

limits for Extra Help are countable income of **\$1,538**/ month (**\$2,078** for couples); and countable resources in the amount of \$14,100 (\$28,150 for couples). Because the rules for counting income and resources under Extra Help are more generous than those for Medicare Savings Program (MSP) eligibility, you may be eligible for the highest level of help even if you have been denied MSP eligibility.

If you qualify for Extra Help you are able to switch drug plans on a month-to-month basis (this should be done *only* to obtain better coverage of the drugs you need).

### **How Do You Apply For These Benefits?**

Applications for a **Medicare Savings Program** are made online, by mail, or in person, with state Income Support Division Offices. Applications for **Extra Help** are made with Social Security, online ([www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)); in person at your local Social Security office; or by phone at 1-800-772-1213. You may also get help with applications from agencies including the NM Aging & Disability Resource Center (1-800-432-2080) and the Benefits Connection Center (1-844-266-2236).

### **Questions about Health Benefits?**

**Call SCLO at (505) 265-2300 or  
The Aging & Disability Resource Center**

Senior Citizens' Law Office, Inc. is funded by the City of Albuquerque Area Agency on Aging, and New Mexico Civil Legal Services and Access to Justice Commissions.

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**This information is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.**



## **Got Medicare? Get Help With Costs**



If you are single and your income is less than **\$1,538** per month, or married and your income is less than **\$2,078** per month, you might qualify for financial help covering many of your Medicare out-of-pocket costs.

### **OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS FOR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES**

Medicare is an important source of health care coverage, but beneficiaries are charged for part of the costs of care. Beneficiaries must pay monthly *premiums*; and when they obtain services they usually have “deductible” and “co-insurance” (including “co-pays”) charges. The amount of this “cost-sharing” can be very high.

## What Type of Help is Available?

Some individuals have other health coverage that helps cover their Medicare cost sharing. This flyer highlights two types of *public benefits* that provide such help for lower income individuals: “**Medicare Savings Programs**,” and “**Extra Help**” (a/k/a “LIS,” the “Low Income Subsidy”).

## What is a Medicare Savings Program?

There are three Medicare Savings Programs, commonly referred to by their initials: “**QMB**,” “**SLMB**,” and “**QI**.” These are special, limited types of *Medicaid* coverage that cover all or part of your Medicare premiums and cost sharing, (*but not for any added services*). QMB covers *all* your Medicare premiums and cost sharing. SLMB and QI pay *only* for your Medicare “Part B” premium.

The countable income and resource limits for these Medicaid programs, effective 4/1/18, are:

	<b>INCOME*</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>
<b>QMB</b>		
Individual	\$1,032/month	\$7,560
Couple	\$1,392/month	\$11,340
<b>SLMB</b>		
Individual	\$1,234/month	\$7,560
Couple	\$1,666/month	\$11,340
<b>QI</b>		
Individual	\$1,386/month	\$7,560
Couple	\$1,872/month	\$11,340

\*Income eligibility is determined on a monthly basis. Medicaid disregards (does not count) the first \$20/month of most types of income. **The income figures include the \$20 disregard.** The income amounts increase each April.

## Are All the Income and Resources You Have Counted in Determining Eligibility?

No, several types of income and resources are not counted. **Income** that is disregarded *includes*: the first \$20 per month; \$65 plus ½ of monthly earnings; and certain types of income available to Native Americans. On the other hand, if other people help you with your food or housing costs, that help can actually be counted as income to you. *Examples* of **resources** that are not counted *include*: your home; a motor vehicle; personal items (e.g., jewelry and household goods); a burial space; and up to \$1,500 per person for funeral expenses.

You must also meet all other Medicaid eligibility requirements. If you think you might be eligible, *apply as soon as possible* (see below); don’t wait until you are sick or get hurt. One reason is that *QMB* coverage doesn’t start until the month *after* your application is approved.

## What is “Extra Help”?

Extra Help, also known as the Low Income Subsidy (LIS), provides financial help with your Medicare prescription drug plan costs (Medicare’s drug coverage is available only from private plans). Depending on the amount of your countable income and resources, it will cover all or part of your plan’s premium, deductible, “donut hole,” and co-pay costs. There are different levels of help.

**If you qualify for one of the Medicare Savings Programs, you automatically qualify for Extra Help,** with a high level of help. If your countable income or resources are too high to qualify for a Medicare Savings Program, you may still qualify for Extra Help, but with a lesser amount of help. The *maximum* financial eligibility