Coding Updates

nthrive

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FCC Telehealth Program

Background

According to a public bulletin released April 8, 2020 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) the "Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) provides guidance on actions applicants can begin to take to ready themselves for filing an application for COVID19 Telehealth Program funding. The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will provide $200 million in funding, appropriated by Congress as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, to help health care providers provide connected care services to patients at their homes or mobile locations in response to the novel Coronavirus 2019 disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will provide immediate support to eligible health care 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."[1]

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program will be open to receive applications effective upon publication of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval in the Federal Register.

According to the bulletin there are three steps interested providers can take immediately to prepare to apply for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program.

1. Obtain an eligibility determination from the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC);

2. Obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN); and

3. Register with System for Award Management.

If providers do not already have these steps and accompanying components completed, the Bureau recommends that it gather the necessary information and begin to complete other necessary steps now, so it is prepared to submit applications for program funding as soon as applications can be accepted for filing.

Eligibility

The bulletin provides detailed instructions for health care providers seeking to participate in the COVID-19 Telehealth Program including the need to obtain an eligibility determination from the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for each health care provider site that they include in their application.

The Telehealth Program is open to rural and non-rural providers and 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 health care to migrants.

3. Local health departments or agencies.

4. Community mental health centers.

5. Not-for-profit hospitals.

6. Rural health clinics (Health care provider sites that USAC has already deemed eligible to participate in the Commission's existing Rural Health Care (RHC) Programs may rely on that eligibility determination for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program).

7. Skilled nursing facilities.

8. Consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories (non-rural providers do not need to be part of a consortium to participate in the program).

The FCC directs interested health care providers that do not already have an eligibility determination to obtain one by filing an FCC Form 460 (Eligibility and Registration Form) with USAC. Providers may also file an application with Commission for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program while their FCC Form 460 is pending with USAC.

The FCC Form 460 can be found at: https://www.usac.org/rural-health-care/resources/forms/.

FCC Registration Number (FRN)

In addition to these steps for applying, and request for funding, the applicant must first obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN). Additionally, to receive payment through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, applicants must be registered with the federal System for Award Management.

While interested parties do not need to be registered with the System for Award Management in order to apply, the Bureau strongly encourages them to start that process early.

To obtain an FRN all applicants, like all other entities doing business with the Commission, must register for an FRN in the Commission Registration System (CORES). To register with CORES, providers are directed to use the following link: https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do.

Details for completing this step are outlined in the bulletin released by the FCC and referenced in this update. One piece of information needed is a DUNS number.

The Commission defines the DUNS number as a unique nine-character number used to identify the organization. The federal government uses the DUNS number to track how federal money is allocated. Most large organizations, libraries, colleges, and research universities already have a DUNS number.

If the provider is not certain if they have a DUNS number, they should contact their grant administrator, financial department, chief financial officer, or authorizing official to determine if one already exists for their organization. If your organization does not yet have a DUNS number, or no one knows it, providers are directed to the Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) website: https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do.

Providers may also call 1-866-705-5711 to register or search for a DUNS number. Registering for a DUNS number is free of charge.

System for Award Management

The System for Award Management is a web-based, government-wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about the federal government's partners in support of federal awards, grants, and electronic payment processes.

Only applicants registered through the System for Award Management will be able to receive COVID-19 Telehealth Program funding.

Many applicants may already be registered with the System for Award Management and do not need to re-register with that system in order to receive payment through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program.

Health care providers not yet registered with the System for Award Management may still apply. However, the Bureau strongly recommends unregistered health care providers to start that registration process now because it may take up to 10 business days for the registration to become active and an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems.

To register with the Award Management System, go to: https://www.sam.gov/SAM/. **Providers should be aware that they will need the DUNS number to complete this step.**

Guidance

1. Access the public bulletin available at the site provided and become familiar with the details of each of the three registration steps.

2. Gather all the necessary information needed to register and complete each step.

3. Confirm eligibility and obtain an FRN and DUNS number and complete registration with the Award Management System.

4. Prepare application for receiving funding.

5. Monitor the Federal Register site for the application open date published by the OMB and submit the prepared application.

Sources
1. https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-20-394A1.pdf ■