



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU EXTENDS DEADLINES FOR THE COVID-19 TELEHEALTH PROGRAM ROUND 2

WC Docket No. 20-89

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) extends two deadlines for Round 2 of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program (COVID-19 Program). First, in response to recent requests from awardees, we extend the deadline for funding recipients to purchase eligible devices and implement eligible services from July 31, 2022, to October 31, 2022.¹ We also necessarily extend the deadline for submitting invoices for reimbursement by three months.²

In order to build off the success of Round 1 of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, Congress, as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, appropriated \$249.95 million to the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) for Round 2 of the Program.³ The Commission issued funding awards for 446 applications between August 26, 2021, and January 26, 2022, awarding more than \$256 million in funding.⁴

Round 2 funding recipients were given a July 31, 2022, deadline to purchase eligible devices and implement eligible services (purchase/implementation deadline).⁵ To date, the Bureau has received multiple requests to extend this deadline. Participants requesting more time have cited a variety of reasons, including supply-chain delays and discontinuities, staff absences due to COVID, and challenges with state government purchasing regulations.⁶ In addition, during Round 1, the initial deadline for

¹ The new purchasing/implementation deadline supersedes the previous announcement in *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces A Purchase and Implementation Deadline of July 31, 2022 For Round 2 of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program*, WC Docket No. 20-89, Public Notice, DA 22-260 (WCB Mar. 11, 2022) (*Round 2 Purchase Deadline Public Notice*).

² The new invoicing deadline supersedes the previous announcement in *Wireline Competition Bureau and Office of Managing Director Set July 31, 2023 Invoicing Deadline for COVID-19 Telehealth Program Round 2 and Provide Post-Program Guidance*, WC Docket No. 20-89, Public Notice, DA 22-582 (WCB May 25, 2022).

³ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260, Division N-Additional Coronavirus Response and Relief, Title IX-Broadband Internet Access Service, § 903 “FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program” (2020), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/133/text> (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021).

⁴ See *Wireline Competition Bureau Approves Sixth and Final Group of Funding Awards in Round 2 of COVID-19 Telehealth Program*, WC Docket No. 20-89, Public Notice, DA 22-88 (WCB Jan. 26, 2022).

⁵ *Round 2 Purchase Deadline Public Notice* at *1.

⁶ See E-mail from Jim Towler, Office of the CIO, Novant Health, to Clinton Highfill, Attorney-Advisor, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau (July 26, 2022) (explaining that recent COVID cases have created staffing constraints and also challenges scheduling vendors); E-mail from Kevin Welch, CEO, Kau Hospital and Rural Clinic, to Clinton Highfill (July 21, 2022) (explaining that COVID-19 cases have increased down time for vital technical staff); E-mail from Christina Higa, Co-Director, Pacific Basin Telehealth

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purchasing and implementation of services was extended similarly.⁷ For these reasons, the Bureau extends the purchase and implementation deadline to October 31, 2022. Next, the Round 2 rules permit program participants to be reimbursed for twelve months of recurring services, so shifting the purchase and implementation deadline by three months may also affect the time participants have to start, incur, and be reimbursed for the full year of services. In light of the fact that the invoicing deadline could be impacted by the change to the purchase and implementation deadline, we also adjust the invoicing deadline and extend it by three months. Finally, while the Bureau extends the purchase/implementation deadline, we encourage COVID-19 Telehealth Program funding recipients to purchase eligible devices and implement eligible services as soon as practicable.

Additional Information. For assistance, all program participants are encouraged to email Round2TelehealthInvoicSupp@fcc.gov. For special situations or to resolve ambiguous issues, please contact Clinton Highfill, Attorney-Advisor, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, clinton.highfill@fcc.gov or (202) 418-0091. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are posted at the Commission's website for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, www.fcc.gov/covid19telehealth.

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Resource Center, to Clinton Highfill (July 20, 2022) (explaining that vendors need more lead time to obtain clearances required to transact business with a State of Hawaii entity).

⁷ *Wireline Competition Bureau Extends the COVID-19 Telehealth Program September 30, 2020 Purchase and Implementation Deadline*, WC Docket No. 20-89, Public Notice, DA 20-1139 (WCB Sept. 28, 2020).