



# FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program (Round 2)

## Frequently asked questions

### What is the purpose of the funding?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is launching a \$250 million telehealth funding program to support healthcare providers responding to COVID-19.

Funds will help healthcare providers purchase telecommunications, broadband connectivity, information services and devices necessary for providing telehealth services.

This Round 2 funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 builds on funding allocations of \$200 million in Round 1 from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The FCC has contracted with the Universal Service Administration Company (USAC) to administer the program.

The funding application portal will open on Thursday, April 29 and close the following Thursday, May 6. Detailed information about program parameters are outlined in the [FCC Report and Order](#) released on March 30.

### How can our dedicated team help?

Netsmart is providing guidance on how to apply for the funding in order to support telehealth initiatives and ensure care and services continue to be delivered during COVID-19. The needs of many organizations have shifted to a virtual workforce, and equipping staff with technology they need is essential to continue service delivery and stay connected.

Our virtual care suite of solutions is designed to help during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in the future as telehealth becomes a common care delivery practice going forward. The FCC is not requiring applicants to procure pricing through RFPs but does encourage applicants to include a description of the telecommunications services, information services or "devices necessary to enable the provision of telehealth services" requested; the total amount of funding requested; as well as the total monthly amount of funding requested for each eligible item.

The rapidly evolving and unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 are requiring us to think differently as we shape approaches to everything from workforce management to care delivery models.

For more information and updates on virtual care policy changes and how they may impact your organization, check out our [Virtual Care Resource Center](#).

Our [FCC funding specialist team](#) is here to assist with supporting documentation for the costs indicated in your application including quotes, invoices or related information. We can help you develop a timeline for rapid deployment of the services you are proposing and strategies to track and measure the real impact of supported services and devices funded by the program.

## Who is eligible to apply?

The FCC Report and Order for the program states: Consistent with the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program limits participation to nonprofit and public eligible health care providers that fall within the following categories: (1) post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools; (2) community health centers or health centers providing healthcare 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; or (8) consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories.

**Round 2 funding applications will be accepted during the specified filing period and evaluated after all are received.**

## What can be purchased with the funding?

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will provide immediate support to eligible healthcare providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by fully funding their telecommunications services, information services and devices necessary to provide critical connected care services until the program's funds have been expended or the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. Examples of eligible services and connected devices include:

- **Telecommunications services and broadband connectivity services:** Voice services and internet connectivity services for healthcare 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.

- **Internet connected devices/equipment:** 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.

## What are the three steps to apply?

1. Obtain an eligibility determination from USAC by filing [FCC Form 460](#). Filers do not need to be rural healthcare providers in order to file Form 460 for this program. An eligibility determination is needed only for the lead health care provider listed on the application.
2. Obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN) from the [Commission Registration System \(CORES\)](#), as well as a CORES username and password via the link. An FRN is a 10-digit number that is assigned to a business or individual registering with the FCC and is used to identify the registrant's business dealings with the FCC.
  - Setting up an account in CORES means creating a username and account in the FCC User Registration System. Look for an automated email titled "FCC Account Request Verification." You must verify your account email address to get to step two.
  - Log in to CORES and select the "Register New FRN" or "Associate Username to FRN" option as applicable from the menu options that appear and provide the information as prompted by CORES.
3. Register with the federal [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#). Have your [DUNS number](#) and checking account information ready.

**Tip:** Complete these steps as soon as possible. FCC guidance indicates that you may file an application with the Commission for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program while your FCC Form 460 is pending with USAC. The telehealth funding is available to rural AND non-rural eligible providers.

## How will the awards be made?

Round 2 awards will be made in two phases. In the initial commitment phase, at least \$150 million will be awarded to the highest-scoring applicants. Applications outside that group will be provided a 10-day period to supplement their application. After that 10-day period, USAC will re-rank the remaining applications and award the remaining funding in the final commitment window.

The FCC has directed USAC to prioritize applications from eligible health care providers that demonstrate that they qualify for the following evaluation metrics with associated prioritization points (see the table below).

