Connected Care Pilot Program Request for Services Best Practices

Submitting the FCC Form 461

Universal Service
Administrative Co.

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

- Slides attached to GoToWebinar Panel and posted to CCPP webpage

Download PDF of Slides here!

Ask questions here!

2
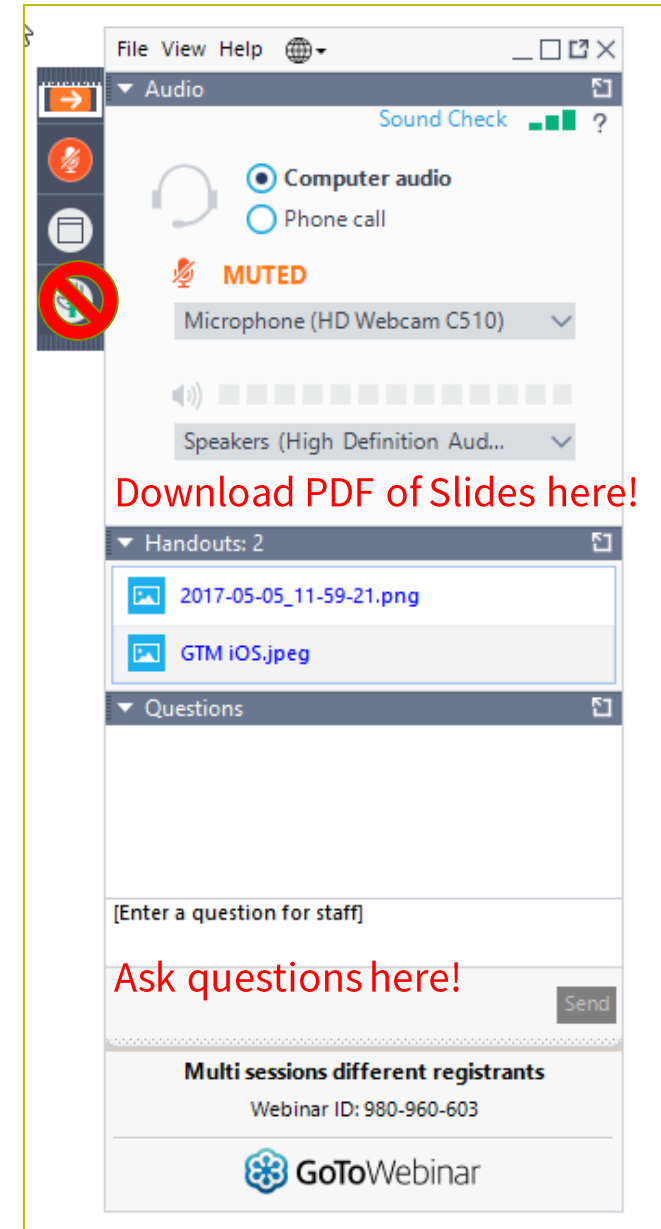
Meet Our Team

Eric Overton

Program Manager | RHC Outreach

Jennifer Contreras

Manager | RHC Outreach

Blythe Albert

Senior Program Manager | RHC Outreach

Agenda

- Overview

- Competitive Bidding

  - Evaluation Criteria

  - Competitive Bidding Exemptions

  - Requests for Proposal

- Search Posted Services

- Submitting the FCC Form 461

- Best Practices & Resources

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

- Complete and submit an FCC Form 461 in My Portal
  - Create bid evaluation criteria
  - Understand competitive bidding requirements
  - Identify applicable competitive bidding exemptions
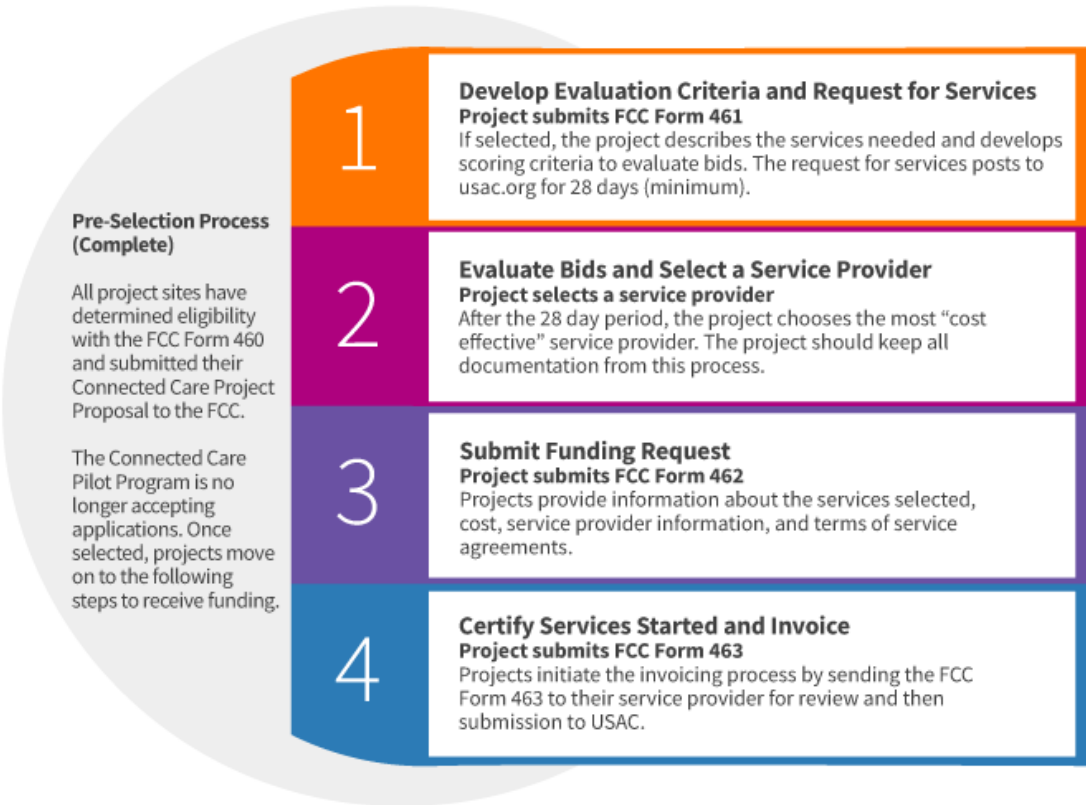- Locate current requests for services and other important resources on the USAC website

Glossary

Acronym	Meaning
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
HCP	Health Care Provider (your site)
HCP Number	Number associated with your site
PAH	Primary Account Holder
LOA	Letter of Agency (Consortium Only)
ACSD	Allowable Contract Selection Date

Overview

Request for Services Best Practices

Connected Care Pilot Program Application Process

Pre-Selection Process (Complete)

All project sites have determined eligibility with the FCC Form 460 and submitted their Connected Care Project Proposal to the FCC.

The Connected Care Pilot Program is no longer accepting applications. Once selected, projects move on to the following steps to receive funding.

1 Develop Evaluation Criteria and Request for Services
