

A healthcare professional, likely a nurse or doctor, is standing by the side of a hospital bed, holding a clipboard and looking at a patient who is lying in bed. The scene is set in a hospital room with medical equipment visible in the background. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

RHC 101

An Introduction to the Rural Health Care Program



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

USAC Staff

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Agenda

1. RHC Program Basics
2. Eligibility
3. Participation in the Program
4. Q&A

The Basics

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 up to \$581M for FY2018 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019) and adjusts for inflation every year.
 - [Order 18-82](#) released June 25, 2018 raised the RHC Program cap from \$400M.
 - This amount includes administrative expenses for Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), the administrator of the programs, to administer the RHC Program per funding year.

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.

The Two Components of the RHC Program

There are two “subprograms” of the RHC Program:

1. Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program

- Supports broadband connectivity and broadband networks for eligible health care providers (HCPs)
- Eligible services and equipment receive a 65% discount

2. Telecommunications (Telecom) Program

- Funds urban/rural rate difference for telecommunications services for eligible rural HCPs.
- Remained in place after adoption of the HCF Program.

Eligibility

Three Criteria for Eligibility

1. Status

- Not for Profit
- Public

2. Eligibility Category

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](#) on the USAC website.

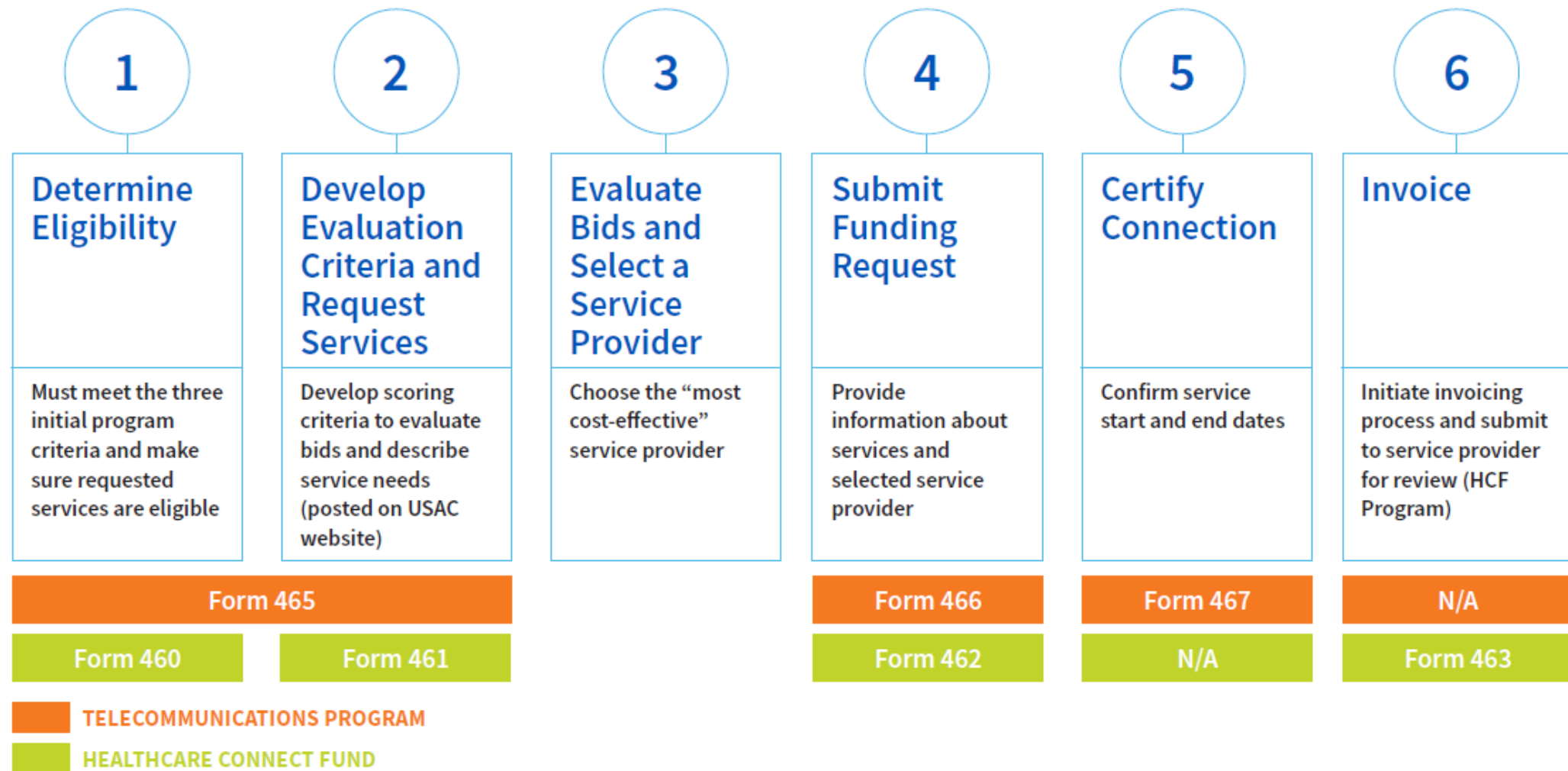
Each HCP site or location is considered an individual HCP for purposes of calculating support under the RHC Program. Each site must thus demonstrate that *by itself* it is an eligible entity.

