

**H-2000 QUALIFYING INDIVIDUALS PROGRAM****H-2010 GENERAL INFORMATION**

Effective January 1, 1998, Section 4732 of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 required states to pay the Medicare Part B premiums for a new mandatory eligibility group of low-income Medicare beneficiaries, called Qualifying Individuals (QI).

The applicant/beneficiary must meet all of the following QI requirements. A QI must:

- Be enrolled in hospital insurance benefits under Medicare Part A, but does not have to be currently enrolled in part B;
- Have income equal to or greater than 120 percent, but less than 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG). Refer to [Z-200 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines](#); and

**Note:**

In January of each year, disregard the Social Security Administration (SSA) cost of living adjustment (COLA) through the month following the release of the FPIG update. Thereafter determine eligibility using all income including the COLA for the current year.

- Meet all non-financial eligibility requirements for Medicaid.

The months of coverage for Medically Needy Program (MNP) shall not include previous Medicaid-covered months, excluding pure Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB), Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB), or QI certifications. The only instance in which a person can be certified for both MNP and QI is for retroactive MNP coverage. Due to system limitations, overlaps in eligibility cannot be avoided and previous eligibility cannot be removed. Since federal regulations stipulate that a QI cannot be otherwise Medicaid eligible, any prospective overlaps in MNP/QI eligibility must be avoided.

An applicant/beneficiary who is eligible for QI can be certified in both the QI and Take Charge Plus (TCP) programs.

**H-2010.1 Coverage**

Eligible for Medicaid payment for the Medicare Part B premium.

**Note:**

Although the online Self Service Portal (SSP) and BHSF Form 1-MB, Application for Medicare Savings Program, are commonly used to apply for initial or continued QI benefits, it is also acceptable to use BHSF Form 1-A, Application for Health Coverage.

**H-2020 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION PROCESS**

Determine eligibility by applying the following criteria. The elements have been listed in the most logical order, but work on all steps simultaneously.

**H-2020.1 Determine Assistance/Benefit Unit**

The assistance/benefit unit consists of the applicant(s)/beneficiary(ies).

**H-2020.2 Establish Categorical Requirement**

Verify \*\* enrollment in Medicare Part A for the applicant/beneficiary. Medicare Part A eligibility, the start date for Medicare Part A, and the Medicare claim number can be verified through the interfaces available in LaMEDS.

**H-2020.3 Establish Non-Financial Eligibility**

Verify eligibility for each member of the assistance unit with regard to the following factors:

- [Assignment of Third Party Rights](#) I-200
- [Citizenship/Identity and Qualified Non-Citizen Status](#) I-300
- [Enumeration](#) I-600
- [Residence](#) I-1900

**H-2020.4 Establish Need****A. Determine Composition of the Income Unit**

The income unit includes the:

- Applicant/beneficiary;

- Applicant/beneficiary and ineligible spouse living in the home; or
- Applicant/beneficiary and eligible spouse who are living in the same home (eligible couple).

**Note:**

If the SSA considers the applicant/beneficiary and their spouse as a couple for SSI purposes, they are considered as an eligible couple for the purposes of budgeting in the Medicare Savings Programs (QMB, SLMB, QI). An eligible spouse is one who is aged, blind, or disabled and lives in the same household as the applicant/beneficiary. The eligible spouse does not have to be entitled to Medicare for the couple to be considered an eligible couple.

**B. Determine Need/Countable Income****Individual**

If the applicant/beneficiary is an individual with no spouse or with an ineligible spouse with no income, complete the following budget steps:

- Step 1. Determine total gross unearned income.
- Step 2. Subtract the \$20 SSI general disregard from unearned income.
- Step 3. The remainder is the countable unearned income.
- Step 4. Determine the total gross earned income.
- Step 5. Subtract any remainder of the \$20 SSI disregard from gross earnings.
- Step 6. Subtract the earned income deduction from remaining gross earnings. Earned income deduction is \$65 and one half of remainder of earnings.
- Step 7. The remainder is the countable earned income.
- Step 8. Add the remainders from Step 3 and Step 7.
- Step 9. Compare the total to 135 percent FPL for one person. Refer to [Z-200 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines](#).

If the remaining income is equal to or greater than the QI income limit for one person, the applicant/beneficiary is income ineligible.

If the remaining income is less than the QI limit for one person, the applicant/beneficiary is income eligible.

### Ineligible Spouse Deeming

If the applicant/beneficiary has an ineligible spouse with income, complete budget Steps 1 through 9 above using only the applicant/beneficiary income. If the income of the applicant/beneficiary is equal to or greater than the QI income limit for one person, the applicant/beneficiary is ineligible and there is no deeming. Consider for Medically Needy Program (MNP).

If the income of the applicant/beneficiary is less than the QI limit for one person, apply deeming policy ([See I-1420 Need - Deeming](#)). Go to Step 1 of the couple budget.

### Couple

If both members of a couple are potentially eligible, or if there is income remaining in the deeming process, complete the following budget steps:

Step 1. Determine the total gross unearned income by combining the couple's unearned income.

**Note:**

When deeming income from an ineligible spouse, the income of the ineligible spouse remaining after allocation for ineligible children is combined with the income of the eligible spouse. The couple is then treated the same as an eligible couple for budgeting purposes.

Step 2. Subtract the \$20 SSI general income disregard.

Step 3. The remainder is the couple's countable unearned income.

Step 4. Determine the total gross earned income of the couple by combining the couple's gross earned income.

Step 5. Subtract any remainder of the \$20 SSI disregard from gross earnings.

Step 6. Subtract one earned income deduction from the remaining gross earnings of the income unit. The earned income deduction is \$65 and one-half of the remainder of the earnings.

- Step 7. The remainder is the couple's countable earned income.
- Step 8. Combine the remainders in Step 3 and Step 7.
- Step 9. Compare the total countable income to the 135 percent FPL for two persons. Refer to [Z-200 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines](#).

If the income is equal to or greater than the QI income limit for two (2) persons, the applicant/beneficiary is not eligible.

If the income is less than the QI income limit for two (2) persons, the applicant/beneficiary is income eligible.

#### **H-2020.5 Eligibility Decision**

Evaluate all eligibility requirements and verification received to make the eligibility decision.

#### **H-2020.6 Certification Period**

The certification period can be effective no earlier than three (3) months prior to the application date provided the individual is otherwise eligible and is enrolled in Medicare Part A.

Coverage of QI is mandatory. However, federal funds are limited. Therefore, the state is authorized to limit participation so that the total assistance provided is (on an estimated basis) equal to, but not greater than the funding allocated to the state for participation.

Individuals who are eligible for QI shall be certified on a first come, first served basis. Individuals who were receiving assistance either under QI, in December of the previous year and remain eligible, or in the case of QMB or SLMB, become eligible under the QI program, must be given preference. Once an individual is determined eligible, he/she is entitled to receive assistance for a twelve (12) month certification period as long as he/she remains eligible and funding for the program is available.

#### **H-2020.7 Notice of Decision**

Send the appropriate notice of decision to the applicant/beneficiary.

**Note:**

Applicants enrolled in Medicare Part A are not referred to the

Federally Facilitated Marketplace. (FFM).