



Health Resources and Services Administration

HRSA Telehealth Learning Series
An Overview of Federal Broadband Programs

April 21, 2021



Topics at Glance



Rural Health Care Program



COVID-19 Telehealth Program |
Connected Care Pilot Program



Emergency Broadband Benefit



Lifeline Program

Our Speaker: Opening Remarks



William England, Senior Advisor
HRSA Federal Office of Rural
Health Policy (FORHP), Office for
the Advancement of Telehealth
(OAT)



An Overview of Federal Broadband Programs

HRSA Office for the Advancement of Telehealth

April 21, 2021

William England, PhD, JD
Senior Advisor, Telehealth
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)

Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People



\$7.1 Billion For Broadband That Can Advance Telehealth

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 provided over \$7 billion for broadband

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) were each tasked with implementing several new initiatives



The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 Broadband Provisions: In Brief

March 2, 2021



Universal Service and Other Broadband Programs - CRS



Congressional Research Service
Informing the legislative debate since 1914

IN FOCUS

January 28, 2021

Federal Universal Service Fund and Other Selected Federal Broadband Programs: A Primer

Introduction

Efforts to deploy voice telephone service throughout the United States began almost 100 years ago. Starting in the 1990s, these efforts shifted toward the deployment of broadband internet service to homes and businesses and the provision of infrastructure to support applications such as telehealth and distance learning. As a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Congress created and funded new programs to accelerate broadband deployment and adoption in minority communities, on Tribal lands, and among qualifying households. Enabling telehealth is one major focus of these programs.

Federal Communications Commission

The Universal Service Fund (USF) is intended to ensure that telecommunications services, including broadband, are available and affordable throughout the country. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) programs supported by the USF—the High-Cost Program, the Connect America Fund, the Lifeline Program, the Rural Health Care Program, and the Schools and Libraries Program—are funded by fees on telecommunications carriers, not through regular appropriations. The FCC sets the regulatory and fee structures for these programs, but the Universal Service Administration Company, an independent not-for-profit corporation designated by the FCC to run USF programs, manages contributions and disburses funds.

High-Cost Program

budget of up to \$11.2 billion, targeting partially served areas as well as the few unserved areas that did not receive Phase I funding. The timeframe for the Phase II auction has not yet been determined by the FCC and is dependent on broadband maps that are to be developed under the Broadband DATA Act (P.L. 116-130).

Lifeline Program

The Lifeline Program helps low-income customers initiate telephone service and pay their monthly bills. The program offers up to \$9.25 per month towards telephone or internet services for eligible subscribers (up to \$34.25 for those living on Tribal lands).

Rural Health Care Program

The Rural Health Care Program allows rural health care providers to pay rates for internet and telecommunications services similar to those of their urban counterparts, making telehealth services more affordable in rural areas. The program's funding cap for 2020 was initially set at \$604.76 million, but an additional \$197.98 million in unused funds from prior years was released in June 2020, bringing the total to \$802.74 million—the most in the program's history. This program has two permanent parts, the Healthcare Connect Program and the Telecommunications Program, as well as the fixed-term Connected Care Pilot Program.

- The **Healthcare Connect Program** (established in 2012) supports broadband connectivity to eligible health care providers and encourages the establishment of state

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), in the Department of Commerce, manages the BroadbandUSA program, which serves local and state governments, industry, and nonprofits that need to enhance broadband connectivity and promote digital inclusion.

NTIA Programs Established/Funded Through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, established three new broadband assistance programs at NTIA:

- The **Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grant Program** was established and appropriated \$300 million for broadband projects by covered partnerships in eligible service areas. Covered partnerships are defined as partnerships between (a) a state or one or more of its political subdivisions and (b) a provider of fixed broadband service.
- The **Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program** was established and appropriated \$1 billion for broadband infrastructure deployment, broadband affordability programs, distance learning, telehealth, and broadband adoption activities on Tribal lands.
- The **Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program** was established and appropriated \$285 million for grants to minority institutions, organizations, and consortia to support broadband development and

loan guarantees to finance the construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas.

Telecommunications Infrastructure Program

The Telecommunications Infrastructure Program furnishes loans and loan guarantees to finance the construction, maintenance, or improvement of telephone and broadband service in eligible rural areas.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program provides grants to finance software and equipment that allows people in eligible rural areas to access distance learning or telemedicine services.

Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funds telehealth services through existing infrastructure and by training health providers, rather than by funding the deployment of new infrastructure. Further discussion of HHS programs is therefore beyond the scope of this primer.

Interagency Rural Telehealth Initiative

In August 2020, the FCC, USDA, and HHS signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to work together on a Rural Telehealth Initiative and establish an interagency Rural Telehealth Task Force to address the telehealth needs of the 57 million rural residents in the United States. The MOU is intended to foster collaboration and information sharing among the three agencies on telehealth initiatives.



HRSA
Health Resources & Services Administration

US Department of Commerce, NTIA & Tribal Funding

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 | Grant Programs Overview

The year-end omnibus legislation* included several broadband and connectivity expansion programs to be implemented by NTIA.

1

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grants:

Grants to expand access to and adoption of (A) broadband service on Tribal land; or (B) remote learning, telework, or telehealth resources during the COVID-19 pandemic: \$1 Billion.

2

Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grants:

Grants for covered broadband projects, defined as competitively and technologically neutral projects for the deployment of fixed broadband service in a census block with at least one household or business that does not have access to 25/3: \$300 million.

