

## Consumer resources on income and employment changes

### Estimating unpredictable income

Marketplace savings are based on your **expected household income for the year you want coverage, not last year's income**. It's hard to predict your income if you're unemployed. Still, it's important to make your best estimate based on all current or expected sources of income for the year.

If your income is hard to predict, base your estimate on your past experience, recent trends, what you know about possible changes at your workplace, and similar information.

Do your best to make a realistic estimate — and be prepared to update it when it changes. **Update your Marketplace application as soon as possible** when your income or household members change during the year.

More information on estimating your expected income is available at <https://www.healthcare.gov/income-and-household-information/how-to-report/>.

### COBRA Coverage

When you lose job-based insurance, you may be offered COBRA continuation coverage by your former employer.

If you decide not to take COBRA coverage, you can enroll in a Marketplace plan instead.

If you're unemployed you may be able to get an affordable health insurance plan through the Marketplace, with savings based on your income and household size. You may also qualify for free or low-cost coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Your household size and income, not your employment status, determine what health coverage you're eligible for and how much help you'll get paying for coverage.

Losing job-based coverage qualifies you for a [Special Enrollment Period](#). This means you have 60 days to enroll in a health plan, even if it's outside the annual [Open Enrollment Period](#).

If you're already enrolled in COBRA, you may have options in the Marketplace. If you're already enrolled in COBRA, but your COBRA is ending or your COBRA costs change because your former employer stops contributing and you must pay full cost, you can qualify for a Special Enrollment Period even if it is more than 60 days since you originally lost coverage through your job.

More information on COBRA and the Marketplace is available at <https://www.healthcare.gov/unemployed/cobra-coverage/>

### Unemployment Compensation

You'll need to report your expected unemployment compensation when applying for health coverage through the Marketplace.

When you complete a Marketplace application, you'll need to predict your income for the coverage year the best you can. The application will help you make this estimate.

More information is available at

<https://www.healthcare.gov/unemployed/coverage/#unemployedincome>

### Health coverage options if you're unemployed

If you're unemployed you may be able to get an affordable health insurance plan through the Marketplace, with savings based on your income and household size. You may also qualify for free or low-cost coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Your household size and income, not your employment status, determine what health coverage you're eligible for and how much help you'll get paying for coverage.

If you have just left your job for any reason and lost your job-based health coverage, you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period. This means you can enroll in a Marketplace insurance plan any time of year. You usually have 60 days from the day you lose your coverage to enroll. Learn how to apply for a Special Enrollment Period.

There is no limited enrollment period for Medicaid or CHIP. If you qualify, you can enroll in these programs any time of year. You'll find out if you qualify when you fill out your Marketplace application.

### Your options depend on your household income

When you apply for Marketplace coverage you'll estimate your income for the current calendar year.

### How to estimate your income if you're unemployed

It's hard to predict your annual income if you're unemployed. Still, it's important to make your best estimate based on all current or expected sources of income for the year.

Types of income to include on your application:

- Unemployment compensation
- All household members' income (not just yours)
- Additional [types of income](#), including interest income, capital gains, cash support, and alimony
- Most withdrawals from traditional IRAs and 401ks. (But see [IRS Form 8606 instructions \(PDF\)](#) for information on non-deductible contributions, and [IRS Publication 590-B \(PDF\)](#) for information on Roth accounts.)

### Medicaid, CHIP, and insurance plans through the Marketplace

When you fill out a Marketplace application, you'll find out if you qualify for any of these types of coverage:

- **A Marketplace insurance plan.** You may qualify for premium tax credits and savings on deductibles, copayments, and other out-of-pocket costs based on your household size and

income. Some people with low incomes may wind up paying very small premiums. Learn about [getting lower costs on a Marketplace insurance plan](#).

- **Medicaid.** Medicaid provides coverage to millions of Americans with limited incomes or disabilities. Many states have expanded Medicaid to cover all people below certain income levels. Learn more about [Medicaid and how to apply](#).
- **Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).** CHIP provides coverage for children, and in some states pregnant women, in families with incomes too high for Medicaid but too low to afford private insurance. [Learn more about CHIP](#).

After you finish your Marketplace application, you’ll get an eligibility determination that tells you what kind of coverage you and others in your household qualify for.

More information is available at <https://www.healthcare.gov/unemployed/coverage/>