



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINER COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES CONNECTED CARE PILOT PROGRAM APPLICATION FILING WINDOW OPENING

Bureau Provides Additional Guidance on Pilot Program Requirements

WC Docket No. 18-213

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces that the Connected Care Pilot Program (Pilot Program) application filing window will open on **Friday, November 6, 2020 at 12:00 PM ET** and will close on **Monday, December 7, 2020 at 11:59 PM ET**. The Bureau also provides additional guidance concerning the application submission process for the Pilot Program, prerequisites for the submission of an application, and services eligible for support under the Pilot Program requirements.

The Pilot Program will make available up to \$100 million over a three year period for selected pilot projects for qualifying purchases necessary to provide connected care services through the Pilot Program, with a particular emphasis on providing connected care services to low-income and veteran patients.¹ The Pilot Program is open to eligible non-profit or public health care providers that fall within the categories in section 254(h)(7)(B) of the Telecommunications Act.² For purposes of the Pilot Program, eligible health care providers and their patients may be located in rural or non-rural areas, and eligible non-rural health care providers are not required to be part of a majority rural consortium.³

Pilot projects selected to participate in the program will receive universal service support to offset 85% of qualifying costs incurred in connection with the Pilot Program. The remaining 15% share of the costs of eligible services must be paid by the selected pilot project recipients, as well as all of the costs of any ineligible expenses associated with their respective projects. Health care providers whose pilot projects are selected to participate in the program also must seek competitive bids for the eligible services for which they intend to seek Pilot Program support.⁴

Process for Submitting Pilot Program Applications

To be considered for the Pilot Program, eligible health care providers must timely and properly submit an application in compliance with the application procedures and the Pilot Program rules and

¹ See *Promoting Telehealth for Low-Income Consumers; COVID-19 Telehealth Program*, Report and Order, 35 FCC Rcd 3366, 3369-97, paras. 5, 55 (2020) (*Report and Order*).

² See *id.* at 3368-69, para. 55 (noting that the categories of eligible nonprofit and public health care providers are: (1) post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction; teaching hospitals, and medical schools; (2) community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants; (3) local health departments or agencies; (4) community mental health centers; (5) not-for-profit hospitals; (6) rural health clinics; (7) skilled nursing facilities; and (8) consortia of health care providers from one of the preceding seven categories). 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)(7)(B). See also *id.* at 3393, para. 51 (describing the Pilot Program's focus on low-income and veteran patients).

³ See *id.* at 3384, para. 38.

⁴ *Id.* at 3412-13, paras. 75-76.

requirements. The *Report and Order*⁵ and the *September Public Notice*⁶ outline the specific information that applicants must provide in their applications.⁷ Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible after the window opens, to ensure complete and accurate applications before the close of the application filing window; applicants bear full responsibility for complete, accurate and *timely filed* applications.

The Commission will accept applications for the Pilot Program through an online application system available on the Universal Service Administrative Company's (USAC) website beginning Friday, November 6, 2020 at 12:00 PM ET.⁸ After the close of the application window on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 11:59 PM ET, the Commission will make timely filed applications available in the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) under Docket No. WC 18-213.⁹

Approved FCC Form 460 Required to Access Application System

To access the Pilot Program application, eligible health care providers will use their My Portal login credentials that were provided when their FCC Form 460 (Eligibility and Registration Form) was approved for their eligible site. **Prospective applicants must have an approved FCC Form 460 to access the application.**¹⁰

In the *September Public Notice*, we encouraged prospective Pilot Program applicants that have not already requested or obtained an eligibility determination to immediately file an FCC Form 460 to initiate the eligibility determination process.¹¹ The Bureau reminds applicants that all sites included in a Pilot Program application must be approved as eligible. For example, a single health care system or organization with multiple locations (sites) must have an approved eligibility determination for each location (site) that will be included in the Pilot Program application.

Health care provider sites that USAC has already determined are eligible to participate in the Commission's Rural Health Care Program or the COVID-19 Telehealth Program are already eligible to participate in the Connected Care Pilot and need not file an additional FCC Form 460 for an eligibility determination for the Pilot Program.¹² Prospective applicants should contact USAC if they intend to apply on behalf of health care provider sites that were deemed eligible through an FCC Form 465 only, or if they have multiple eligible sites (whether part of the same organization or health system, or separate

⁵ *Id.* at 3397, para. 5.

⁶ See *Wireline Competition Bureau Provides Additional Information Concerning the Connected Care Pilot Program*, Public Notice, DA-20-1019 (WCB Sept. 3, 2020) (*September Public Notice*).

⁷ See *Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3404-3408, paras. 67-69; *September Public Notice* at 3-6.

⁸ Applications can be accessed while the application filing window is open at: <https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login>.

⁹ *Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3412, para. 70 ("To promote transparency, applications for the Pilot Program must be submitted through the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System...").