3

Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program:

Grants to eligible recipients in anchor communities for the purchase of broadband internet access service or any eligible equipment, or to hire and train information technology personnel, \$285 million.



FCC Broadband Programs Relevant to Telehealth

Rural Health Care Programs

- The Healthcare Connect Program
- The Telecommunications Program
- The Connected Care Pilot Program
- The COVID-19 Program (Round 2) ← **NEW, application window Apr 29 to May 6**

The Lifeline Program

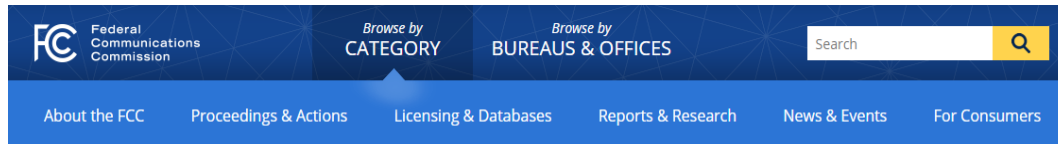
The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program ← **NEW, starting soon**

The High-Cost Program, being phased into the Connect America Fund (CAF)

The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF), an extension of CAF



See Details on FCC and USAC Websites



Home /

Consumer FAQ for Emergency Broadband Benefit

Español | 繁體中文 | Tagalog | Tiếng Việt | 한국어

When can I sign up for the Emergency Broadband Benefit?

The program has been authorized by the FCC, but the start date has not yet been established. The FCC is working to make the benefit available as quickly as possible, and you should be able to sign up by the end of April, 2021. Please check our website, www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit, regularly for the latest information.

Do I receive the funds directly each month?

No, the Emergency Broadband Benefit provides a monthly discount on broadband service of up to \$50 per eligible household (or up to \$75 per eligible household on Tribal lands). The participating broadband service provider will receive the funds directly from the Emergency Broadband Benefit program.

Which broadband providers are participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit?

Various broadband providers, including those offering landline and wireless broadband, will be participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit. Depending on where you live, you may have a choice of providers. Check with the broadband providers in your area to learn about their plans for program participation and eligible service offerings. You can find a list of participating providers by state and territory on this webpage, www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-providers.

What is the enhanced benefit amount for residents of Tribal Lands?

Eligible households on Tribal lands can receive a total monthly discount of up to \$75. You can find out more about which areas are eligible Tribal lands by visiting this site: www.lifelinesupport.org/additional-support-for-tribal-land.

Eligibility

Eligible Broadband Plans

Connected Devices

Tribal

Program Length

- Who is eligible for the Emergency Broadband Benefit? ⚡
- Can I apply for the Emergency Broadband Benefit if I have a past due balance with the provider? ⚡
- Can I sign up for the Emergency Broadband Benefit if I am already a customer or if I was a customer in the past? ⚡
- Can my roommate and I each get a monthly discount? ⚡
- What is Lifeline and how do I qualify? ⚡
- If I already receive Lifeline benefits will I automatically receive the Emergency Broadband Benefit? ⚡
- Can I receive both the Emergency Broadband Benefit and Lifeline benefits at the same time? ⚡



Subscribe Payments Open Data

Sign In

About

E-rate

Rural Health Care

Lifeline

High Cost

Service Providers

USAC | About | Emergency Broadband Benefit Program | Webinars and Trainings

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

Application and Eligibility Resources

System Resources

Webinars and Trainings

Webinars and Trainings

Upcoming Webinars

EBB Program for Consumer Groups: This webinar – repeated twice – is targeted to consumer advocates, social service agencies, consumer groups and others who will help consumers learn about the EBB Program and support their enrollment in the program. We will walk through the program, demonstrate the eligibility process and share resources that consumers and consumer groups can use to help eligible consumer learn about the program and participate.

- Wednesday, April 7 @ 3 p.m. ET: Webinar Recording Below
- Wednesday, April 21 @ 3 p.m. ET: [Register](#)

National Verifier for the EBB Program: This webinar will prepared service providers to use the National Verifier in the EBB Program. All EBB Program service providers are encouraged to attend as the session will highlight changes to the National Verifier and processes unique to the EBB Program.

- Tuesday, April 13 @ 4 p.m. ET: [Register](#)
- OFFICE HOURS:** Thursday, April 15 @ 3 p.m. ET: [Register](#)

Lifeline Claims System – EBB Program Reimbursement: This webinar will prepared service providers to use LCS in the EBB Program. All EBB Program service providers are encouraged to attend as the session will highlight changes to LCS and processes unique to the EBB Program.

- Tuesday, April 20 @ 4 p.m. ET: [Register](#)



