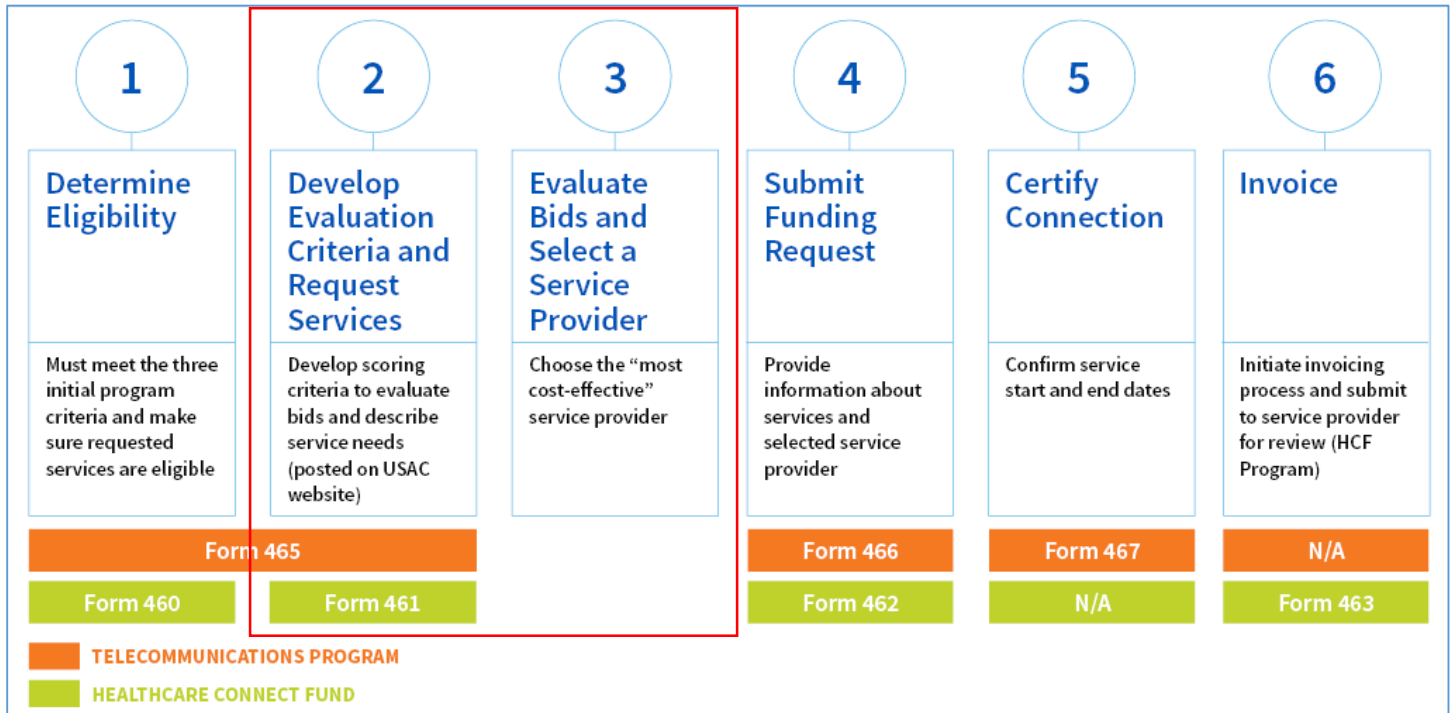


Rural Health Care Program

Requests for Services



What is a request for services?

- Request for services is the part of the application process that lets services providers know what types of telecommunications or broadband services the health care provider (HCP) is seeking. Forms initiating the request for services are:
 - Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program – [FCC Form 461](#) (Request for Services Form)
 - Telecommunications (Telecom) Program – [FCC Form 465](#) (Description of Services Requested and Certification Form)
 - Note: The Telecom Program’s FCC Form 465 includes **both** eligibility information and request for services
- Once a request for services is posted, service providers have 28 days to send their bids to the applicant
 - The applicant and service provider may not enter into an agreement to purchase services until the 28 days is over
 - After 28 days, the HCP and service provider can sign a contract; this is the Allowable Contract Sign Date (ACSD).

What is competitive bidding?

- [Competitive bidding](#) is the process that allows service providers equal opportunity to bid on the HCP’s service requirements.
- Program rules require that the competitive bidding process be “fair and open.”¹
- Service providers who plan to bid cannot help the HCP select a winner nor participate in the vendor selection process.
- All applicants and service providers must comply with any applicable state or local competitive bidding requirements.
- In some cases, the applicant’s service needs or contract conditions can permit a competitive bidding exemption. [Read more.](#)

¹ Paragraph 126 of the HCF Order
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Bid Evaluation Criteria

- The bid evaluation criteria is a list of weighted standards the HCP uses to determine the most cost-effective bid. [Read more.](#)
- Each criterion is given a certain weight, and the sum of these weights must equal 100.
- The bid criteria should address the HCP's needs per the FCC Forms 461/465 and meet the FCC's definition of "cost-effective."²

Requests for Proposal

- A [request for proposal \(RFP\)](#), submitted at the same time as the FCC Form 461, is a comprehensive bidding solicitation that describes the applicant's business priorities and functional requirements in sufficient detail.
- Information that is required on the FCC Form 461 must be identical to the information described in the RFP.

FY2019 Information for HCF Program Applicants

- Rollover FY2018 Request for Services for FY2019 funding commitments
 - Applicants who submitted a FY2018 FCC Form 461 can request a rollover for FY2019, under the following conditions:
 - The FCC Form 461 must have been submitted for FY2018, and previously reviewed and approved by RHC in FY2018.
 - The FY2018 FCC Form 461 and/or competitive bidding process must have complied with the FCC's competitive bidding rules
 - Rolling over an already posted FY2018 FCC Form 461 allow applicants to immediately file a FY2019 FCC Form 462.
 - To request an FCC Form 461 rollover:
 - Send email to: RHC-Assist@usac.org
 - Subject line of email: FCC Form 461 Rollover Request App #
 - Include within the email body: HCP #, FCC Form 461 application #
 - Once emailed, the rollover request may take 5 - 8 business days to review and process.
 - If approved, your request will be confirmed via email from an RHC staff member.
- RFP Review Opt-Out
 - Applicants may choose to bypass the formal USAC RFP review. During the formal RFP review, RHC identifies areas of potential non-compliance with competitive bidding requirements and makes recommendations.
 - To opt out, applicants must email rhc-assist@usac.org at the time of FCC Form 461 submission.

Tips for Consortia

- Make sure the FCC Forms 460 and LOAs for all member sites have been approved before filing the consortium FCC Form 461.
- 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.
- Ensure all of your authorization documents are up to date (i.e., TPA/LOA).

Resources

- [Subscribe](#) to the RHC Program Monthly Newsletter
- [Online Learning Library](#)
- [RFP Checklist](#) (HCF Program Only)
- [Network Plan Checklist](#) (HCF Program Only)

² The FCC defines "cost-effective" as the method that costs the least after consideration of the features, quality of transmission, reliability, and other factors that the health care provider deems relevant to choosing a method of providing the required health care services. 47 CFR 54.603(b)(4) (Telecom Program), 47 CFR 54.642(c) (HCF Program)