

Medicaid Work Requirements under the “One Big, Beautiful Bill”

What is the “One Big, Beautiful Bill”?

The “One Big, Beautiful Bill” is a budget reconciliation act that was signed into law on July 4, 2025. It includes many changes to the Medicaid program, including new work requirements.

Will everyone receiving Medicaid benefits need to meet the new work requirements for Medicaid?

No. The work requirement **only applies to non-disabled adults age 19-64** who are covered under the “Medicaid Expansion” category.

What does the new law require?

Adults covered in the “expansion” category will be required to complete 80 hours of work or community service activities per month **or meet exemption criteria** to enroll in and maintain coverage.

When do the work requirements begin?

States are required to start the new work requirement no later than **December 1, 2026**.

When will I hear more about these changes and how they may impact me?

Even though the bill passed, the Secretary of Health and Human Services has until **June 1, 2026** to issue an interim final rule on implementing work requirements. This means much more information will be coming over the next year.

States are required to begin outreach about new work requirements by **September 30, 2026**.

What are the rules for work and are there exemptions for who will have to meet the new work requirements?

The chart below shows the type of activities that are considered “qualifying activities”. There are also exemptions for certain individuals, including those deemed “medically frail”.

Figure 2

| Proposed Qualifying Activities and Exemptions | | |
|---|---|---|
| Qualifying Activities | Mandatory Exemptions | Optional Hardship Exceptions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 80 hours per month of work, community service, and/or “work program” participation• Enrolled in education at least half time• Any combination of the above totaling 80 hours per month• Monthly income of minimum wage multiplied by 80 hours• Seasonal workers with an average monthly income over 6 months of minimum wage multiplied by 80 hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian/caretakers of dependent children under age 13 or disabled individuals• Pregnant or receiving postpartum coverage• Foster youth/former foster youth under age 26• Medically frail• Participating in SUD program• Meeting SNAP/TANF work requirements• American Indians and Alaska Natives• Disabled veterans• Incarcerated or released from incarceration within 90 days• Entitled to Medicare Part A/enrolled in Medicare Part B | <p>State option to allow short-term hardship exceptions, for an individual who....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• was in an inpatient hospital, nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or inpatient psychiatric hospital• resided in a county with a federally-declared emergency or disaster• resided in a county with a high unemployment rate (above 8% or 1.5x the national unemployment rate), subject to a request from the state to the Secretary• traveled outside of the individual’s community for an extended period for medical care for themselves or for their dependent |

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Where can I find more information?

You can sign up for newsletter updates from Virginia Medicaid here:

<https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/for-members/>