¹⁰ See *Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3404, para. 67 (stating that prospective Pilot Program applicants "must first obtain an eligibility determination from USAC by submitting an FCC Form 460 (Eligibility and Registration Form) along with supporting documentation to USAC to verify its eligibility to participate in the Pilot Program."); *September Public Notice* at 2 (stating that an eligibility determination is required for each health care provider site that will be included in a Pilot Program application and providing instructions on filing an FCC Form 460 to obtain an eligibility determination).

¹¹ See Universal Service Administration Company, *Forms*, <https://www.usac.org/rural-health-care/resources/forms/> (last visited Nov. 5, 2020).

¹² *September Public Notice* at 2. To check whether a site has an existing health care provider number, see the USAC guide at <https://www.usac.org/wp-content/uploads/rural-health-care/documents/handouts/How-to-Check-for-an-Existing-HCP-Guide.pdf>.

entities) that should be associated as a consortium. Interested health care providers can contact USAC for specific questions about eligibility and completing the eligibility form (FCC Form 460) via telephone at (800) 453-1546 or via email at RHCAssist@usac.org.

Additional Information on Eligible Services

The Pilot Program will provide selected pilot projects 85% funding for eligible services to provide connected care services as part of the Pilot Program, which fall under the following categories: (1) patient broadband Internet access services; (2) health care provider broadband data connections; (3) connected care information services; and (4) certain network equipment (i.e., network equipment necessary to make a supported broadband service functional).¹³ The Pilot Program will not fund devices, including end-user connected devices (e.g., tablets, smart phones, or remote patient monitoring equipment), medical equipment, health care provider administrative costs, personnel costs (including, but not limited to medical professional costs), or other miscellaneous expenses.¹⁴ The Pilot Program also will not fund network deployment, the construction of networks between health care providers, or connectivity services between health care provider sites.¹⁵ Health care providers participating in the Pilot Program must cost allocate all ineligible services and/or equipment that are included in bundles, packages, or suites of services used in Pilot Program projects.¹⁶ Funding for selected pilot projects is limited to three years.¹⁷

The following are illustrative examples of the types of items that are eligible for support through the Pilot Program. These illustrative examples fall within the categories of services designated as eligible for Connected Care Pilot Program support in the *Report and Order*.¹⁸

Patient Broadband Internet Access Services/Health Care Provider Broadband Data Connections

- New or upgraded broadband connections (whether for health care provider or participating patients) necessary for connected care services for the Pilot Program.
 - Examples of the Types of Broadband Eligible for Pilot Program Support include:
 - Digital Subscriber Line
 - Cable Modem
 - Other Copper Wireline
 - Optical Carrier/Fiber to the End-User
 - Terrestrial Fixed Wireless
 - Mobile Wireless (e.g., 3G, LTE, 4G, 5G)
 - Satellite
 - Broadband over Powerline
- Health care providers requesting support for broadband services can also receive support for costs of internet security firewall services typically provided by the broadband service provider that are necessary to protect personally identifiable information (PII) and other sensitive patient information within the confines of the Pilot Program.

¹³ See *Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3397, para. 55. The Report and Order does not impose minimum bandwidths for eligible connections.

¹⁴ See *id.* at 3402-04, paras. 65-66.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 3399-40, 3403, paras. 60, 65.

¹⁶ See *id.* at 3397, n.131.

¹⁷ See *id.* at 3389, para. 46.

¹⁸ See *id.* at 3397, para. 55.

Other Connected Care Information Services

- Services for connected care that capture, transmit (including video visits), and store health care data for connected care. This includes information services with “store-and-forward” technology, patient reported outcome platforms, and remote patient monitoring platforms and other telehealth platforms used to provide connected care services.
 - Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - HIPAA compliant (or requirement waived) telehealth solutions, packages, platforms, or suites of services that facilitate the capturing, storing, and transmitting of health care data between health care provider and patient for purposes of connected care services.
 - HIPAA compliant (or requirement waived) telehealth video services that transmit health care data between health care provider and patients for purposes of connected care services.
 - One-time, annual or recurring monthly costs for telehealth information services necessary to provide connected care.
 - Licenses, subscriptions, or recurring charges necessary for health care providers to access or use eligible connected care information services that capture, transmit (including video visits), or store health care data for connected care.
 - Implementation and integration costs necessary to integrate Pilot Program eligible services used to provide connected care services through the Pilot Program. This includes costs necessary to integrate existing electronic health records or electronic medical records systems with Pilot-supported information services.

Network Equipment

- Certain network equipment necessary to make newly acquired or upgraded Internet service for the patient or health care provider for the Pilot Program functional (e.g., routers) or necessary to manage, control, or operate a supported broadband service.
 - Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Equipment that terminates a carrier’s or other provider’s transmission facility and any router/switch that is directly connected to either the facility or the terminating equipment. This includes routers at the health care provider premises or routers for use at participating patient residences.
 - Costs of engineering, furnishing (i.e., as delivered from the manufacturer), and installing eligible network equipment.
 - Servers used exclusively for eligible broadband services.
 - Routers (including at patient’s home).
 - Switches.

