Rural Health Care (RHC) Program – Funding Year (FY) 2024 Updates

September 18, 2024

Universal Service
Administrative Co.

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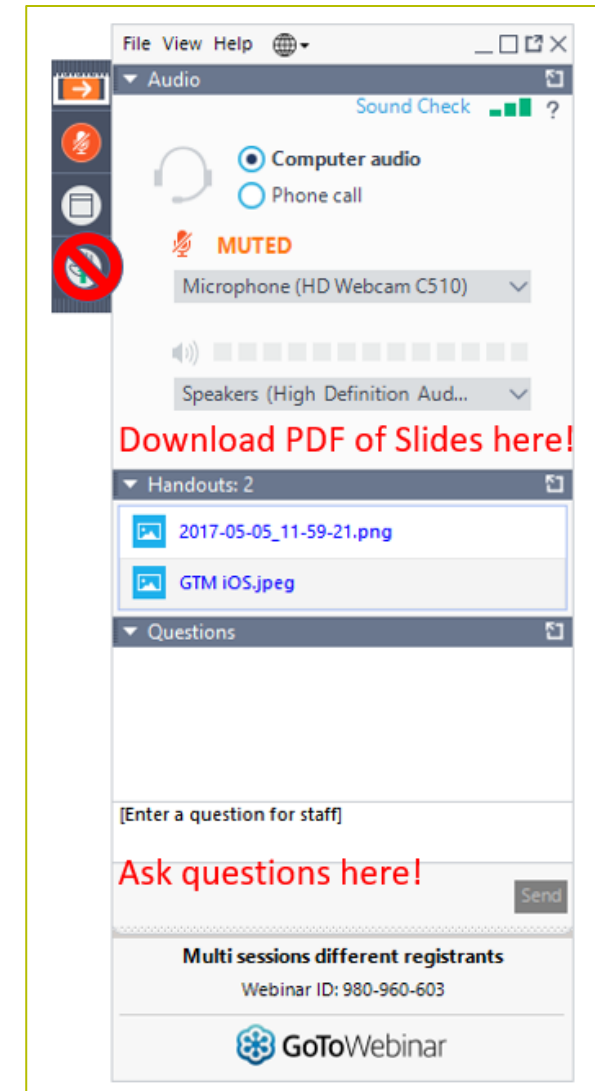
Meet Our Team

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Agenda

- Program Updates for FY2024

- Next Steps for FY2024

- My Portal and RHC Connect Updates

- Important Reminders

- Upcoming Training

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
FRN	Funding Request Number
FCL	Funding Commitment Letter
BAN	Billing Account Number
SPIN/498 ID	Service Provider Identification Number
FCCRN	FCC Registration Number (Referred to as FRN on FCC website)

Program Updates for FY2024

Funding Year 2024 Updates Webinar

FCC Report and Order 24-214

- On March 7, 2024, the FCC released FCC Order DA 24-214 extending the deadline for the FY2024 Application Filing Window to May 1, 2024.

- Applicants were given a 30-day extension from the original filing deadline of April 1, 2024.

- All funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) must have been submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on May 1, 2024, for the initial filing window period.

- Visit USAC's website for more information about filing windows.

FCC 23-110 Third Report and Order

- On December 14, 2023, the FCC released [Order FCC 23-110](#). This order improves RHC program administration and facilitates participation in the program by allowing health care providers that expect to become eligible during a funding year to complete the processes required to request funding, aligns program deadlines, simplifies rules for calculating urban rates, streamlines administrative processes, and frees up unused funding for other purposes. Changes to RHC program rules are as follows:

  - Permits health care providers to be granted conditional eligibility, thus allowing them to initiate competitive bidding and request funding while awaiting a final eligibility determination.

  - Provides health care providers more time to complete Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) changes by moving the SPIN change deadline to align with the invoice filing deadline (Beginning in FY2023).

  - Simplifies urban rate calculations by eliminating the seldom-used "standard urban distance" component of the rule for determining urban rates in the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program (Beginning in FY2025).

  - Allows health care providers to request changes to the dates covered by an evergreen contract post-commitment (Beginning in FY2024).

  - Adopts the FCC Form 460 for eligibility determinations in the Telecom Program, which will eliminate the need for Telecom Program participants to seek an eligibility determination every time they engage in competitive bidding.

FCC Order DA 23-6

- On January 26, 2023, the FCC released Order DA 23-6, waiving the requirement that HCPs and service providers participating in the Telecom Program use the Rates Database to calculate urban and rural rates for FY2024 and FY2025.

