2027 Recommended Date
FCC Form 465 (Request for Services)	February 2, 2027 Recommended Date
FCC Forms 466 (Funding Request)	April 1, 2027 **Deadline to Submit**

*Please note that the FCC Form 460 and 465 submission dates are not mandatory deadlines, but rather recommended milestones to ensure that the FCC Form 465 is posted to USAC's website early enough for a 28-day competitive bidding period before the deadline to submit an FCC Form 466.

Online Resources

- RHC Learn
- Step 4: Submit Funding Requests webpage
- Welcome to RHC Connect – FCC Form 466 webpage
- RHC Connect User Guide – FCC Form 466
- Information Request tip sheet
- Urban and Rural Rate Information FY2027 tip sheet
- Competitive Bidding Exemptions

Upcoming Trainings

- Consortium Best Practices webinar.
  - When: Wednesday, December 9, 2026, from 2 – 3 p.m. ET – Register
- RHC webinars are posted on the Upcoming Dates webpage on the USAC website.

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

The 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 orders for RHC.	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 RHC Connect.
Assist with My Portal and RHC Connect.	Transfer a call to a specific form reviewer.

Questions?

Available for Public Use



Universal Service
Administrative Co.