SHIP State Health Insurance Assistance Program

Navigating Medicare

Low Income Assistance Programs for Help with Medicare Costs

January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026

Medicare is a federal insurance program for older adults and people with disabilities. Enrollment is completed through the Social Security Administration (SSA). Help with Medicare-related costs is available through the following programs:

1) **Extra Help/Low Income Subsidy (LIS)** – Help with Part D prescription drug plan premiums, deductibles, and co-insurance. If eligible for Medicaid, enrollment is automatic. Otherwise, apply through the SSSA at **www.ssa.gov** or contact your local **State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) at 1-888-696-7213.**

		Monthly Income (Gross)	Total Assets
Extra Help/Low Income Subsidy (LIS)	Individual	$1,995	$18,090
	Couple	$2,705	$36,100

Income limits include a $20 disregard per household. Asset limits include a $1,500 burial allowance per person. Most people who qualify for Extra Help/Low Income Subsidy will pay:
--No premiums or deductibles for their drug plan
--No more than $5.10 per generic drug and no more than $12.65 per brand name drug covered by the plans formulary

2) **Manufacturer's Assistance with Medication Costs** – Information on manufacturer's assistance on some prescriptions, depending on income and insurance. Medicare's website offers program information organized by drug name.

3) **Medicaid** – State-administered program for certain lower income individuals. Enrollment is completed through the Department of Human Services and may provide assistance with Medicare premiums, deductibles, and/or co-insurance. *Note: Assets don't include primary residence and one vehicle per person.*

a) Medicare Savings Programs (MSP).		**Monthly Income**	**Total Assets**	
Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) - Pays Part A Premium, Part B Premium, Deductibles, and Co-Insurance	Individual	$1,350	$11,450*	($9,950)
	Couple	$1,824	$17,910*	($16,410)
Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) - Pays Part B Premium	Individual	$1,616	$11,450*	($9,950)
	Couple	$2,184	$17,910*	($16,410)
Qualifying Individual (QI) - Pays Part B Premium	Individual	$1,816	$11,450*	($9,950)
	Couple	$2,455	$17,910*	($16,410)
Qualified Disabled & Working Individual (QDWI) - Pays Part A Premium *Note: Must also meet one or more of the following requirements: Working disabled person under 65, lost premium free Part A when returned to work, and/or not receiving medical assistance.*	Individual	$5,405	$4,000	
	Couple	$7,299	$6,000	

**Includes $1,500 burial assistance per person* (Without burial assistance in parenthesis)*

Updated 5/1/2026

b) Full Medicaid -

May pay for some items that Medicare won't cover; income may be higher if employment-based. Contact the your local Department of Human Services for application or apply online at **coloradopeak.secure.force.com**
Note: Assets do not include primary residence and one vehicle per person.

		Monthly Income	Total Assets
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Individual	$994	$2,000
	Couple	$1,491	$3,000
Old Age Pension (OAP)	Individual	$1,032	$2,000
	Couple		$3,000

c) Long Term Care (LTC) -
Pays for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), Alternative Living Facility (ALF), and Nursing Facility (NF) care; must need assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL's); income limit is much higher than regular Medicaid; special income/asset protections for spouses. Contact the Department of Human Services for application and more information.

		Monthly Income	Total Assets
Long Term Care (LTC)	Individual	$2,982	$2,000
	Couple (only counts assets per couple)		$3,000

4) **Additional Assistance** – BenefitsCheckUp is an online screening tool that connects older adults and people with disabilities with programs that can help them afford daily expenses, live healthy, and stay independent. Check your eligibility by visiting: **https://benefitscheckup.org**

Call Toll-Free 1-888-696-7213

to talk to a local SHIP counselor who can direct you to your source for guidance with Medicaid and other benefits.

https://doi.colorado.gov/insurance-products/health-insurance/senior-health-care-medicare

This project was supported, in part by grant number 2201COMISH, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.