Office for the Advancement of Telehealth

Telehealth Resource Centers

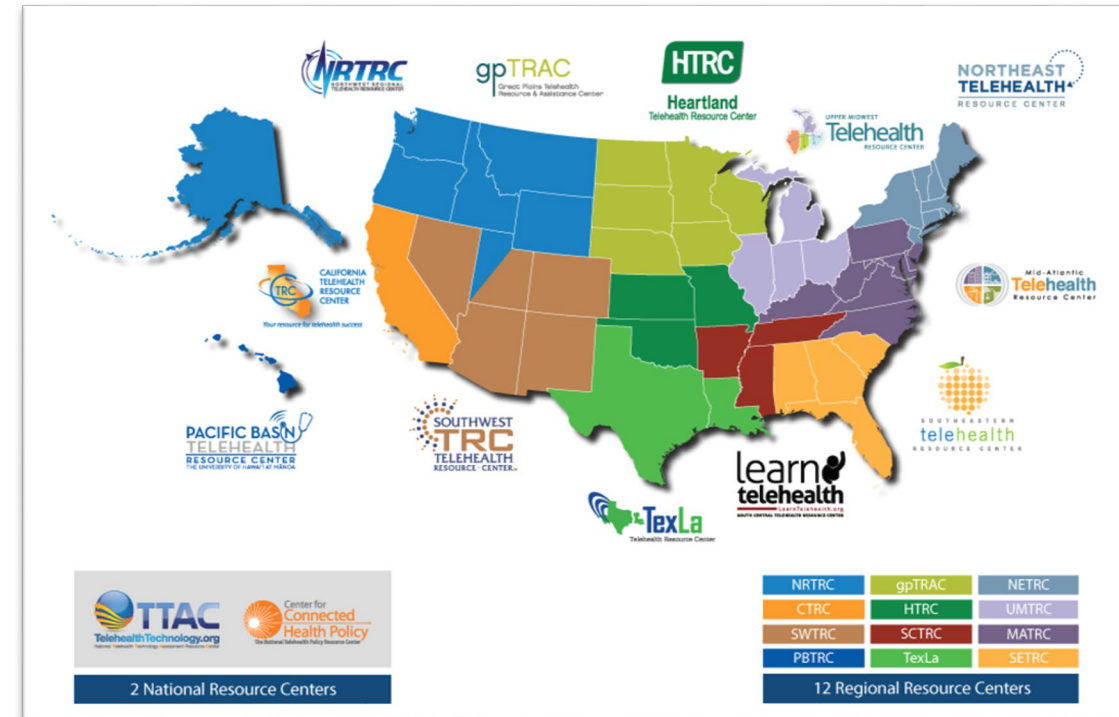


The purpose of the **Telehealth Resource Center Program** is to support delivery of telehealth technical assistance.

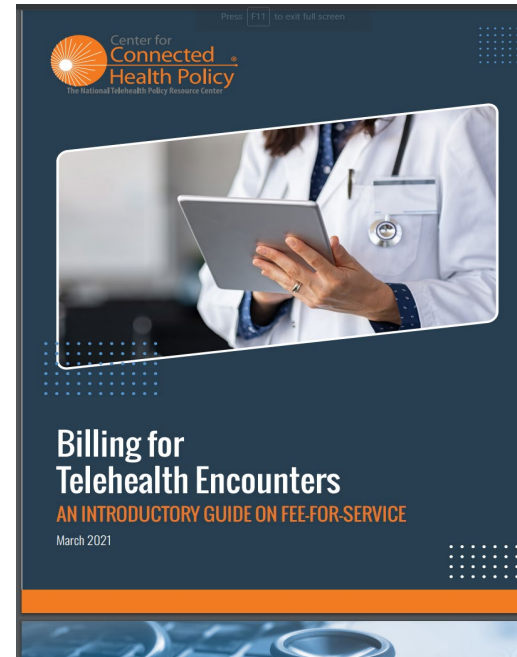
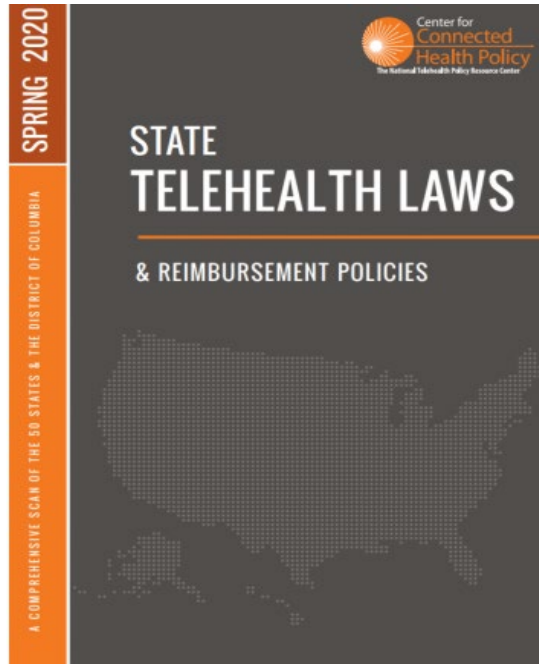
- **National Policy Telehealth Resource Center**
- **National Technology Telehealth Resource Center**
- **Regional Telehealth Resource Centers**

In 2020, the Telehealth Resource Centers had over 10,000 technical assistance inquiries, a 350% increase over 2019

In 2020, the Telehealth Resource Centers reached 200,000 participants through 2,716 outreach events, a 200% increase over 2019



Telehealth Policy Resource Center



COVID-19 Related State Actions

As a result of COVID-19 many states have taken action to remove policy barriers to telehealth utilization to address this pandemic on a temporary basis. Below is a list of state actions taken by each state's Office of the Governor, Medicaid Program, Medical Board and/or Department of Insurance, and their current status. If you have additional information on state actions that are not included here, please submit your information to info@cchpca.org and we will be sure to include it in future updates.