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

Rural Healthcare Program Application Process



HCF and Telecom Programs Comparison

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

HCF and Telecom Programs Comparison

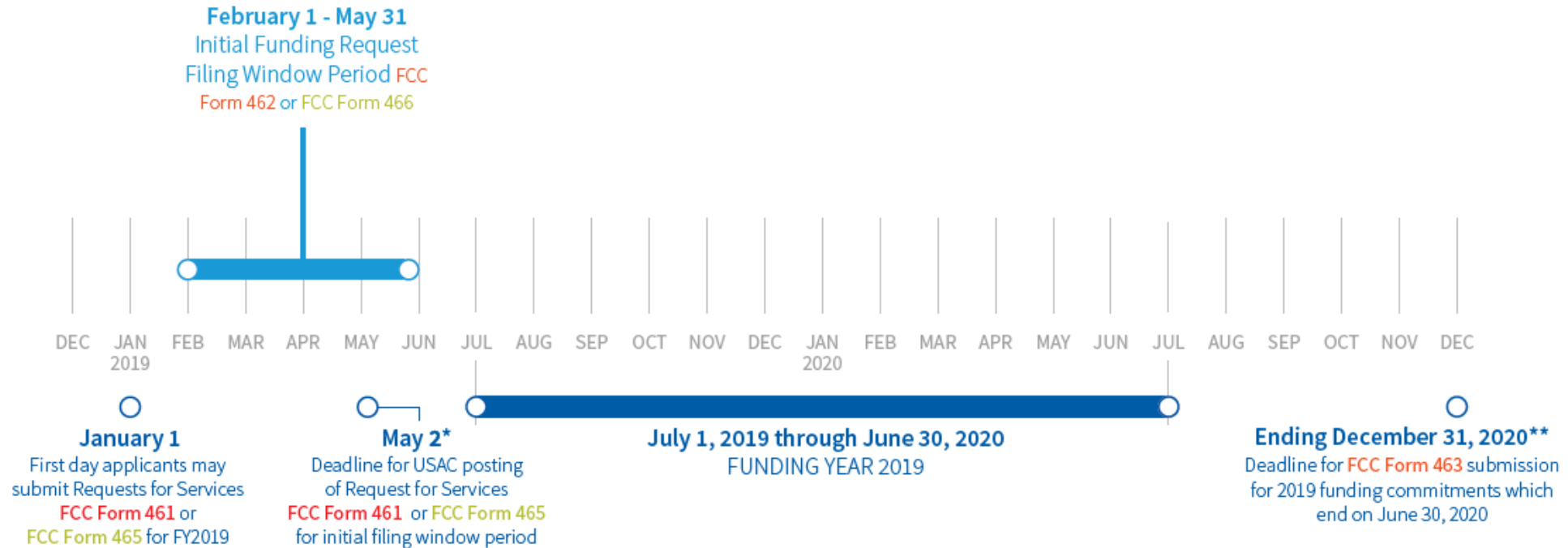
Category	HCF Program	Telecom Program
Eligible Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broadband services• Network equipment• HCP-constructed and owned network facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Telecommunications services
Application Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply as an individual HCP or as a part of a consortium• Can obtain a multi-year funding commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply as an individual HCP• Must seek new funding commitment for each funding year



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.