Project submits FCC Form 461
If selected, the project describes the services needed and develops scoring criteria to evaluate bids. The request for services posts to usac.org for 28 days (minimum).

2 Evaluate Bids and Select a Service Provider
Project selects a service provider
After the 28 day period, the project chooses the most "cost effective" service provider. The project should keep all documentation from this process.

3 Submit Funding Request
Project submits FCC Form 462
Projects provide information about the services selected, cost, service provider information, and terms of service agreements.

4 Certify Services Started and Invoice
Project submits FCC Form 463
Projects initiate the invoicing process by sending the FCC Form 463 to their service provider for review and then submission to USAC.

*Note: Each physical site/location must submit its individual FCC Form 460, even if part of a hospital system. A hospital system is not considered one entity; it must form a consortium to apply.

What is a Request for Services?

- To initiate the competitive bidding process, you (the HCP) complete an FCC Form 461 in My Portal to let service providers know what types of eligible services you are looking for.

- Service providers use the information on the FCC Form(s) 461 to create a bid to provide those services.

- Request for Services Forms:
    - FCC Form 461 (Request for Services) – Same form that's used for the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program (with slight modifications for Pilot Program participants)
    - Must select 'Connected Care Pilot Program'

- Approved Request for Services forms must be posted for a <u>minimum</u> of 28 days on the USAC public website.
    - Once a form is posted, the 28 day competitive bidding process begins the next full business day.

What is a Request for Services?