- States Waiving Licensure Requirements/Renewals See: [Federation of State Medical Boards \(FSMB\)](#)
- States Waiving In-State Licensure Requirements for Telehealth See: [Federation of State Medical Boards \(FSMB\)](#)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| • Medicaid - Home/Originating Site Expansion/Clarification | • Medicaid - Telephonic/Audio-Only Delivery | • Cross-State Licensing |
| • Medicaid - Provider Type Expansion or Clarification | • Waiving/Easing/Clarifying Prescribing Requirements | • Private Payer - Telehealth Requirement or Guidance |
| • Medicaid - Service Expansion Provider Type Expansion or Clarification | • Waiving/Easing/Clarifying Consent Requirements | |

ALABAMA (UPDATED 01.26.2021)

ALASKA (UPDATED 12.17.2020)

ARIZONA (UPDATED 01.25.2021)

ARKANSAS (UPDATED 12.17.2020)

CALIFORNIA (UPDATED 01.22.2021)

COLORADO (UPDATED 10.19.2020)

CONNECTICUT (UPDATED 10.19.2020)

COVID-19 Related State Actions

NATIONAL POLICY CENTER - CENTER FOR
CONNECTED HEALTH POLICY
November 30, 2020

Telehealth Coverage Policies In The Time Of COVID-19

NATIONAL POLICY CENTER - CENTER FOR
CONNECTED HEALTH POLICY
November 30, 2020

E-Consult Sustainability

NATIONAL POLICY CENTER - CENTER FOR
CONNECTED HEALTH POLICY
November 30, 2020

State Telehealth Laws & Reimbursement Policies

NATIONAL POLICY CENTER - CENTER FOR
CONNECTED HEALTH POLICY
November 30, 2020



Telehealth Technology Center and Technology Toolkits

Toolkits are a critical part of the work that the Telehealth Technology Assessment Center does. These interactive elements allow users to learn the fundamentals of how various technologies work, as well as how to assess them for use in telehealth programs.

We will be releasing new toolkits or assessments in our new [Innovation Watch](#) section of our website every few months, as well as working to keep existing content relevant and accurate. Some toolkits will guide users through performing their own assessments. Other toolkits will help users identify their needs, bringing technology into alignment with clinical requirements.



[Clinician's Guide to Video Platforms](#)



[Digital Cameras – DSLR](#)



[Digital Cameras – Point and Shoot](#)



[Electronic Stethoscopes](#)



[Home Telehealth](#)



[mHealth](#)



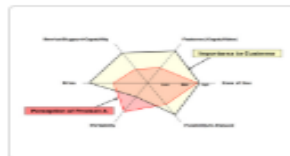
[mHealth App Selection](#)



[Mobile Blood Pressure](#)



[Patient Exam Cameras](#)



[Technology Assessment 101](#)



[Tympanometers](#)



[Video Otoscopes](#)


The Telehealth Website - Telehealth.HHS.gov

TELEHEALTH.HHS.GOV

About us For patients ▾ For providers ▾

Telehealth: Health care from the safety of our homes.

Whether you're a patient looking for medical care, or a doctor who provides it, telehealth keeps us connected — even while social distancing during COVID-19.





Learn more about telehealth

For patients



Find out what telehealth is, what you'll need (not much!), and what to expect from a visit. You can also check out our tips on finding telehealth options.

 [Understanding telehealth](#) >

 [Telehealth during COVID-19](#) >


 [Finding telehealth options](#) >

[See more on the patients page](#) >

For providers



Get information to help you integrate telehealth and get up to speed on recent COVID-19 changes to policies and billing and reimbursement.

 [Getting started with telehealth](#) >

 [Policy changes during COVID-19](#) >

 [Billing for telehealth during COVID-19](#) >

[See more on the providers page](#) >



The FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program

\$3.2 billion to provide consumers with broadband access and devices

Sign-up starts soon

Up to \$50/month support per family (plus up to \$100 for purchase of broadband device)

Additional support for tribal areas

Program ends when funds are expended or 6 months after pandemic ends, whichever is first

Like Lifeline, eligibility is based on need, but with broader categories such as significant loss of income in 2020 due to the pandemic, for families earning under \$198,000.

Those on Lifeline automatically eligible, but must sign up. Support can be additive to Lifeline.

Like Lifeline, the program is administered by USAC.



Connect with HRSA

Learn more about our agency at:

www.HRSA.gov



[Sign up for the HRSA eNews](#)

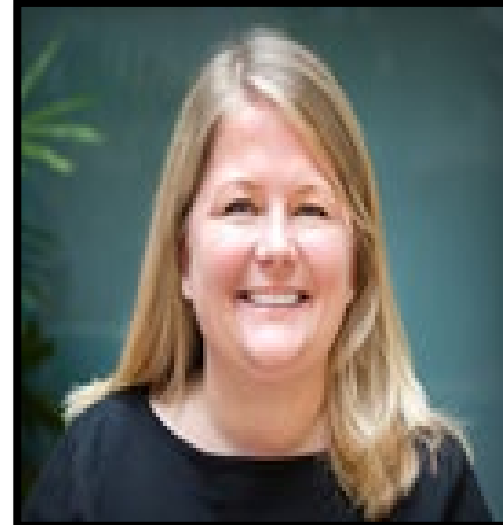
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Our Speakers



Jennifer Contreras, Manager
Communications Universal
Service Administrative
Company (USAC)



Jaymie Gustafson, Director
Outreach Universal Service
Administrative Company
(USAC)



RHC 101

An Introduction to the Rural Health Care Program



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Agenda

1. RHC Program Basics and FY2021 Overview
2. Eligibility
3. Getting Started
4. COVID-19 Response
5. Lifeline
6. Resources

The Basics

RHC 101

Overview of the RHC Program

- The RHC Program provides discounts for telecommunications and broadband services to *eligible* health care providers (HCPs).
- The amount of funding that the RHC Program is authorized to disburse is determined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) each year.
 - For FY2020, the RHC Program is authorized to distribute \$802.74 million, the most in program history.
- For current Funding Year information please visit the [Funding Year Overview](#).