- For FY2024 and FY2025, 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 FY2025, applicants and service providers using Methods 1 and 2 to calculate rural rates are not permitted to use previously approved rates.

  - 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 and urban 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 or urban rate.

- Please use the Urban and Rural Rate Information FY2024-2025 tip sheet as a resource.

FY2024 Funding Requests

- The FY2024 filing window closed on May 1, 2024.

    - No further FY2024 funding requests (FCC Forms 462 and 466) will be accepted.

- Funding Requests Reviews Started Early!

    - RHC began reviewing funding requests before the filing window closed.

    - The first FY2024 funding commitments were issued on June 20, 2024, six weeks after the close of the filing window

- Due to the demand for RHC program funds, there will not be a second filing window for FY2024.

- The RHC program will not accept additional funding requests (FCC Forms 462 or 466) for FY2024.

FY2024 Funding Demand

- On June 14, 2024, the FCC Wireline Competition Bureau directed USAC to carry forward up to $161.57 million in unused funds from prior funding years to the extent necessary to satisfy FY2024 demand for the RHC program.

- For more information, read [Public Notice DA 24-573](#).

- All approved Telecom Program and HCF Program funding requests will be fully funded.

FY2024 Funding Request Review Status

- As of September 13, 2024:

  - FY2024 HCF – 77.7% of FCC Forms 462 are processed (approved, denied or withdrawn)

  - FY2024 Telecom – 37% of FCC Forms 466 are processed (approved, denied or withdrawn)

Connected Care Pilot Program (CCPP)

• The 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.

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

• No more applications will be selected for the CCPP.

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

Next Steps for FY2024

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Next Steps for Approved FY2024 Commitments

- When you receive a Funding Commitment Letter (FCL):

    - Review details carefully including funding start and end dates, cost of service, and contract information.

- Prepare to invoice:

    - The invoice filing deadline for Telecom and single-year HCF FY2024 commitments is **October 28, 2025**.

    - Your invoice filing deadline appears on your FCL and on the [Rural Health Care Commitments and Disbursements (FCC Form 462/466/466A)](#) section of the [USAC Open Data](#) platform.

    - To locate your invoice filing deadline, search by FRN and your invoice filing deadline will be on the far right of the screen.

Next Steps for FY2024 Applicants - Appeals

- If you disagree with a final decision from USAC, please use the [Appeals](#) webpage on the USAC website as a resource.

  - You must file your appeal (or, if submitting by mail, it must be postmarked) within 60 days of the date when USAC issued the decision you are appealing.

  - Note: If that day falls on a weekend or on a federal holiday, the appeal is also considered on time if you file it (or it is postmarked) by the first business day following that weekend or holiday.

- Unless you're appealing a program deadline, all appeals must be submitted to RHC before submitting to the FCC.

  - If you are appealing a deadline or any other rule, you must file a petition to request a waiver of the RHC rule with the FCC on the [Electronic Comment Filing System](#).

Awaiting Decision on FY2024

- If you are waiting on an FY2024 evergreen determination as of December 1, 2024, we recommend filing an FCC Form 461 or 465 to competitively bid for FY2025.

- If you are waiting for a final decision on a multiyear commitment for FY2024, we recommend filing a funding request for FY2025.

- **Applicants planning to apply for FY2025 funding should submit their forms prior to the window close, regardless of their FY2024 pending form status.**

  - FY2025 Filing Window: December 1, 2024 – April 1, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

- Please be sure to include a cover letter when you submit your FY2025 funding request explaining your competitive bidding process and include the associated FY2024 FRN for reference.

  - Without an explanation, your FY2025 funding request could be perceived as a duplicate request and denied as such. RHC reviewers will work directly with applicants on specific applications.

Example of FY2024 Single Expense FCL

- General information including:
  - FRN info
  - Listed contact information
  - Service provider information
  - Service delivery deadline
  - Invoice filing deadline

Example of FY2024 Multiple Expense FCL

- General information including:
  - FRN info
  - Contact information
  - Service provider information
  - Service delivery deadline
  - Invoice filing deadline

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Privileged and Contains Confidential Information

Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) Date:	08/15/2024
Funding Request Number (FRN):	RHC20
Program:	Healthcare Connect Fund
Funding Year (FY):	
Service Delivery Deadline:	
Invoice Filing Deadline:	
FCC Form 461 Application Number:	
Health Care Provider (HCP) Name:	
HCP Number:	
HCP Contact Name:	
HCP Contact Email:	
HCP Contact Phone:	

The Rural Health Care (RHC) Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) has completed its review of the FCC Form 462 (Funding Request Form) and supporting documentation submitted by the HCP referenced above. Based on the information provided, RHC has made a funding decision for the expense items described below. Additionally, if the HCP submitted a contract or service agreement with the form, the outcome of the contract review is included in this letter.