Miscellaneous Costs

- Various miscellaneous costs associated with eligible services listed above may be eligible for support. Applicants should request eligible miscellaneous services in the same category as the associated service being obtained or installed.
 - Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Installation, Activation, and Initial Configuration.
 - Fees and charges that are a necessary component of an eligible service, such as shipping charges, taxes, surcharges, and other reasonable charges incurred in obtaining an eligible product or service.

Applicant Duty to Understand Rules and Requirements and Submit Accurate, Complete and Timely Filed Application Forms

Pilot Program applicants should carefully review the sections of the *Report and Order* concerning the Pilot Program,¹⁹ and all subsequent Public Notices related to the Pilot Program, including the *September Public Notice* to familiarize themselves with the Pilot Program rules and requirements. Prospective applicants should also review the additional guidance materials concerning the Pilot Program on the FCC's website at <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/telecommunications-access-policy-division/connected-care-pilot-program>. Applicants bear full responsibility for submitting an accurate, complete, and timely application for the Pilot Program and ensuring their compliance with Pilot Program rules and requirements.

Applications filed after the close of the filing window will not be considered. Thus, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible after the window opens to ensure completeness and accuracy. Applications will be reviewed after they are received. During the filing window, an applicant will be allowed to make any necessary modifications to its Application Form until the application submission deadline. Pursuant to section 1.65 of the Commission's rules, each applicant has a continuing obligation to maintain the accuracy and completeness of information furnished in a pending application, including a pending application to participate in the Pilot Program.²⁰ An applicant is obligated to amend its pending application even if a reported change may result in the dismissal of the application because it is subsequently deemed ineligible. If, at any time, an applicant needs to make changes to maintain the accuracy and completeness of its application pursuant to section 1.65 of the Commission's rules, it must do so via the application in the portal system.

Additional Information

For further information regarding this Public Notice, please contact India McGee, Attorney-Advisor, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, India.McGee@fcc.gov or Clinton Highfill, Attorney-Advisor, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, Clinton.Highfill@fcc.gov. Additional information concerning the Pilot Program will be posted at: <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/telecommunications-access-policy-division/connected-care-pilot-program>. Prospective applicants can also submit questions concerning the Pilot Program to the FCC at ConnectedCare@fcc.gov.

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¹⁹ See *Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3384-3411, paras. 37-86.

²⁰ See 47 CFR § 1.65. For purposes of section 1.65 of the Commission's rules, Pilot Program application and associated attachments will remain pending until the announcement of the pilot projects selected for the Pilot Program.

**APPENDIX
Connected Care Eligible Services Chart**

Category	Eligible Services	Examples
<p>Patient Broadband Internet Access Services/Health Care Provider Broadband Data Connections</p>	<p>New or upgraded broadband connections (whether for health care provider or participating patients) necessary for connected care services for the Pilot Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital Subscriber Line ○ Cable Modem ○ Other Copper Wireline ○ Optical Carrier/Fiber to the End-User ○ Terrestrial Fixed Wireless ○ Mobile Wireless (e.g., 3G, LTE, 4G, 5G) ○ Satellite ○ Broadband over Powerline • Firewall Service
<p>Other Connected Care Information Services</p>	<p>Services for connected care that capture, generate, acquire, transmit (including video visits), retrieve, and store health care data for connected care. This includes information services with “store-and-forward” technology, patient reported outcome platforms, and remote patient monitoring capabilities to monitor patients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIPAA compliant (or requirement waived) video services • HIPAA compliant (or requirement waived) telehealth solutions/packages/platforms, suites of services. • One-time, annual, recurring monthly costs for information service • Licenses, subscriptions, or recurring charges necessary for providers to access or use eligible information service.
<p>Network Equipment</p>	<p>Certain network equipment necessary to make newly acquired or upgraded Internet service for the HCP/Patient for the Pilot Program functional (e.g., routers) or necessary to manage, control, or operate a supported broadband service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment that terminates a carrier’s or other provider’s transmission facility and any router/switch that is directly connected to either the terminating equipment. • Network equipment that helps manage, control, or operate a supported broadband service (consortia applicants only) • Servers used exclusively for eligible broadband services • Routers (including at patient’s home) • Switches
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<p>Various miscellaneous costs associated with eligible services listed above may be eligible for support. Applicants should request eligible miscellaneous services in the same category as the associated service being obtained or installed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation, Activation, and Initial Configuration (including implementation and integration costs necessary to integrate eligible information services with existing systems). • Fees and charges that are a necessary component of an eligible service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shipping charges ○ Taxes, surcharges, and other reasonable charges incurred in obtaining an eligible product or service.
Ineligible Services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-user devices • Medical supplies • Provider (Doctor’s) Fees • Administrative and Personnel costs • Live Translation Services • Internal Connections between Provider Sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage Devices • IT support • Maintenance costs • DocuSign • VPN Solutions • Special Construction/Network Builds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications not purchased as part of connected care information service • Standalone Voice, including VoIP • Standalone messaging services • Network Equipment not necessary to make broadband functional or manage, control or operate a supported broadband service.

Note: This eligible services chart is illustrative and is not intended to be exhaustive.