- Once a Request for Services is posted, service providers have a minimum of 28 days to send their bids to the applicant.

  - The HCP and service provider may not enter into an agreement to purchase services until the 28 days are over.

  - After the 28 days are complete, the HCP and service provider are welcome to sign a contract, this day is called the **Allowable Contract Selection Date (ACSD)**.

- **FCC Form 461 Deadline-** Initial form must be **publicly posted** no later than January 17, 2022

Eligible Services

Category	Eligible Services	Examples
Patient Broadband Internet Access Services/Health Care Provider Broadband Data Connections	New or upgraded broadband connections (whether for health care provider or participating patients) necessary for connected care services for the Pilot Program	Broadband Connections o Digital Subscriber Line o Cable Modem o Other Copper Wireline o Optical Carrier/Fiber to the End-User o Terrestrial Fixed Wireless o Mobile Wireless (e.g., 3G, LTE, 4G, 5G) o Satellite o Broadband over Powerline • Firewall Service
Other Connected Care Information Services	Services for connected care that capture, transmit (including video visits), and store health care data for connected care. This includes information services with "store-and-forward" technology, patient reported outcome platforms, and remote patient monitoring capabilities to monitor patients.	• HIPAA compliant (or requirement waived) video services • HIPAA compliant (or requirement waived) telehealth solutions/packages/platforms, suites of services. • One-time, annual, recurring monthly costs for information service • Licenses, subscriptions, or recurring charges necessary for providers to access or use eligible information service.

Note: This eligible services chart is illustrative and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Eligible Services, Continued

Category	Eligible Services	Examples
Network Equipment	Certain network equipment necessary to make Internet service or connected care services for the HCP/Patient for the Pilot Program functional (e.g., routers) or necessary to manage, control, or operate a supported broadband service.	• Equipment that terminates a carrier's or other provider's transmission facility and any router/switch that is directly connected to either the facility or the terminating equipment. • Network equipment that helps manage, control, or operate a supported broadband service (consortia applicants only) • Servers used exclusively for eligible broadband services • Routers (including at patient's home) • Switches

Miscellaneous	Various miscellaneous costs associated with eligible services listed above may be eligible for support. Applicants should request eligible miscellaneous services in the same category as the associated service being obtained or installed.	• Installation, Activation, and Initial Configuration (including implementation and integration costs necessary to integrate eligible information services with existing systems).
		• Fees and charges that are a necessary component of an eligible service:
		    • Shipping charges
		    • Taxes, surcharges, and other reasonable charges incurred in obtaining an eligible product or service

Note: This eligible services chart is illustrative and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Ineligible Services

- End-user devices

- Medical supplies

- Provider (Doctor's) Fees

- Administrative and Personnel costs

- Live Translation Services

- Internal Connections between Provider Sites

- Storage Devices

- IT support

- Maintenance costs

- DocuSign

- VPN Solutions

- Special Construction/Network Builds

- Applications not purchased as part of connected care information service

- Standalone Voice, including VoIP

- Standalone messaging services

- Network Equipment not necessary to make broadband or connected care services functional or manage, control or operate a supported broadband service.

Note: This ineligible services chart is illustrative and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Questions?

Competitive Bidding

Request for Services Best Practices

Competitive Bidding

- The purpose of competitive bidding is to allow all service providers an equal opportunity to understand your service requirements and offer the most cost-effective solution to address those needs.

- RHC program rules and FCC Orders require that the competitive bidding process be "fair and open" and HCPs must choose the "most cost-effective" service provider before entering into a contract.

Competitive Bidding

- Service providers who plan to bid cannot also assist with the preparation of the FCC Form 461, choose a winning bidder, or participate in the vendor selection process in any way.

- All potential bidders and service providers must have access to the same information about the service needs and must be treated in the same manner.

- All applicants and service providers must comply with any applicable state, Tribal, or local procurement laws.

Bid Evaluation Criteria

- The bid evaluation criteria is a list of weighted standards included in your Request for Services that you will use to determine the most cost-effective bid.

- Applicants must have "minimum requirements" for each criterion.

- Each criterion is given a certain weight, and the sum of these weights must equal 100.

- The bid evaluation criteria should address your needs as indicated on the FCC Form 461 and be based on the FCC's definition of "cost-effective." (*47 CFR 54.622(c))*.

