
CMCS Informational Bulletin

DATE: January 29, 2015

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SUBJECT: 2015 Federal Poverty Level Standards

As required by Section 673(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updates the poverty guidelines at least annually and by law these updates are applied to eligibility criterion for programs such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). These annual updates are accomplished by increasing the Census Bureau's current official poverty thresholds by the relevant percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

The 2015 guidelines reflect the 1.6 percent price increase between calendar years 2013 and 2014. After this inflation adjustment, the guidelines are rounded and adjusted to standardize the differences between family and household sizes. For a family or household of 4 persons living in one of the 48 contiguous states or the District of Columbia, the poverty guideline for 2015 is \$24,250. Separate poverty guideline figures are developed for Alaska and Hawaii, and different guidelines may apply to the Territories. The guidelines can be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-01-22/pdf/2015-01120.pdf>.

To determine eligibility for Medicaid, CHIP, and advance payments of the premium tax credit (APTC) and cost-sharing reductions (CSR) for the purchase of health coverage through the Marketplace, states and the federal government generally use a percentage multiple of the guidelines (for example, 133 percent or 185 percent of the guidelines) as allowed or mandated in relevant authorizing legislation or program regulations. *The Federally-facilitated Marketplace (FFM) will begin using the 2015 FPLs for Medicaid and CHIP eligibility on February 1, 2015. In accordance with section 36B of the Internal Revenue Code, eligibility for APTC and CSR will continue to be determined using 2014 FPLs for all APTC and CSR for enrollment that is effective in 2015.*

Included with this informational bulletin is the *2015 Dual Eligible Standards* chart that displays the new standards for the Medicare Savings Program categories. These standards are also available on Medicaid.gov at <http://www.medicare.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-population/medicare-medicare-enrollees-dual-eligibles/seniors-and-medicare-and-medicare-enrollees.html>.

Please update your standards in accordance with this information. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Judith Cash, Director of the Division of Eligibility and Enrollment, at 410-786-4473 or Judith.Cash@cms.hhs.gov.