§ 54.605 Determining the urban rate.

(a) If a rural health care provider requests support for an eligible service to be funded from the Telecommunications Program that is to be provided over a distance that is less than or equal to the “standard urban distance,” as defined in paragraph (c) of

(b) Telecommunications Services. Any telecommunications service that is the subject of a properly completed bona fide request by a rural health care provider shall be eligible for universal service support, subject to the limitations described in this paragraph. The length of a supported telecommunications service may not exceed the distance between the health care provider and the point farthest from that provider on the jurisdictional boundary of the largest city in a state as defined in §54.625(a).

(c) Existing contracts. A signed contract for services eligible for Telecommunications Program support pursuant to this subpart between an eligible health care provider as defined under §54.600 and a telecommunications carrier shall be exempt from the competitive bid requirements set forth in §54.603(a) as follows:

(1) A contract signed on or before July 10, 1997 is exempt from the competitive bid requirement for the life of the contract.

(2) [Reserved]

(d) For rural health care providers that take service under or pursuant to a master contract, as defined in §54.500(f), the date of execution of that master contract represents the applicable date for purposes of determining whether and to what extent the rural health care provider is exempt from the competitive bid requirements.

The competitive bid system will be deemed to be operational when the Administrator is ready to accept and post FCC Form 465 from rural health care providers on a website and that website is available for use by telecommunications carriers.

§ 54.604 Consortia, telecommunications services, and existing contracts.

(a) Consortia. (1) Under the Telecommunications Program, an eligible health care provider may join a consortium with other eligible health care providers; with schools, libraries, and library consortia eligible under subpart F of this part; and with public sector (governmental) entities to order telecommunications services. With one exception, eligible health care providers participating in consortia with ineligible private sector entities shall not be eligible for supported services under this subpart. A consortium may include ineligible private sector entities if such consortium is only receiving services at tariffed rates or at market rates from those providers who do not file tariffs.

(2) For consortia, universal service support under the Telecommunications Program shall apply only to the portion of eligible services used by an eligible health care provider.

(3) The Administrator shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement the Telecommunications Program provisions in this section.

§ 54.605 Determining the urban rate.

(a) If a rural health care provider requests support for an eligible service to be funded from the Telecommunications Program that is to be provided over a distance that is less than or equal to the “standard urban distance,” as defined in paragraph (c) of