

FCC RURAL HEALTHCARE PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

FUNDING WINDOW PREPARATION

When should I prepare for the next funding window?

It is suggested that funding window preparation happens between August and November.

How do I prepare for a funding window?

1. Review your current network and determine how it's future might look like.
2. Broadband Services will then review your inventory, contracts and invoices to determine the appropriate USAC funding window to file eligible telecom expenses, existing and new.
3. Sign a Letter of Agency (LOA) with Broadband Services. The LOA allows Broadband Services to file forms, for each eligible location your organization may have, on your behalf with USAC.
4. Submit copies of invoices, service provider master service agreements and a complete inventory list.

Eligible Services

If I purchase new equipment or services after a funding window, can it be subsidized?

HCP owned equipment: No. Owned equipment must be purchased through a Request for Proposal (RFP) submitted during the 2022 funding window in order to apply for subsidy.

HCP leased equipment/services: Yes. Broadband Services will request for existing leased equipment/services (put in place after July 1) to be subsidized in the 2022 application window as a 'standing bid'. Leased equipment will have to go out for (RFP) and must be considered the most cost-effective solution for your organization. Subsidy will cover charges beginning July 1.

Do I have to purchase new equipment or services during a funding window?

Current HCP leased equipment/services: No. Broadband Services will request for existing leased equipment/services (put in place after July 1) to be subsidized in the 2022 application window as a 'standing bid'. Leased equipment will have to go out for (RFP) and must be considered the most cost-effective solution for your organization. Subsidy will cover charges beginning July 1.

HCP owned equipment: Yes. Owned equipment must be purchased through a Request for Proposal (RFP) submitted during the 2022 funding window in order to apply for subsidy.

When is the best time to upgrade a circuit if I want to insure it receives subsidy?

If your organization is considering upgrading a circuit after a funding window, the upgrade must be included in the RFP process and go live on or after July 1 after the close of the funding window.

If I have a SAN and two physical hosts managing VM's that support my virtual management of my primary, secondary and remote clinic firewalls and application filtering but they aren't 100% dedicated to one function, are they eligible?

There is a way to use equipment that isn't 100% dedicated to the transport vs. compute operations. You would need to show how you allocate the usage, then we would apply for the appropriate percentage.

Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Contracting

When can I sign a new contract with a service provider?

Broadband Services suggests that contracts for new services be signed through the USAC RFP process that occurs between November and March. During this process, all service provider bids will be reviewed to determine the most cost-effective solution for your organization.

An RFP will be posed between September and December. The RFP must be posted for 28 days to allow for competitive bidding. Contracts can then be signed on the 29th day for new services starting on or after July 1.

USAC adheres to a strict competitive bidding cycle. If a contract is signed before or during an RFP posting period, USAC may deny the application as a violation of the fair and open bidding process.

USAC Invoicing

When will I receive the awarded subsidy?

After the close of the funding window, April 1, USAC will review all applications submitted. Historically, USAC has taken up to 9-14 months to review and approve subsidy applications.

Upon approval of the application from USAC, Broadband Services, as well as the chosen service provider, will receive a Funding Commitment Letter (FCL) indicating the awarded subsidy.

*Broadband Services then will request copies of invoices from your organization for services that were awarded subsidy dating back to July 1. Broadband Services will then process the invoices and submit a reimbursement request to USAC. Once approved, the **subsidy is then paid directly to the corresponding service provider and applied to your account as a credit.** Until an FCL is received, we encourage you to pay the service provider in full to avoid any late penalties.*

Every month following the initial reimbursement request, Broadband Services will require copies of invoices to submit for monthly reimbursements for the life of the awarded subsidy.

If subsidy is approved for 3 years, does USAC disperse funding for the whole 3 years?

No. The first disbursement is retroactive to July 1, and then monthly after that for the life of the awarded subsidy. Subsidy is dispersed directly to the service provider.

Can we discontinue our 3 year agreement with Broadband Services, without penalty, if we choose to no longer receive awarded subsidy?

Yes. There is no penalty for discontinuing subsidy. Approved funding will return to USAC as unused.

Important Dates

August 30: All member Service Agreements and USAC Letter of Agency's are to be finalized prior to the following funding window.

September 30: Member inventory lists are to be submitted to Broadband Services. These lists should include all current and new services starting July 1.

September 1 – December 31: RFPs are posted by Broadband Services. On average, USAC will post an RFP in 10-40 days

October 1 – January 31: RFPs are evaluated with members and contracts are signed with service providers.

December 1 – March 1: Broadband Services begins filing Form 462's (the official application request for funding).

April 1: Last day of the funding window.

July 1 – June 30: USAC funding year.

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