FUNDING YEAR (FY) 2019

FILING CALENDAR



 Funding Request Filing Window Period	Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program
 General Funding Year Deadlines	Telecommunications Program

*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.

Submitting an FCC Form in the HCF and Telecom Programs

- All form 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.

Create Your My Portal Account

- A My Portal account is created by submitting a new FCC Form 460 (HCF Program) or FCC Form 465 (Telecom Program)

The screenshot displays the website for the Universal Service Administrative Co. The top navigation bar includes links for Tools, Forms, Payments, and My Portal (highlighted with a red box). Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for About USAC, Schools and Libraries, Rural Health Care (highlighted), Lifeline, High Cost, Contributors, and Service Providers. The main content area features a sidebar with sections for 'ABOUT THE PROGRAM' (including Process Overview, Appeals & Audits, Program Calendar, Funding Information, Glossary of Terms (PDF), and FAQs) and 'RESOURCES & TOOLS' (including Forms, My Portal (highlighted with a red box), Tools, Latest News, Sample Documents, FCC Resources, Trainings & Outreach, and Contact Us). The main content area also features a large blue banner for the 'FY2018 Initial Filing Window Period Open February 1, 2018' with a 'VIEW MORE INFO' button. Below the banner are three blue buttons for 'INDIVIDUAL HCPS', 'CONSORTIA', and 'SERVICE PROVIDERS'. At the bottom, there are sections for 'LATEST NEWS' and 'QUICK LINKS'.

Information Collected on the RHC Program Eligibility Forms

FCC Form 460 (HCF Program)