Picking which Program is Right for You

- **Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program**
 - Supports broadband connectivity and broadband networks for eligible HCPs
 - Eligible services and equipment receive a 65% discount
- **Telecommunications (Telecom) Program**
 - Funds urban/rural rate difference for telecommunications services for eligible HCPs

Funding Years & Filing Window Periods

- **Funding Year**

- From July 1 to June 30 of the subsequent calendar year
- FY2020 = July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021
- **FY2021= July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022**

- **Filing Window Periods**

- A fixed period during which all qualifying funding requests (FCC Forms 462 and 466) 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 depending on demand and available funding.
- **FY2021 Filing Window Period is January 4, 2021 – June 1, 2021 at 11:59**

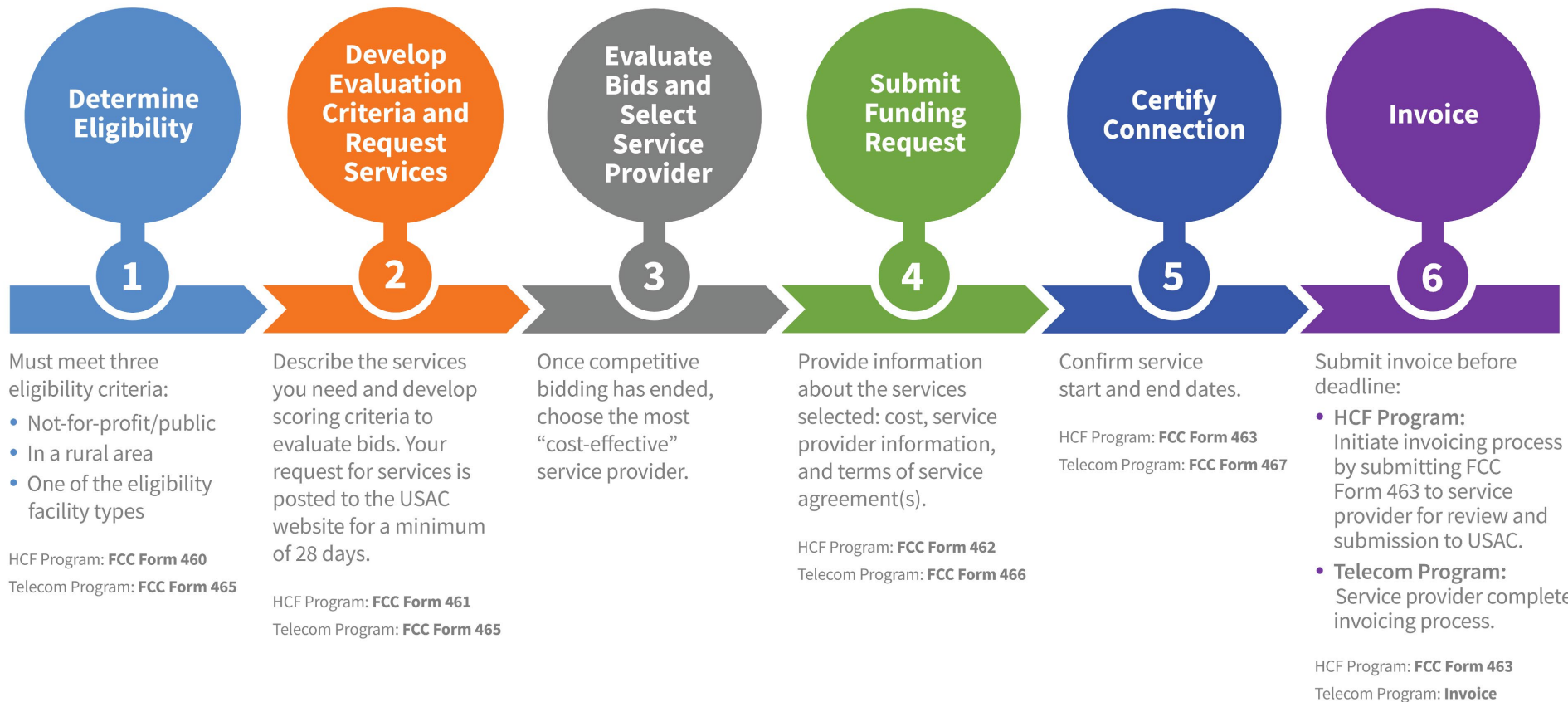
p.m. ET

Rural Health Care Program: **Funding Year 2021**



RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

Application Process



Connected Care Pilot Program

- Will provide 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.
- Will provide funding to cover 85% of the eligible costs of broadband connectivity, network equipment, and information services necessary to provide connected care services to the intended patient population.
- No longer accepting applications

Eligibility

RHC 101

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 an eligible entity type, other than rural health clinic, and participate 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 demonstrate that, *by itself*, it is an eligible entity.

Eligible HCP Types

- 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
- Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)
- Consortia of the above entities

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
Eligible Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadband services Network equipment 	<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

Next Steps for New Applicants:

- Complete your FCC Form 460 to determine eligibility
- You can submit your FCC Form 460 at any time during the funding year.
 - Watch the [RHC 101 Learning Module](#)
 - Watch the [HCF Eligibility Learning Module](#)
 - Watch the [How to Find an Existing HCP in My Portal](#) video
- Ensure you have the necessary authorizations completed.
 - Review [competitive bidding resources](#)

Getting Started

RHC 101

Submitting an FCC Form in the HCF and Telecom Programs

- All form and supporting documentation must be submitted to USAC online 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.

