RHC 101
An Introduction to the Rural Health Care Program
USAC Staff

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Agenda

1. RHC Program Basics
2. Eligibility
3. Participation in the Program
The Basics
What Does the Rural Health Care Program Do?

The RHC Program discounts support getting the facility connected; the money goes directly to the service provider who then offsets the facilities’ costs by applying the discount to their bill or a check.

Video: What is the RHC Program?
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCC</td>
<td>Federal Communications Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCF</td>
<td>Healthcare Connect Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY</td>
<td>Funding Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCP</td>
<td>Health Care Provider (your site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Service Provider (Telco Co)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCL</td>
<td>Funding Commitment Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRN</td>
<td>Funding Request Number</td>
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Overview of the RHC Program

• The RHC Program **provides discounts** for telecommunications and broadband services to *eligible* health care providers (HCPs).

• The RHC Program is authorized by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to commit over $590M in funding for funding year (FY) 2019 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) and adjusts for inflation every year.
  • [FCC Order 18-82](#) released June 25, 2018 raised the RHC Program funding cap from $400M.
  • The funding cap includes administrative expenses for the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to administer the RHC Program each funding year.

• Read the RHC Program [Rules](#) and [Order](#) for complete information.
The Two Components of the RHC Program

There are two “subprograms” of the RHC Program:

• Telecommunications (Telecom) Program
• Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program
Telecom Program Highlights

- Funds *telecommunications services* related to the use of telemedicine and telehealth
- **Single year** funding requests
- **Funds up to the difference** between the urban and rural rates
Healthcare Connect Fund Program Highlights

- Funds eligible expenses related to **broadband connectivity** for both **individual sites** and **consortia**
- Provides a flat **65% discount**
- **Multi-year** funding
HCF Program: Benefits of the Consortium Approach

• Creation and growth of broadband HCP networks.
• Lower administrative costs.
• Sharing of medical, administrative, and technical expertise.
• Consortia can include ineligible HCP sites as part of the network and benefit from negotiated rates, but these sites cannot receive HCF Program support and must pay their “fair share” of the network costs.
• Improved quality and reduced cost of healthcare through leveraging broadband connections in consortia.
RHC Program: Funding Years & Filing Window Periods

• **Funding Year**
  • From July 1 to June 30 of the subsequent calendar year
  • FY2019 = July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

• **Filing Window Periods**
  • A fixed period during which all qualifying funding requests that are received during a filing window period are treated as having been filed simultaneously for purposes of making funding commitment decisions.
  • Each funding year can have multiple filing window periods.
  • FY2019 Filing Window Period is February 1 – 11:59 p.m. ET May 31.
    • Extended filing window for some HCF applicants which ended June 30.
FUNDING YEAR (FY) 2019

FILING CALENDAR

February 1 - May 31
Initial Funding Request
Filing Window Period FCC Form 462 or FCC Form 466

June 30
Filing Window End Date for HCF Program
Applicants affected by FCC Order 19-45

January 1
First day applicants may submit Requests for Services
FCC Form 461 or FCC Form 465 for FY2019

May 2*
Deadline for USAC posting of Request for Services
FCC Form 461 or FCC Form 465 for initial filing window period

July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020
FUNDING YEAR 2019

Ending December 31, 2020**
Deadline for FCC Form 463 submission for 2019 funding commitments which end on June 30, 2020

*Applicants should allow for processing time between their submission and USAC posting of the form by this day.
**An invoice must be submitted to the service provider and approved by the deadline.
• **218** Healthcare Providers in Alaska received funding in the Telecom Program for Fund Year 2017.

• **24** Healthcare Providers in Alaska received funding in the HCF Program for Fund Year 2017.
RHC Program Dollars in Alaska for Fund Year 2017

- Telecom Funding: $88.51 million
- HCF Funding: $1.16 million
Eligibility
Rural Healthcare Program
Application Process

1. Determine Eligibility
   Must meet the three initial program criteria and make sure requested services are eligible

2. Develop Evaluation Criteria and Request Services
   Develop scoring criteria to evaluate bids and describe service needs (posted on USAC website)

3. Evaluate Bids and Select a Service Provider
   Choose the “most cost-effective” service provider

4. Submit Funding Request
   Provide information about services and selected service provider

5. Certify Connection
   Confirm service start and end dates

6. Invoice
   Initiate invoicing process and submit to service provider for review (HCF Program)

Form 465
Form 460
Form 461
Form 466
Form 462
N/A
N/A
N/A
Form 463

TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM
HEALTHCARE CONNECT FUND
Three Criteria for Eligibility

1. **Status**
   - Not for Profit
   - Public

2. **HCP Type**

3. **Rural Location**
   - Telecom Program: HCP applicants must be located in an FCC-approved rural location to be considered rural.
   - HCF Program: Individual HCP applicants must be located in an FCC-approved rural location to be considered rural. Non-rural HCP applicants may apply as part of a majority-rural consortium.
   - Use the [rural look-up tool](https://www.usac.org) on the USAC website.