Total Committed Funding:	
HCP Physical Location:	
Service Provider Name:	
SPIN/498 ID:	
Billing Account Number (BAN):	Multiple

Expense Item Decisions

Expense Item	Site Number	Decision	Pro-Rated Committed Funding Amount
1		Approved	
2		Approved	
3		Approved	
4		Approved	
5		Approved	
6		Approved	
7		Approved	

Best Practices: Communicating With Your Service Provider

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

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

- HCPs and service providers are required to retain documentation for a minimum of five years.

Supply Chain Order

- As a reminder, when service providers log into My Portal and RHC Connect, they will see two new supply chain certifications included in the FCC Form 463 and Telecom Program invoice/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](#).

- **FY2024 Applicants**: If you requested services or equipment that contain components of products produced by any of the listed covered companies or their parents, affiliates or subsidiaries in FY2024, you cannot invoice for these funds. Instead, you should immediately request a [service substitution](#).

- **FY2025 Applicants:** 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 or subsidiaries.

Supply Chain Web Page

- [Supply Chain webpage](#)

Site and Service Substitutions

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

- You may request a site or service substitution if:

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

  - The requested change, e.g., adding sites or upgrading services, is clearly stated in the Request for Services, including any applicable Requests for Proposal (RFP) used in the competitive bidding process;

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

  - The site is an eligible HCP, and the service must be eligible under the Telecom or HCF Program.

- HCPs using month-to-month service agreements are not eligible for site and service substitutions.

- For more information, visit our [Site and Service Substitutions](#) webpage.

- Site and service substitutions must be submitted by the service delivery deadline.

Questions?

FY2024 RHC Connect and My Portal Updates

Funding Year 2024 Updates Webinar

RHC Connect Updates

Form	Current Platform	RHC Connect Migration
FCC Forms 460 & 465 - Letters of Agency (LOA) - Third Party Authorization (TPA)	RHC Connect My Portal My Portal	Ready for release* Currently in development Currently in development
FCC Form 461	RHC Connect	FY2023 and forward
FCC Form 462	RHC Connect	FY2022 and forward
FCC Form 463	RHC Connect	FY2022 and forward
FCC Form 463	My Portal	FY2021 and prior – multi-year commitments
HCF Post-Commitment Change Requests	RHC Connect	FY2022 and forward
FCC Form 466	RHC Connect	FY2024 and forward
FCC Form 469 (Telecom Invoice Form)	My Portal	Currently in development

*The FCC Form 460 for both RHC programs and the FCC Form 465 for the Telecom Program are awaiting final approval as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).

RHC Connect Resources

- Forms for prior funding years and the Connected Care Pilot Program (CCPP) will remain in My Portal.

- 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

- FCC Form 466 – FY2024 and forward

  - [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – FCC Form 466

- HCF Post-Commitment Change Requests

  - [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – Post Commitment Change Requests

RHC Connect Resources – Coming Soon!

- FCC Form 460
  - Webpage
  - User Guide
  - Self-guided training video
- FCC Form 465
  - Webpage
  - User Guide
  - Self-guided training video
- FCC Form 469 (Telecom invoice)
  - Webpage
  - User Guides for HCPs and service providers

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 or expense item.

Information Request Reminders – RHC Connect

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

- For all forms that have migrated to RHC Connect, an auto-generated email will be sent directing applicants to RHC Connect to respond.

- **Applicants should respond through RHC Connect only.**

- Please use the [Information Request tip sheet](#) as a resource.

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

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Best Practices for Creating the FCC Form 463

- Consolidate invoices.

- Use calendar drop down for billing start and end dates.

- Identify eligible amount for chosen period.

- Common issues:
    - Expense items unavailable to invoice
    - $0.00 in the USF Support Amount to be Paid column
    - Error Messages

Post-Commitment Changes in RHC Connect

- The following operations are now available in RHC Connect for FY2022 and forward:
  - SPIN changes, both correctional and operational
  - Site and service substitutions
  - Invoice filing deadline extension
  - Service delivery deadline extension for non-recurring costs in HCF
- **NOTE: If you have submitted a post-commitment change request in RHC Connect, please log into RHC Connect and request an invoice filing deadline extension.**
  - We have a high volume of these requests and may not complete the review prior to the invoice filing deadline.
- These post-commitment operations are available in My Portal for funding commitments for FY2021 and prior funding years for HCF, Telecom and CCPP FRNs.