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

FCC Form 465 (Telecom Program)

1. Site information
2. Contact information
3. Eligibility information
4. Certifications and signatures
5. Services requested (Telecom Program only)

Please note that the FCC Form 465 must be completed in a single session.

How to Get to My Portal

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Universal Service Administrative Co. website. The header includes the company logo, navigation links for 'Subscribe', 'Payments', and a 'Sign In' dropdown menu. The 'Sign In' dropdown is open, showing options for 'All Users' and 'EPC Only'. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'About', 'E-rate', 'Rural Health Care' (which is underlined), 'Lifeline', 'High Cost', and 'Service Providers'. The main content area features a large banner for 'Rural Health Care' with the text 'Supporting healthcare facilities in bringing world class medical care to rural areas through increased connectivity'. Below the banner are three sections: 'Manage Forms' with a 'Sign In' button highlighted by a red box, 'Resources' with links to 'Search Posted Services', 'Funding Commitments', 'Videos, Webinars, and Printable Resources', and 'Upcoming Dates' with a calendar icon and the text '04/30 2020 Filing Window Close'.

Universal Service Administrative Co.

Subscribe Payments **Sign In**

All Users
EPC Only

About E-rate Rural Health Care Lifeline High Cost Service Providers

Rural Health Care

Supporting healthcare facilities in bringing world class medical care to rural areas through increased connectivity

Manage Forms

Manage and submit your application forms in My Portal.

Sign In


Resources

[Search Posted Services](#)
[Funding Commitments](#)
[Videos, Webinars, and Printable Resources](#)

Upcoming Dates

04/30 2020 [Filing Window Close](#)

Getting Started in My Portal



Username

Password

Forgot password?

You are accessing a portal to Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) systems used to administer participation in the federal Universal Service programs in compliance with 47 C.F.R. Part 54. Access to the systems is provided solely to USAC-authorized users for USAC-authorized business purposes. By logging in, you represent that you are an authorized user. Use of this system indicates acceptance of the terms and conditions governing the USAC systems. USAC monitors user access and content for compliance with applicable laws and policies. Use of the system may be recorded, read, searched, copied and/or captured and is also subject to audit. Unauthorized use or misuse of this system is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.

☐

Click the box to accept

By signing in, I accept the terms and conditions of the USAC system.

Sign In

Don't have an account?

Create an account

Who am I?

I am a..

Service Provider - 498 ID

Service Provider - 499 ID

Rural Health Care Applicant

If you are new applicant to the Rural Health Care (RHC) program, determine if your health care facility is eligible for Rural Health Care (RHC) Program funding through the Healthcare Connect Fund and/or Telecommunications Program by completing an FCC Form 460 or FCC Form 465.


Get Started

E-rate Participant

498 Company Officer

499 Company Officer

Select the RHC Program for Which You Want to Apply

 Universal Service
Administrative Co.

RURAL HEALTH CARE

To apply for support in the Healthcare Connect Fund or the Telecom/Internet Access Programs, choose the appropriate selection below:

Submit a new [FCC Form 460](#) for eligibility determination in the Healthcare Connect Fund

Submit a new [FCC Form 465](#) for eligibility determination and to submit a request for services in the Telecommunications program

Account Holders

1. Primary Account Holder (PAH)

- Must work for the legal entity of the HCP
- Responsible for the accuracy of information submitted to USAC
- Can only be one individual
- Mandatory for every HCP

2. Secondary Account Holder

- Must work for the legal entity of the HCP
- Responsible for the accuracy of information submitted to USAC
- “Back up” for PAH
- Can have multiple secondary account holders for one HCP

3. Tertiary

- Hired by HCP to file forms on behalf of the HCP (e.g., consultants)

COVID-19 Response and Longer-Term Pilot Program

- The FCC recognizes that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic represents extraordinary public health challenges, and has taken the necessary steps to provide emergency and longer-term funding relief to eligible health care providers (HCPs) for costs associated with telehealth:
- **FCC Order 20-44:** Adopts two new programs that will provide support to HCPs and patients across the country for costs associated with telehealth. Read [FCC Order 20-44](#).
 - **Connected Care Pilot Program:** Will make available up to \$100 million over a three-year funding period to defray eligible health care providers' costs of providing connected care services to patients at their homes/mobile locations, with a focus on benefitting low-income Americans and Veterans. Will provide selected pilot projects funding to cover 85% of the eligible costs of broadband connectivity, certain network equipment, and information services necessary to provide connected care services.
 - **COVID-19 Telehealth Program:** Originally a \$200M program funded by the CARES Act to provide short-term relief to eligible health care providers. On December 27, 2020 the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) was signed into law and provided an additional \$249.95 million for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program.

COVID-19 Response

RHC 101

COVID-19 Telehealth Program Overview

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program provides funding to health care providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to support the telecommunications services, information services, and connected devices needed to provide critical connected care to patients at their homes or mobile locations.

COVID-19 Telehealth Program Funding Rounds

1

Round 1 Funding

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program was established by the CARES Act with initial funding of \$200 million, and the FCC stopped accepting applications for the initial round of funding on June 25, 2020. This initial round provided support to more than 500 health care facilities.