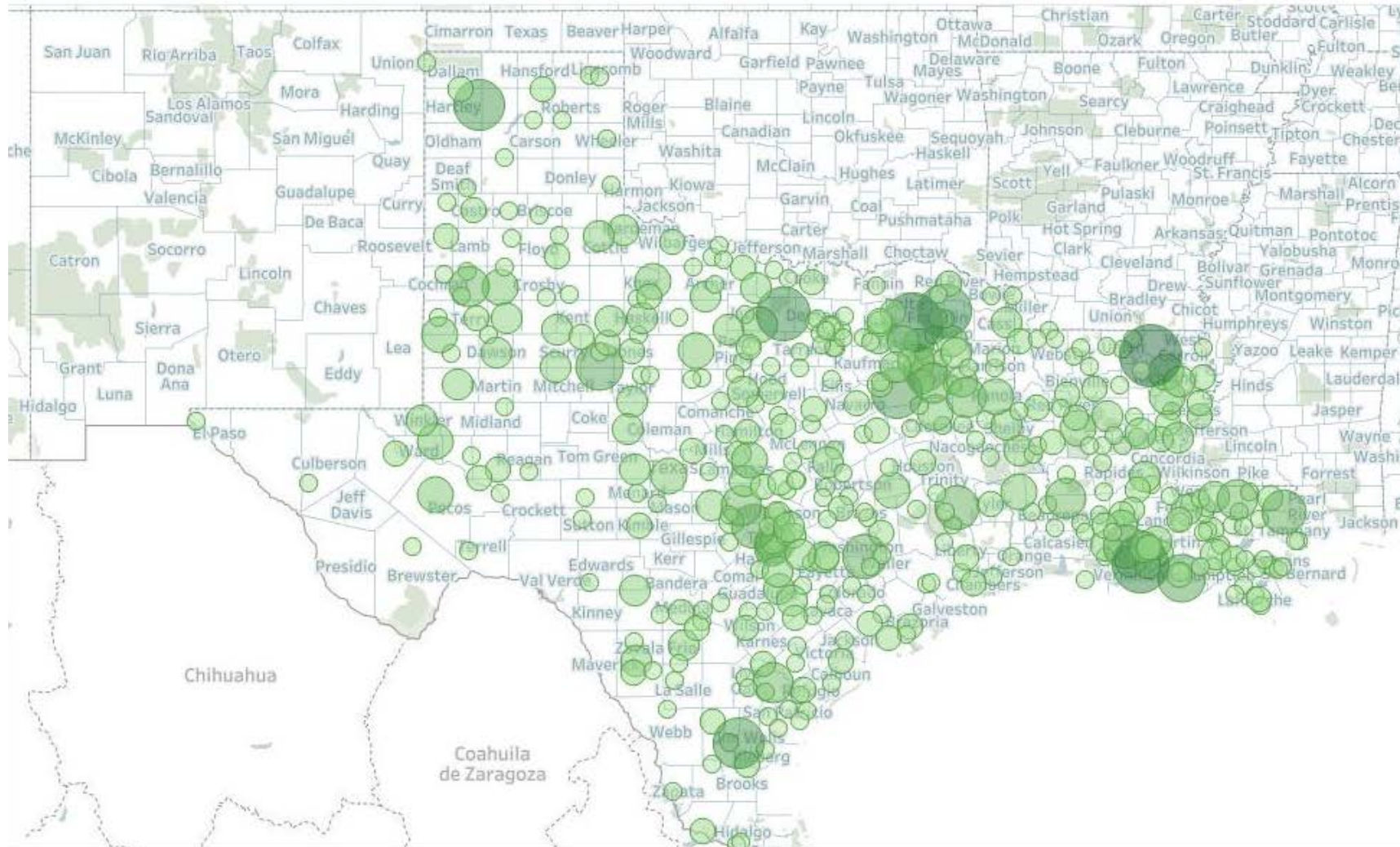
1. Site information
2. Contact information
3. Eligibility information
4. Certifications and signatures

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)

Participating HCPs by zip code within Tex-La regional area



RHC Program Dollars In TexLa Area

- HCF Funding = \$9.16 million
- Telecom Funding = \$12.24 million



RHC Program Dollars Save Time and Money

The University of Virginia Telemedicine clinic has saved patients nearly 16 million miles of driving since its inception and has conducted over 56,000 patient encounters.

The use of RHC Program funds closes the gap in funding, enabling rural clinics to access telemedicine and the specialists their communities need.



“The ability to lay broadband and support telemedicine has a direct effect on the quality of health care.”

- David Cattell-Gordon, Director, UVA Telemedicine Office

Training & Resources

- Webinars
- RHC Monthly Newsletter
- Training Videos
- Handouts

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Process Overview
- Appeals & Audits
- Program Calendar (FY2018)
- Funding Commitments (FY2017)
- 2018 Funding Cap Order
- Glossary of Terms (PDF)
- FAQs

RESOURCES & TOOLS

- Forms
- My Portal
- Tools
- Latest News
- Sample Documents
- FCC Resources
- Trainings & Outreach
- Contact Us

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 \(6/25/2018\)](#)

[Read more](#)

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!

[Read more](#)

TRAININGS & OUTREACH

Online Learning Library
All Training Events

Handouts & Reference
Newsletter

Webinars

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](#)

Looking for a past event?

[View webinar recordings](#)
[View full event archive](#)

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
Print resources, guides, and more
[View All Handouts](#)



Online Learning Library
Videos, tutorials, and webinar recordings
[View All Videos](#)