- Cost must be a primary factor, but need not be the only primary factor.

- Although other factors may receive the same weight as cost, no single factor can receive a weight that is greater than cost *(47 CFR 54.622(c))*.

Example of Evaluation Criteria

Block 5: Bid Evaluation

22 Select selection criteria (and weights assigned to each) that will be used to evaluate bids received as a result of this request for services. Attach supplemental information (if necessary).

Criteria	Weight	Minimum Requirement
a. Cost	40	
b. One vendor solution	30	
c. Prior experience, including past performance	30	See attached for more information
d.		
e.		

Examples of Evaluation Criteria

Bid evaluation criteria should include the factors that you deem most important for your site to provide eligible Connected Care services.

Criteria commonly included on the FCC Form 461 include:

- Technical support;

- Quality of transmission;

- Reliability;

- Service provider to provide a single point of contact; and

- Prior experience, including past performance.

What is a Competitive Bidding Exemption?

- In some cases, the service needs or contract conditions allow you to be exempt from competitive bidding.

- With a competitive bidding exemption, you will not have to undergo the competitive bidding process, and do not need to create evaluation criteria or collect bids from service providers.

- A competitive bidding exemption will allow you to skip the FCC Form 461 (for the purposes of competitive bidding) entirely and proceed directly to submitting a funding request.

Competitive Bidding Exemptions

- Purchasing services from a master service agreement (MSA) negotiated by a federal, state, Tribal, or local governmental entity on its behalf of you and others, and which was awarded pursuant to applicable competitive bidding requirements;

- Requesting support using contracts previously endorsed by USAC (MSA under the 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);

- Using a contract approved under the Schools and Libraries (E-rate) program;

- Projects seeking support for $10,000 or less of total undiscounted eligible expenses for a single year do not have to complete an FCC Form 461.

New Connected Care Pilot Program-Specific Exemption

- ***Pre-Existing Contract:*** The eligible health care provider already has entered into a legally binding agreement with a service provider for services or equipment eligible for support in the Pilot Program and that legally binding agreement itself was the product of competitive bidding.
  - This exemption applies only when the contract was signed before the applicant was selected to participate in CCPP and the contract was not entered into solely for purposes of the Pilot Program.
  - The prior competitive bidding process must have included public solicitation of bids or the applicant must have evaluated multiple quotes or bids before signing the contract.

Evergreen Contracts

- You are not required to file an FCC Form 461 or competitively bid for the life of a multi-year contract designated as evergreen under the HCF or Telecom programs.

- Your contract may be designated as "evergreen" if the contract meets all of the following requirements:
  - Both parties are identified
  - Contract specifies the service type, bandwidth, and quantity
  - Contract is signed and dated by the HCP or consortium leader after the Allowable Contract Selection Date (ACSD)
  - Contract specifies the term and cost of service(s)
  - Contract includes the physical addresses of the HCP(s) purchasing from the contract

- **USAC must have designated the contract evergreen prior to submission of the funding request**.

Site and Service Substitutions

- Site and service substitutions allow you (the HCP) to reallocate un-invoiced committed funds to substitute services, modify or upgrade services, or provide the requested services to other eligible sites.

- CCPP Program applicants may request a site or service substitution if:

  - The substitution is provided for in the contract, within the change clause, or constitutes a minor modification;

  - The site is an eligible health care provider and the service is an eligible service under the HCF Program;

  - The substitution does not violate any contract provision or state, Tribal, or local procurement laws; and

  - The requested change is within the scope of the controlling Request for Services, including any applicable RFP used in the competitive bidding process.

- More information about [site and service substitutions](#)

Requests for Proposal

- A [request for proposal](RFP) is a comprehensive bidding solicitation that describes your business priorities and functional requirements in sufficient detail to ensure an effective and fair and open competitive bidding process.

- Per FCC Order 19-78 (47 CFR § 54.622(e)(5)(i)), you are required to submit an RFP if:
    - (A) it is required under applicable State, Tribal, or local procurement rules or regulations;
    - (B) the applicant is a consortium seeking more than $100,000 in program support during the funding year, including applications that seek more than $100,000 in program support for a multi-year commitment; or

Requests for Proposal (RFP)

- If you plan to issue an RFP, it must be submitted with the FCC Form 461 for USAC review and approval, and it should include, at a minimum:

  - A description of the service needs;

  - The number of days during which bids will be accepted (28 days or more);

  - Clearly delineated deliverables; and

  - The bid evaluation criteria, including the weight assigned to each criterion.