2

Round 2 Funding

The CAA provided an additional \$249.95 million to fund a second round of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) will be administering the program's second round.

How applicants receive funding

The FCC will announce a filing window for Round 2 funding at least two weeks before applications open, which will enable all applicants to be evaluated equally and permit time for applicants to submit supplementary information if needed.



Eligible health care providers that are approved for funding will be required to submit an invoicing form and supporting documentation in order to receive reimbursement for eligible expenses and services



Eligibility Criteria

Health care providers must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for funding:

- Nonprofit and public eligible health care providers that fall within the categories of health care providers in section 254(h)(7)(B) of the 1996 Telecommunications Act:
 - 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;
 - Skilled nursing facilities; or
 - Consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories.
- **Both rural and non-rural health clinics are eligible to receive funding**

Key Change in Round 2 Applications

Health care providers must file an FCC Form 460 for the **lead health care provider site** for which they intend to purchase eligible services and/or connected devices. Applicants requesting funding for multiple eligible HCP sites in a single application **do not** need to receive eligibility determinations for every site that will receive funding during Round 2 of the Program, but instead will be required only to certify that all other health care sites that would receive Program funding are eligible for Program funding.



Eligible Services and Devices

- **Telecommunications Services and Broadband Connectivity Services:** Voice services and Internet connectivity services for health care providers or their patients. These expenses are eligible for up to 12 months of funding
- **Information Services:** Remote patient monitoring platforms and services; patient reported outcome platforms; store and forward services, such as asynchronous transfer of patient images and data for interpretation by a physician; platforms and services to provide synchronous video consultation. These expenses are eligible for up to 12 months of funding
- **Connected Devices:** Tablets, smart phones, or connected devices to provide telehealth services (e.g., broadband, Wi-Fi, or Bluetooth enabled blood pressure monitors; pulse-oximeters) for patient or health care provider use; telemedicine kiosks/carts for health care provider site. General office scanners and printers are not considered connected devices for purposes of this Program



Telehealth Program Requirements

- Health care providers must obtain an eligibility determination from the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)
- Obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN) from the Commission Registration System (CORES)
- Register with the federal System for Award Management (SAM)

COVID-19 Telehealth Program Overview

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program provides funding to health care providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to support the telecommunications services, information services, and connected devices needed to provide critical connected care to patients at their homes, mobile locations, or remotely from within the healthcare facility.

COVID-19 Telehealth Program Funding Rounds

1

Round 1 Funding

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program was established by the CARES Act with initial funding of \$200 million, and the FCC stopped accepting applications for the initial round of funding on June 25, 2020. This initial round of the Program provided support to more than 500 health care facilities.

2

Round 2 Funding

The CAA provided an additional \$249.95 million to fund a second round of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) will be administering the program's second round under the FCC's oversight.

How applicants receive funding

The application filing window will be open from Thursday, April 29 at noon until Thursday, May 6 at noon. The application filing window provides all applicants equal time to prepare and submit their applications. Applications will be evaluated based on objective evaluation metrics, and funds will go to the applications with the highest scores. Funding will be committed in two windows. After the first window of funding commitments, applicants who did not receive a funding commitment will be given the opportunity to supplement their applications.



Eligible health care providers that are approved for funding will be required to submit an invoicing form and supporting documentation in order to receive reimbursement for eligible expenses and services.



Eligibility Criteria

Health care providers must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for funding:

- Nonprofit and public eligible health care providers that fall within the categories of health care providers in section 254(h)(7)(B) of the 1996 Telecommunications Act:
 - 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;
 - Skilled nursing facilities; or
 - Consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories.
- Both rural and non-rural health clinics are eligible to receive funding

Key Change in Round 2 Applications

Health care providers must file an FCC Form 460 for the **lead health care provider site** for which they intend to purchase eligible services and/or connected devices. Applicants requesting funding for multiple eligible HCP sites in a single application **do not** need to receive eligibility determinations for every site that will receive funding during Round 2 of the Program, but instead will be required only to certify that all other health care sites that would receive Program funding are eligible for Program funding.



Eligible Services and Devices

- **Telecommunications Services and Broadband Connectivity Services:** Voice services and Internet connectivity services for health care providers or their patients. These expenses are eligible for up to 12 months of funding
- **Information Services:** Remote patient monitoring platforms and services; patient reported outcome platforms; store and forward services, such as asynchronous transfer of patient images and data for interpretation by a physician; platforms and services to provide synchronous video consultation. These expenses are eligible for up to 12 months of funding
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Lifeline

Lifeline Benefit



A monthly discount for
phone or internet
service for eligible
low-income
consumers

- All eligible consumers can receive a discount of up to \$9.25 per month
- Consumers who live on qualifying Tribal lands can receive enhanced support of up to \$34.25 per month
- [Link Up](#) offers residents on Tribal lands eligible for Lifeline support reimbursement to start service at their address
 - Link Up is a **one-time benefit per address**
 - Consumers may request Link Up if they move to an address eligible to receive the Link Up reimbursement
 - Not all Lifeline service providers offer Link Up so consumers should ask their phone or internet company

Lifeline Benefit

Lifeline support is provided directly to the designated eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC), which passes the support on to the consumer as a discount. Lifeline support is based on the service(s) a consumer receives that meet the Lifeline minimum service standards.

