



HFS

Illinois Department of
Healthcare and Family Services

MEDICAID RULES WILL BE CHANGING

What you need to know



A new federal law (HR 1) is changing who qualifies for Medicaid and how often some customers need to renew their coverage. Some changes take effect as soon as October 2026 and others will begin January 1, 2027. Find out what you need to do to keep your coverage.

WHAT IS MEDICAID?

Medicaid is a public health coverage program run jointly by the federal and state governments. For over 60 years, it has helped Americans with limited income access healthcare. You may know it by other names like All Kids, Aetna, BlueCross BlueShield, CountyCare, Humana, Meridian, or Molina.

Medicaid eligibility is based on factors like household income and family size. In Illinois, households earning up to 138% of the federal poverty level qualify. Children and pregnant people qualify at higher income levels.

WHAT TO DO NOW

1

Update your contact information.

Make sure HFS has an address where mail always reaches you — otherwise you risk missing a notice and losing coverage. If you move, get a new phone number, change your email address or your immigration status changes, update that with the state right away. Visit abe.illinois.gov and click "Manage My Case," or fill out the [Medicaid Address Change Form](#).

2

Watch your mail for letters from HFS. We will contact Medicaid customers directly before any change affects coverage.

WHAT'S CHANGING AND WHEN?

The new federal law affects two groups of Medicaid customers: **certain noncitizens** and **ACA Adults** (generally people ages 19-64 who don't have dependent children under 18 at home and aren't on Medicare).

- **October 1, 2026:** Some **noncitizens** will no longer qualify for federally funded Medicaid.
- **January 1, 2027:** **ACA Adults** will need to report hours of work, school, volunteering or similar activities to continue receiving coverage. They will also need to renew their coverage more frequently: every six months rather than yearly. You can be exempted from work requirements if you meet certain conditions, including but not limited to: you are pregnant or receiving postpartum benefits; you are a former foster youth who is under 26 years old; you are participating in a drug addiction or alcohol treatment program. A complete list of exemptions can be found by scanning the QR code below.

Many other Medicaid customers will not be subject to work requirements. For example, people ages 65 and older, and children under 19. In addition, most parents and caretaker relatives in Illinois are in Family Health Plans and are not subject to work requirements because they are not included in the ACA Adult population.

3

Stay updated. Scan the QR Code for additional information and updates on federal changes.



KEY CHANGES AT A GLANCE

WHO	NEW REQUIREMENT	WHAT IT MEANS	STARTS
Noncitizens	Eligibility Restricted	Refugees, asylees, humanitarian parolees, and survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking will no longer qualify for Medicaid or CHIP. The following groups will remain eligible: naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents (subject to the five-year waiting period unless federally exempt), certain Cuban and Haitian entrants, Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants (from Marshall Islands, Micronesia or Palau), children under 19 years old and pregnant individuals. Individuals currently enrolled in a state-funded program including AATV, VTTC, and HBIS are not affected.	Oct. 1, 2026
ACA Adults	New Mandatory Work Requirements	To get or keep your coverage, you will need to prove that you meet new work, education, work training, or community service requirements, or claim an allowable exemption based on circumstance (<i>See details below</i>).	Jan. 1, 2027
	Twice-A-Year Renewals	Today, Illinois verifies eligibility once a year. Under the new law, renewals will happen every six months for ACA adults.	Jan. 1, 2027

AM I SUBJECT TO WORK REQUIREMENTS?

Starting Jan. 1, 2027, some adult Medicaid customers may need to report work hours or certain activities to continue receiving coverage.

Generally, the new federal work requirements will apply to individuals in the **Affordable Care Act expansion population ("ACA Adults")**, who are individuals aged 19–64, who are not receiving Medicare, and do not have a dependent child under 18 years old in their home.

Many Medicaid customers will not be subject to work requirements. For example, people ages 65 and older, children under 19, and most parents and caretaker relatives will not be subject to work requirements because they are not ACA Adults.

WHO IS EXEMPT?

ACA Adults must complete their coverage renewal in order for the State to determine they meet a valid exemption. If you are an ACA Adult but any of the following apply, you may not have to comply with work requirements:

- Have Medicare Part A or Part B
- Parent or caregiver of a child under 14, or of a person who has a disability
- Former foster youth under age 19 to 26
- Pregnant or post-partum
- Medically frail. Person with special medical needs, such as a serious health condition, or a disability
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Veteran with total disability rating from the Veterans' Administration
- Are in jail or prison now or were in the past 3 months
- Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program
- Experiencing a short-term hardship (e.g., travel for medical care, a hospital stay, a natural disaster)
- Required to complete work requirements for TANF or SNAP

WHAT ACTIVITIES COUNT TOWARD WORK REQUIREMENTS

You can meet the requirement by doing any one of the following in at least one month of your 6-month eligibility period:

- Earn at least \$580 per month in income
- Attend school, college or technical training at least half-time
- Complete 80 hours per month of any of these alone or in combination:
 - Paid employment
 - Education
 - Community service or volunteering
 - Job training or work program

HOW IT'S REPORTED

You may be required to take action to demonstrate compliance with new requirements, but if possible, Illinois will use existing state data to confirm work requirement compliance or exemption status automatically wherever possible so many members will not need to take any action. If documentation is needed, HFS will mail you a notice with instructions about what you need to do to keep coverage. Keep your address up to date so you don't miss it.

ARE YOU ALSO ENROLLED IN SNAP?

SNAP rules are also changing under the same federal law. Individuals who meet SNAP work requirements will automatically satisfy Medicaid work requirements. For details, see the companion **"SNAP Rules are Changing"** factsheet on the Illinois Department of Human Services [SNAP Federal Impact Center webpage](#).