Questions?

Important Reminders

FY2024 Updates Webinar

FCC Form 469 – Telecom Program

- The FCC Form 469 is the new form for the Telecom Program.

- Per FCC Order 23-6, it's aligned with the FCC Form 463.

- One key difference is that the service provider will submit the FCC Form 469 in RHC Connect, the applicant will receive an email alerting them of the submission, and the applicant will officially submit the form to USAC by certifying and signing the form.

- For FY2024, the FCC Form 467, the Healthcare Provider Support Schedule (HSS), and the Telecom invoice will be eliminated in the Telecom Program.

- The RHC outreach team will provide resources once the FCC Form 469 is deployed in RHC Connect.

Post-Commitment Changes to Approved Funding

- If the address of your site changes or the primary account holder no longer works for the HCP, you must submit an FCC Form 460 revision for HCF and Telecom within 30 days of the change.

  - This is for all changes **including those that occur post-commitment**.

- If you don't use all approved funding, you can request a decrease in your approved funding by sending an email to RHC-Invoicing@usac.org.

  - You must include your HCP name and number, the affected Funding Request Number (FRN) and the amount you would like to reduce in the commitment.

  - USAC will complete a **partial** de-commitment for that FRN in that amount.

- If you'd like to re-allocate funds within your approved FRN, you can submit a [Site and Service Substitution](#). This applies to both HCF and Telecom.

- If you will not be using **any** of the funds in your approved funding commitment, you can return the approved and invoiced funds to USAC. For more information, use the [Returning Program Funding](#) webpage as a resource.

Account Holder Management

- Please ensure all account holders are up to date for all HCPs at all times.

- We recommend having at least one secondary account holder per HCP.

- Automatic emails and Information Requests are sent directly to all account holders.

- The primary account holder (PAH) is responsible for adding or removing all other account holders.

  - If the current PAH is not available, please reach out to the RHC Customer Service Center at RHC-Assist@usac.org.

- If a PAH needs to be changed, the current PAH should submit an FCC Form 460 revision.

- Resources about account holder changes will be available once the FCC Form 460 and account holder management functions move to RHC Connect.

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.

- Account holders 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 or expense item.

Information Request Reminders – RHC Connect

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

- For all forms that have migrated to RHC Connect, an auto-generated email will be sent directing applicants to RHC Connect to respond.

- **Applicants should respond through RHC Connect only.**

- Please use the Information Request tip sheet as a resource.

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

Questions?

Upcoming Trainings and Resources

Funding Year 2024 Update Webinar

Upcoming Webinars

- Funding Request Best Practices for FY2024 Filing Window
    - Service Provider Training – October 9, 2024, at 2 p.m. ET - Register
    - HCF Program – November 13, 2024, 2-3 p.m. ET - Register
    - Telecom Program – November 20, 2024, 2-3 p.m. ET - Register
- All RHC trainings are posted on the Upcoming Dates webpage on the USAC website.

Resources – HCF Program

- [Examples of Common Products and Services](#) - HCF Program

- [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – FCC Form 461

- [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – FCC Form 462

- [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – FCC Form 463

- [RHC Connect FCC Form 461](#) – training module

- [RHC Connect FCC Form 462](#) – training module

- [Post-Commitment Change Requests](#) – training module

- [Information Requests in RHC Connect](#) – tip sheet

Resources – Telecom Program

- [Examples of Common Products and Services](#) - Telecom Program

- [RHC Connect User Guide](#) – FCC Form 466

- [Rural and Urban Rate Information for FY2024 and FY2025](#)

- [Information Requests in RHC Connect](#) – tip sheet

Coming Soon!

- RHC Connect User Guide – FCC Form 460

- RHC Connect User Guide - FCC Form 465

- RHC Connect User Guide – FCC Form 469 (HCPs and service providers)

- RHC Connect User Guide – LOA/LOE

- RHC User Guide – User Management

- Training modules
  - FCC Form 460 in RHC Connect
  - FCC Form 465 in RHC Connect
  - FCC Form 466 in RHC Connect
  - FCC Form 469 in RHC Connect (HCPs and service providers)
  - User Management in RHC Connect

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 all FCC orders	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 and RHC Connect
Assist with My Portal and RHC Connect	Transfer a call to a specific form reviewer

Questions?