Service Options

Service Type	Description
Voice (mobile or landline)	Subscriber is provided a voice only service that meets the minimum service standards
Broadband (internet)	Subscriber is provided a broadband only service that meets the minimum service standards
Bundled Voice	Subscriber is provided a voice and broadband service that meets the voice minimum service standards only
Bundled Broadband	Subscriber is provided a voice and broadband service that meets the broadband minimum service standards only
Bundled Voice and Broadband	Subscriber is provided a voice and broadband service that meets both the voice and broadband minimum service standards

Minimum Service Standards

Mobile Voice	Mobile Broadband	Home Broadband
1000 Minutes	Speed: 3G or better; Usage Allowance: 4.5 GB	Speed: 25/3 Mbps; Usage Allowance: 1024 GB

Eligibility Criteria

Consumers can qualify for Lifeline by showing that:

1. Their income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, **or**
2. They participate in at least one of the following qualifying government programs:
 - Medicaid
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
 - Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit
 - Residents on Tribal lands can also demonstrate their eligibility for Lifeline by participating in a Lifeline-qualifying [Tribal program](#)

Eligibility Criteria

Qualify through dependent (e.g., child): Consumers can sign up for Lifeline if a dependent participates in any of the programs listed previously

One per household: Only one Lifeline benefit is allowed per household, which is defined as a group of people that share income and expenses

- If a consumer lives with other people that receive Lifeline but do not share income and expenses (*e.g., nursing home, homeless shelter, roommates*), then they may still be eligible
- Lifeline applicants typically must complete a one-per-household worksheet to self-certify that they do not share income and expenses with another Lifeline subscriber if they share the same address

Temporary Expanded Eligibility Criteria – COVID-19 Pandemic Response Eligibility Changes for Lifeline

In response to the pandemic, the FCC released a series of waivers suspending several Lifeline rules and processes through February 28, 2021. The waivers also made temporary changes to the way consumers can qualify for Lifeline during the waiver period:

1. Through the waiver period, consumers who do not have three consecutive months of income documentation may provide an official document that confirms their current household income information to evidence that it is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines. This may include a notice of unemployment benefit payments or a notice of a successfully submitted application for unemployment benefits.
2. The FCC temporarily waived its rules to allow Lifeline providers to begin offering service to consumers residing in rural areas on Tribal lands, even if those consumers have not yet submitted certain supporting documentation to complete their Lifeline application.

Resources

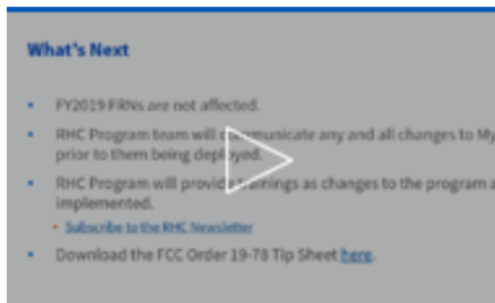
RHC Program Open Data

- Two RHC Program Data Sets Available:
 - [Commitments and Disbursements](#) - Includes commitment and disbursement information for approved and committed applications. (FCC Forms 462 and 466)
 - [Requests for Services](#) - Look up request for services (FCC Forms 461 and 465) information for both the HCF and Telecom Programs. Please keep in mind that this information is updated daily, so if your request for services was approved today, it will appear in the Open Dataset tomorrow.
- [Video guides](#) available to assist in sorting data and filtering information.
- Watch the [RHC Program Data Visualization Demo](#).
- If you have questions on how to use this tool, email opendata@usac.org.

Training & Resources

- [Webinars](#)
- [RHC Monthly Newsletter](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Online Training Modules](#)
- [Handouts](#)

Most Recent Webinar



Telecom Program Funding Request Best Practices for FY2020

January 16, 2020 | 49:23 minutes

Materials:


[Webinar Slides](#) 

Previous Trainings

HCF Program Funding Request Best Practices for FY2020

January 14, 2020 | 60:51 minutes

[Watch](#)

[Webinar Slides](#) 

Request for Services Best Practices for FY2020

December 18, 2019 | 55:57 minutes


[Watch](#)

[Webinar Slides](#) 

HCF Program Invoicing Best Practices

November 14, 2019 | 46:01 minutes

[Watch](#)

[Webinar Slides](#) 

FY2020 Kickoff

November 07, 2019 | 56:54 minutes

[Watch](#)

[Webinar Slides](#) 

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.
- Include in your email
 - HCP Number
 - FRN Number
- Phone: **(800) 453-1546**
 - Hours are 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET

Questions about any Tribal USAC Program

- Email: TribalLiaison@USAC.org



COVID-19 Telehealth Support

Contact the COVID-19 Telehealth Call Center



Email: Round2TelehealthApplicationSupport@fcc.gov

Lifeline Support

Contact the Lifeline Support Center



Email: LifelineSupport@usac.org



Call: (800) 234-9473 (*press 1 for English; press 2 for Spanish*)

The Lifeline Support Center serves consumers and those supporting consumers, and is available 7 days a week, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

Stay Informed about the EBB Program

- For service providers:
 - Visit [USAC.org](https://www.usac.org) to follow EBB Program updates
 - Sign up for the [USAC EBB Program Outreach List](#) to:
 - Receive EBB Program email updates
 - Learn about EBB Program trainings
 - Visit <https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-program> for information about the provider application process
- For consumers:
 - Visit [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org) to find consumer information and resources



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

HRSA Telehealth Learning Series: Next Session

An Overview of Licensure Compacts

Date: **May 17, 2021**

Time: **12:30 - 2:00 PM EST**

Register: [An Overview of Licensure Compacts](#)



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