  - The RFP should align with everything entered into the FCC Form 461 and provide more details.

Service Providers and Competitive Bidding

- Service providers are prohibited from preparing, signing, or submitting an applicant's FCC Form 461 or any other competitive bidding documents.

- Service providers are prohibited from being involved in developing the bid evaluation criteria, or participating in the vendor selection process in any way.

- If it is determined that a service provider helped an HCP with its request for services and was subsequently chosen to provide services, the HCP will have committed a competitive bidding violation, and the funding request will be denied or any funding payments will be subject to rescission.

Questions?

Search Posted Services

Request for Services Best Practices

Search Posted Services

About	E-rate	Rural Health Care	Lifeline	High Cost	Service Providers

Getting Started	**Telecommunications Program**	**Additional Program Guidance**	**Learn**
Commitment Info	Determine Eligibility of Your Site	FCC Report and Order 19-78	Webinars
Service Providers	Prepare For Competitive Bidding & Request Services	Funding Year Overview	Videos
Healthcare Connect Fund Program	Evaluate Bids & Select Service Provider	Authorizations	Sample Documents
Determine Eligibility of Your Site	Submit Funding Requests	Evergreen Contracts	Newsletter
Develop Evaluation Criteria & Select Services	Review Funding Commitment Letter (FCL)	Document Retention	FAQs
Evaluate Bids & Select Service Provider	Invoice USAC	FCC Orders and Resources	
Submit Funding Requests		**Resources**	**Contact Us**
Review Your Funding Commitment Letter (FCL)		My Portal	
Invoice USAC		Forms	
What is a Consortia?		Tools	
		Upcoming Dates	
		Announcements	
		Appeals & Audits	

31

Search Posted Services

Additional Search Tools

Funding Commitments Search - HCF Program (2013 and later) ↗	This commitments search tool provides HCF Program funding commitment information.
Funding Commitments - Telecom Program (2012 and Later) ↗	This commitments search tool provides Telecom Program funding commitment information starting in FY2012.
HCF Program & CCPP - Search Posted Services * ↗	This tool allows service providers to view service request information posted by consortia and individual health care providers applying for funding through the Healthcare Connect Fund Program. *Connected Care Pilot Projects (CCPP) request for service postings can also be found under this tool.
Telecom Program - Search Posted Services ↗	This tool allows service providers to view service request information posted by consortia and individual health care providers applying for funding through the Telecom Program.

Search Posted Services

Questions?

Submitting the FCC Form 461

Request for Services Best Practices

Select HCP

- Go to "My HCPs" tab in My Portal and select the HCP for which you would like to file an FCC Form 461.

Create FCC Form 461

- Once the HCP is selected, go to the "Form 460" tab and click "Create Form 461."

Navigating the FCC Form 461

RURAL HEALTH CARE

Return to My HCP

- GENERAL INFORMATION
- INDIVIDUAL HCP SITE REQUEST FOR SERVICES
- INDIVIDUAL HCP SITE REQUEST FOR SERVICES CONTD
- DECLARATION OF ASSISTANCE
- BID EVALUATION
- ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION
- CERTIFICATIONS
- SIGNATURE

General Information   Preview PDF   Form Guide

Read the complete Form Guide before you begin. Click the ❓ button on each screen for guidance about completing each section of the form. Failure to comply with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and orders may result in denial of the request.

Information about the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) is available here

USAC Internal Use Only

FCC Form 461 Application Number: 1000

General Information

- Application Number and form friendly name (optional)

General Information

- Select Connected Care Pilot Program, other information will pre-populate with information from the FCC Form 460

Individual HCP Site Request for Services

- Indicate if you are using an RFP, and upload.

- Enter number of posting days (minimum of 28 days).

Individual HCP Site Request for Services

- Enter in the information for the services you are requesting.