Upcoming
Webinars and
Trainings →

Helpful materials
to guide you
through the
application
process →

←
Webinar
recordings

RHC Program Search Tools

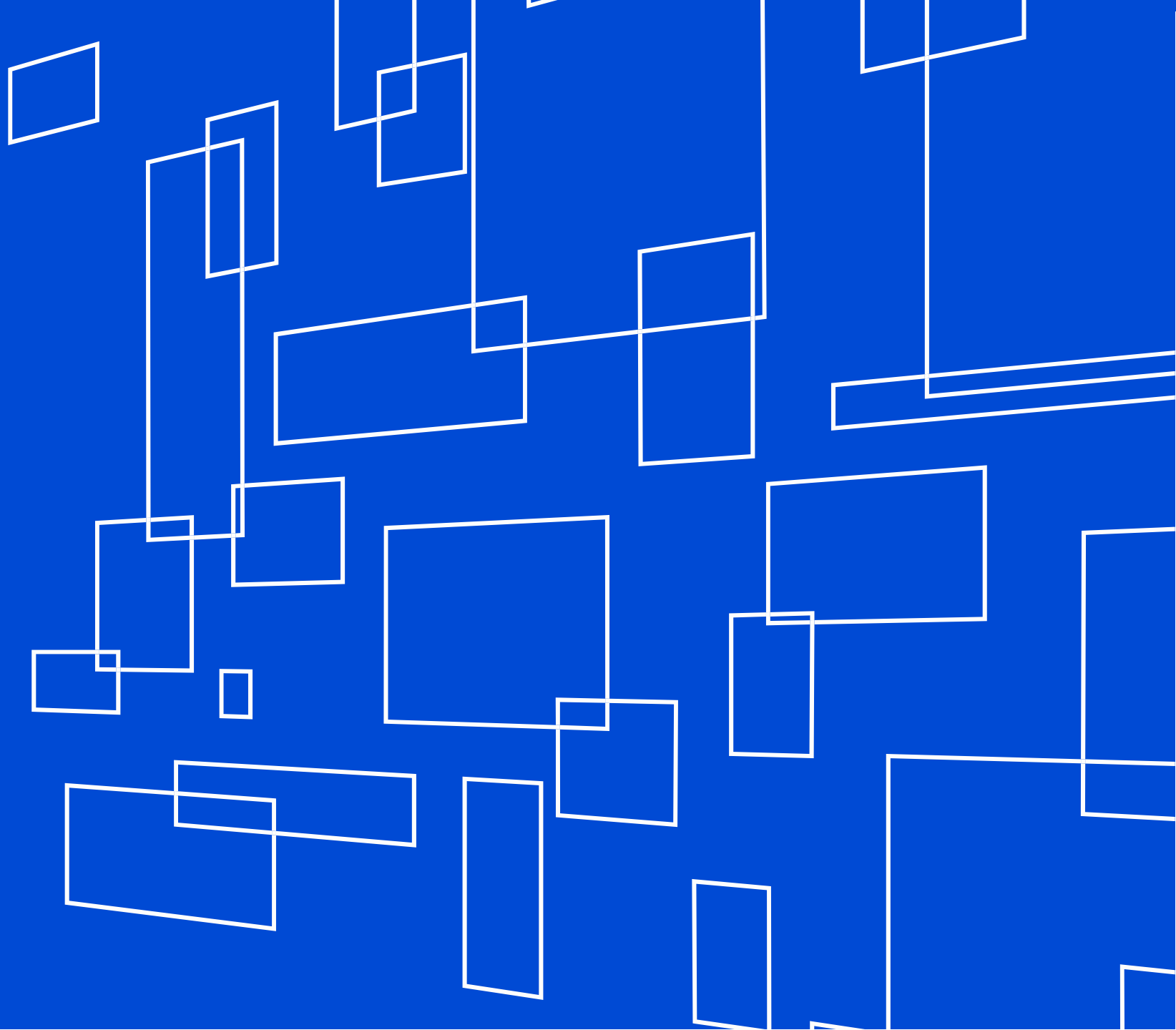
- Commitments Search
 - Funding information for past funding years
 - You may filter by states or years for more specific information.
 - Different searches for the [HCF Program](#) and [Telecom Programs](#)
- Search Posted Services
 - This tool allows service providers to view service request information posted by consortia and individual health care providers applying for funding through the Healthcare Connect Fund Program.
 - Different Searches for the [HCF Program](#) and [Telecom Programs](#)

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



Questions?





**Universal Service
Administrative Co.**