## When and where do I file my application?

The Federal Communications Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau will begin accepting applications for Round 2 of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program on **Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 12:00 PM ET** at [www.fcc.gov/covid19telehealth](http://www.fcc.gov/covid19telehealth). The filing window will last seven calendar days and close on **Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 12:00 PM ET**. For additional information on eligibility and the application process, review the Application Process Guidance available on the Universal Service Administrative Company's COVID-19 Telehealth Program webpage at <https://www.usac.org/about/covid-19-telehealth-program/>.

**FCC COVID-19 Telehealth Program Round 2 Evaluation Metrics**

Factor	Information Required	Points
Hardest Hit Area	Applicants must provide health care provider county	Up to 15
Low-Income Area	Applicants must provide health care provider physical address and county	Up to 15
Round 1 Unfunded Applicant	Applicants must provide unique application number from Round 1 <sup>1</sup>	15
Tribal Community	Applicants must provide physical address and/or provide supporting documentation to verify Indian Health Service or Tribal affiliation	15
Critical Access Hospital	Applicants must provide proof of Critical Access Hospital certification	10
Federally Qualified Health Center/ Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike/Disproportionate Share Hospital	Applicants must (1) provide proof of Federally Qualified Health Center certification, or (2) demonstrate qualification as a Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike, or (3) demonstrate qualification as a Disproportionate Share Hospital	10
Healthcare Provider Shortage Area	Applicants must provide Healthcare Provider Shortage Area ID number or health care provider county	Up to 10
Round 2 New Applicant	Applicants must certify, under penalty of perjury, that the applicant has not previously applied for Program funding	5
Rural County	Applicants must provide health care provider county	5

<sup>1</sup> For applicants that applied during Round 1, the application number started with "GRA" followed by seven numbers (e.g., GRA0000123). Some applications submitted via e-mail during Round 1 did not receive a GRA number. If the applicant did not receive an application number, USAC may accept proof of an email submission in lieu of the application number.

Questions specific to the application process can be directed to: [Round2TelehealthApplicationSupport@usac.org](mailto:Round2TelehealthApplicationSupport@usac.org).

## Health IT

### 1. Netsmart Telehealth

[Netsmart Telehealth™](#) is a HIPAA compliant, mobile and web platform that brings healthcare directly to the consumer, and it is totally integrated with your EHR platform. By enabling the distribution of virtual clinical services, Telehealth expands the reach of specialized care during times of crisis. Improved care outcomes are achieved with the timely access to high-demand specialties, such as addiction treatment, psychiatry and after-hours access to physicians.

- Schedule initial intake or ongoing appointments with existing clients
- Access and launch a telehealth session from an EHR
- Document treatment and services and seamlessly bill for services
- Available on an Android or iOS device
- Dedicated tablets are available at remote locations (emergency departments (EDs), mobile health clinics and physicians' offices) to connect individuals with specialists for consultations and assessments

### 2. Netsmart Telehealth Tablets

The Telehealth Tablets support secure, integrated live healthcare visits remotely. The tablet gives providers the tools necessary to perform telehealth sessions that reach individuals anytime and anywhere. Additionally, agencies and health systems can expand catchment areas and extend care options to individuals requiring specialty care. Extend the ability of a provider to instantly locate and connect with another provider, regardless of clinical setting.

#### Simplify and streamline deployment

The Telehealth Tablets are pre-configured with the Netsmart Telehealth solution, allowing clinicians to immediately focus on providing care and delivering a quality experience. The solution can be moved between individual rooms or stationed in EDs, mobile crisis vans and other community centers.

An optional cart or mount can be leveraged to improve mobility and positioning of the Telehealth Tablet. Its small footprint allows it to be stored discreetly when not in use. Optional diagnostic and peripheral devices are available, which can be used to extend the provider's diagnostic capabilities.

### 3. Consumer Engagement and health status monitoring

Support better outcomes and increased satisfaction by empowering individuals, families and caregivers to participate fully in their care.

Our portal supports consumer and family-driven care by connecting individuals to their treatment through a user-friendly, secure solution. Seamlessly integrated with the EHR, the portal provides consumers, families and caregivers convenient access to clinical and personal information. Consumer engagement forges a unique relationship between a provider and an individual where the person becomes more invested in their healthcare. Better communication between consumers and care providers supports better outcomes for everyone involved.

**We have a dedicated telehealth specialist team ready to help you succeed. [Contact us](#) for a demo or consultation.**