Add Services

Identify services for which the applicant is requesting bids. Select all that apply. If appropriate, enter a bandwidth range for each service the applicant is requesting. *

| Previous | Next | **New Service** | Select All Rows | Delete Checked Rows |

Add All Services

Services	Input if Other	Minimum Download Bandwidth (Mbps)	Maximum Download Bandwidth (Mbps)	Minimum Upload Bandwidth (Mbps)	Maximum Upload Bandwidth (Mbps)	The applicant is seeking bids for similar services if appropriate	Actions
Select A Service ⌄						☑	☐

Select A Service
Data
Equipment
Installation
Other

(check all applicable): *

43

Individual HCP Site Request for Services

- Enter contact information.

13 Contact for Request for Services:
[Select a contact ▼]

13a If other, provide full contact information: *
Contact First Name:
Contact Middle Initial:
Contact Last Name:

Organization Name: *

Contact Name Title: *

Phone: *
Ext:

Fax:

Email: *

Address Line 1: *

Address Line 2:

City: *

State: *

Zip Code: *

Save and Exit **Save and Go Back** **Save and Continue** **Exit**

44

Declaration of Assistance

- List contact information for any assistance received in preparing the FCC Form 461 and the nature of the relationship.

45

Minimum Requirements for Bid Evaluation Criteria & Disqualification Factors

Additional Documentation

- If you have any additional documentation, upload here by clicking "New Document."

Required Certifications

- All certifications must be checked.

Signature

Signature   🔲 Preview PDF ❓ Form Guide

36 Email: [blurred]

33 Printed Name of Authorized Person:

First Name: USAC

Middle Initial: [ ]

Last Name: USAC

34 Title/Position of Authorized Person: USAC

35 Phone: (123) 123-1234   Ext: [ ]

37 Employer: USAC

38 Employer's FCC RN: [blurred]

Consortium FCC Form 461

- When filing a consortium FCC Form 461, you should make sure the FCC Forms 460 and LOAs for all member sites have been approved before filing the consortium FCC Form 461.

    - [LOA Submission Guide](#)

- Once the FCC Form 461 is filed, you will not be able to link sites to that FCC Form 461 that are later added to the consortium.

- Additionally, numerous FCC Forms 461 will likely mean numerous ACSDs, which would increase the administrative burden associated with competitive bidding.

- Ensure all of your [authorization](#) documents are up to date (i.e., TPA/LOA).

After Submitting

- You will receive an email confirmation that your form was submitted with a copy of the PDF form. If you do not receive a confirmation email, reach out to RHC-Assist@usac.org.

- 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

  - Information requests will come from a reviewer using an @usac.org domain address

Questions?

Best Practices & Resources

Request for Services Best Practices

Best Practices: Communicating with Your Service Provider

- Once your ACSD has passed and you've chosen a service provider, include the service provider on all emails when you reply to Information Requests.

- Ensure your service provider is aware of all the necessary documentation needed for future steps in the funding request and disbursement.

- Include language in your bid documentation that confirms your service provider will act in compliance with all Pilot Program rules and FCC Orders concerning the Pilot Program.

- All bid correspondence should be handled via email for audit purposes.

- All applicants and service providers are required to retain documentation for a period of five years after the conclusion of the Pilot project.

Information Request Reminders

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

- Where USAC requires information that cannot be located on the submitted supporting documentation 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 deadline to respond to the Information Request.

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

Important Dates and Deadlines

- **Contact Update Deadline** – Deadline for projects to provide updated contact information to USAC August 27, 2021

- **FCC Form 461 Deadline-** Initial form must be **publicly posted** no later than January 17, 2022

- **FCC Form 462 Deadline** - Initial form must be submitted no later than February 14, 2022
  - Per FCC Order 21-74 - Effective Date August 13, 2021

- Funding Request Webinar - August 5, 2021, 2-3 p.m. ET – Register

- Invoicing Webinar - Fall 2021

Resources

- [Develop Bid Evaluation Criteria & Select Services](#)

- [CCPP- Request for Services Summary](#)

- [CCPP Competitive Bidding Exemptions](#)

- [Search Posted Services](#)

- Blank [FCC Form 461 and Instructions](#)

- [CCPP Webpage](#)

Questions?

Thank you for joining us today!

- RHC Help Desk
  - Call (800) 453-1546
  - Hours: 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET M-F
  - Email RHC-Assist@usac.org

- Please fill out the post-webinar survey!

Thank You!