Each HCP site or location is considered an individual HCP for purposes of calculating support under the RHC Program. Each site must thus demonstrate that *by itself* it is an eligible entity.
Health Care Provider (HCP) Type

- Post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools
- Community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants
- Local health departments or agencies
- Community mental health centers
- Not-for-profit hospitals
- Rural health clinics
- Dedicated emergency departments of rural for-profit hospitals
- Part-time eligible entities
- Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)
- Consortia of the above entities
Participation in the Program
# HCF and Telecom Programs Comparison

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>HCF Program</th>
<th>Telecom Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discount</td>
<td>65% flat rate discount on all eligible expenses</td>
<td>Calculated as urban-rural differential of cost of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rurality</td>
<td>HCP can be located in a non-rural location as a member of an eligible consortium, as long as consortium is majority rural</td>
<td>HCP must be in a rural location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Site Expenses</td>
<td>Connections associated with off-site data centers and off-site administrative offices used by eligible HCPs for health care purposes are eligible for funding</td>
<td>No off-site associated connections are eligible for funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# HCF and Telecom Programs Comparison

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Telecom Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Expenses</td>
<td>• Broadband services</td>
<td>• Telecommunications services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Network equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• HCP-constructed and owned network facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Options</td>
<td>• Apply as an individual HCP or as a part of a consortium</td>
<td>• Apply as an individual HCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can obtain a multi-year funding commitment</td>
<td>• Must seek new funding commitment for each funding year</td>
</tr>
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Submitting an FCC Form in the HCF and Telecom Programs

- All forms and supporting documentation submission is done online and forms are submitted to USAC for review.
- The RHC Program online application management system, My Portal, is used for both the HCF and Telecom Programs.
- Applicants will receive email correspondence about the status of form submission, decisions, and any additional information needed.
My Portal Access

- New applicants will not have access to our online application management system My Portal until their first form (either the FCC Form 460 or 465) is approved.
- You must complete the FCC Forms 460 and 465 in a single session.
Information Collected on the RHC Program Eligibility Forms

FCC Form 460 (HCF Program)
1. Site information
2. Contact information
3. Eligibility information
4. Certifications and signatures

Note: the FCC Forms 460 and 465 must be completed in a single session. You are unable to save a draft form and return to complete at a later time.

FCC Form 465 (Telecom Program)
1. Site information
2. Contact information
3. Eligibility information
4. Certifications and signatures
5. Services requested (Telecom Program only)
2018 Funding Cap Order Released

Find Out How Your FY2017 Funding Commitment is Affected

CLICK HERE

INDIVIDUAL HCPS ▼  CONSORTIA ▼  SERVICE PROVIDERS ▼

LATEST NEWS

My Portal System Updates Regarding FY2017 Site and Service Substitutions (7/25/2018)

My Portal Outage Due To System Maintenance Thursday, August 2 (7/25/2018)

Watch the 2018 Funding Cap Order Informational Webinar Today! (7/18/2018)

Newsletter for July 2018 (7/9/2018)

FCC RHC 2018 Funding Cap Order (6/25/2018)

QUICK LINKS

Letter of Agency Information – Download a Sample LOA

Third Party Authorization Information – Download a Sample TPA

Urban and Rural Rate Information – Telecom Program

FY2018 Request for Services Best Practices Webinar – Watch Now!

Funding Request Best Practices Webinar – Watch Now!
## TRAININGS & OUTREACH

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<td>All Training Events</td>
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USAC offers a variety of Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program resources for individual health care providers (HCPs), current and prospective consortia, and service providers. In this section you can access publications, handouts, webinar recordings, educational tutorials, and other resources. All events and resources are offered free of charge.

### Upcoming Events

- October 24, 2017 2:00pm ET – RHC Program Filing Window Update – [Register](#)
- See more outreach opportunities on the [Program Calendar](#)

### Resources

Learn at your own pace with our handouts, reference materials, online videos, and tutorials. You can also view recordings of past webinar events.

- **Handouts & Reference**
  - [View resources, guides, and more](#)

- **Online Learning Library**
  - [Videos, tutorials, and webinar recordings](#)

Looking for a past event?
- [View webinar recordings](#)
- [View full event archive](#)
Upcoming trainings

- **September 4- FCC Order 19-78 Webinar**
  - On August 20, 2019, the Federal Communications Commission released a Report and Order reforming the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program to promote transparency and predictability, and to further the efficient allocation of limited program resources while guarding against waste, fraud, and abuse. RHC Outreach staff will be providing a general overview of newly released FCC Order 19-78 during this webinar.

- **September 12- Consortia Webinar Training**
  - Specifically for consortia who want to start and prepare for FY2020 Filing Window. Will go over general questions about forming and organizing a consortia, and how to get ready for Request for Services FCC Form 461/465 process
  - Answer questions in regards to Consortia Annual Report, forming consortia, and best practices
  - Register [HERE](#)
RHC Program Help Desk

- Email: RHC-Assist@usac.org
  - Email at any time to request a one-on-one appointment to learn more about the application process or ask specific questions.

- Phone: (800) 453-1546
  - Hours are 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET
USDA Rural Development

Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program

Jessie Huff
Energy Coordinator – Public Information Coordinator
The program provides or improves Distance Learning and/or Telemedicine Services in Rural America by funding equipment that allows rural residents to access distance learning or telemedicine services from hub sites located in larger urban or suburban areas.

Overcoming the effects of remoteness and low population density.
Eligible Applicants

Prior to official submission of applications, applicants may request technical assistance or other application guidance from RUS, as long as such requests are made 15 days prior to the final application due date.
http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants
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