

**§ 54.620**

as described in paragraph (a) in this section. The Wireline Competition Bureau, in consultation with the Office of the Managing Director, shall determine the proportion of unused funding for use in the Rural Health Care Program in accordance with the public interest to either satisfy demand notwithstanding the annual cap, reduce collections for the Rural Health Care Program, or to hold in reserve to address contingencies for subsequent funding years. The Wireline Competition Bureau shall direct the Administrator to carry out the necessary actions for the use of available funds consistent with the direction specified in this section.

(b) [Reserved]

**§ 54.620 Annual filing requirements and commitments.**

(a) *Annual filing requirement.* Health care providers seeking support under the RHC Program shall file new funding requests for each funding year consistent with the filing periods established under this subpart, except for health care providers who have received a multi-year funding commitment in this section.

(b) *Long-term contracts.* If health care providers enter into long-term contracts for eligible services, the Administrator shall only commit funds to cover the portion of such a long-term contract scheduled to be delivered during the funding year for which universal service support is sought, except for multi-year funding commitments as described in this section.

(c) *Multi-year commitments under the Healthcare Connect Fund Program.* Participants in the Healthcare Connect Fund Program are permitted to enter into multi-year contracts for eligible expenses and may receive funding commitments from the Administrator for a period that covers up to three years of funding. If a long-term contract covers a period of more than three years, the applicant may also have the contract designated as “evergreen” under § 54.622(i)(3), which will allow the applicant to re-apply for funding under the contract after three years without hav-

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ing to undergo additional competitive bidding.

**§ 54.621 Filing window for requests and prioritization of support.**

(a) *Filing window for requests.* (1) The Administrator shall open an initial application filing window with an end date no later than 90 days prior to the start of the funding year (*i.e.*, no later than April 1). Prior to announcing the initial opening and closing dates, the Administrator shall seek the approval of the proposed dates from the Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau.

(2) The Administrator, after consultation with the Wireline Competition Bureau, may implement such additional filing periods as it deems necessary. To the extent that the Administrator opens an additional filing period, it shall provide notice and include in that notice or soon thereafter the amount of remaining available funding.

(3) The Administrator shall treat all health care providers filing an application within a filing window period as if their applications were simultaneously received. All funding requests submitted outside of a filing window will not be accepted unless and until the Administrator opens another filing window.

(b) *Prioritization of support.* The Administrator shall act in accordance with this section when a filing window period for the Telecommunications Program and the Healthcare Connect Fund Program, as described in paragraph (a) in this section, is in effect. When a filing period described in paragraph (a) in this section closes, the Administrator shall calculate the total demand for Telecommunications Program and Healthcare Connect Fund Program support submitted by all applicants during the filing window period. If the total demand during the filing window period exceeds the total remaining support available for the funding year, then the Administrator shall distribute the available funds consistent with the following priority schedule: