

Medicaid Eligibility for Non-Citizens

Frequently Asked Questions

What changes are happening to Medicaid eligibility for non-U.S. citizens?

New Federal law¹ has changed who can qualify for Medicaid. Beginning **October 1, 2026**, some non-citizens who are currently covered by Kentucky Medicaid may no longer be eligible and Medicaid eligibility for non-citizens will generally be limited to:

- Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) (otherwise known as Green Card holders) who have met the five-year waiting period if one applies;
- Cuban/Haitian Entrants;
- Citizens of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau, also called Compacts of Free Association (COFA) migrants;
- Lawfully residing children under 19; and
- Lawfully residing people who are pregnant or within their postpartum coverage period.

Kentucky will review Medicaid eligibility for affected members before these changes take effect.

How will I know if these changes affect me?

If Kentucky Medicaid needs more information to determine whether you remain eligible for Medicaid, you will receive a notice.

You can find notices:

- In the Message Center in your **kynect** account; and
- By mail, if you have chosen to receive paper notices.

Please read any notice you receive and respond as soon as possible.

If Kentucky Medicaid determines that you are no longer eligible for Medicaid, your notice will:

- Explain the reason for the decision;
- Provide information about other health coverage options; and
- Explain how to appeal if you disagree with the decision.

¹ Commonly known as H.R.1, Public Law 119-21, or the Working Families Tax Cut Act.

If your immigration status has recently changed and you believe you may qualify under one of the eligible categories listed above, update your information through:

- Logging into the [Self-Service Portal](#)
- Calling kynect at 1-855-459-6328 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET
- Calling the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) at 1-855-306-8959 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- [Search for a kynector near you](#) to get help from a kynector
- [Find a DCBS office location](#) to get help in person

Kentucky will review the updated information and determine whether you remain eligible for Medicaid.

When do these changes take effect?

The federal changes take effect on October 1, 2026. Kentucky must review eligibility for affected non-citizens before that date, even if a person's regular Medicaid renewal date occurs later.

How can I check the status of my immigration application?

If you have a pending immigration application, petition, or request with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), you can [check the status of your USCIS case online](#).

You will need your USCIS 13-character receipt number, which can be found on Form I-797 or Form I-797C.

Will losing my Medicaid affect my immigration status or citizenship application?

No. Your Medicaid eligibility and your immigration status are separate issues. Losing Medicaid coverage, responding to Medicaid notices, or updating your Medicaid information does not affect:

- Your immigration status;
- Your application for lawful permanent residence; or
- Your citizenship application.

If I lose my Medicaid, can I get health insurance another way?

You may have other health coverage options available.

You can:

- Shop for health insurance through [kynect Health Coverage](#)

- NOTE: The exceptions for lawfully residing pregnant persons and children do not apply to federal tax subsidies.
- You can also call 1-855-459-6328 to explore coverage this way;
- See whether you qualify for coverage through an employer;
- Join a family member's employer-sponsored health plan, if eligible; or
- Purchase coverage directly from a health insurance company.

What happens if I need emergency medical care and do not have health insurance?

Hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Rural Health Centers (RHCs), and other providers must provide emergency medical treatment for serious or life-threatening conditions regardless of a person's insurance coverage or immigration status. You can find a health center near you using the [Health Center Locator](#).

If you meet Medicaid financial requirements but cannot receive full Medicaid because of your immigration status, you may qualify for **Emergency Medicaid**. Emergency Medicaid may help pay for treatment of serious medical emergencies but does not cover routine medical care.

You can work with the doctor treating you at the hospital to submit the Emergency Medicaid application. They will be able to provide the necessary documentation that the treatment you received is covered under Emergency Medicaid.

What is the five-year waiting period?

Some LPRs must wait five years before they can receive Medicaid. This is often called the **five-year waiting period** or **five-year bar**. The five-year bar does not apply to certain immigrants who gain LPR status including:

- Refugees;
- Asylees;
- Victims of human trafficking;
- Certain Ukrainian or Afghan humanitarian entrants or parolees;
- People granted withholding of removal;
- Iraqi or Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders;
- Amerasian immigrants;
- Veterans, active-duty service members, and certain family members; and
- Certain American Indians born outside the United States.

These individuals generally do not have to complete a five-year waiting period before receiving Medicaid.

The federal changes taking effect October 1, 2026, do not change this requirement. People who were subject to the five-year waiting period before these changes will generally remain subject to it afterward.

Do COFA migrants have to wait five years for Medicaid?

No. Citizens of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau who are living in the United States under COFA are not subject to the five-year waiting period for Medicaid.

What about Amerasian immigrants or Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders who entered the United States as Lawful Permanent Residents?

These groups are generally exempt from the five-year waiting period and may qualify for Medicaid immediately if they meet all other eligibility requirements. The October 1, 2026, federal changes do not change this rule.

If I'm a refugee, asylee, or another exempt immigrant who later becomes an LPR, can I still get Medicaid?

Yes. If you become an LPR, you can get Medicaid as long as you continue to meet other Medicaid eligibility requirements. If you were exempt from the five-year waiting period before becoming an LPR, you will generally remain exempt after receiving your Green Card. The October 1, 2026, federal changes do not change this rule.

I am a Cuban/Haitian Entrant. My Temporary Protected Status (TPS) has ended. Can I still get Medicaid?

Possibly, yes. Eligibility as a Cuban/Haitian Entrant is separate from TPS. If you continue to meet the requirements for Cuban/Haitian Entrant status, you may remain eligible for Medicaid even if your TPS has ended.

If I lose my Medicaid because of my immigration status, can I apply again later?

Yes. You may reapply for Medicaid if your circumstances change. For example, you should apply again if:

- You gain an immigration status that qualifies for Medicaid;
- You become an LPR and complete any required five-year waiting period;
- You become pregnant; or
- Your child may qualify for Medicaid or another health coverage program.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions about your Medicaid coverage or need help updating your information:

- Logging into the [Self-Service Portal](#)
- Calling kynect at 1-855-459-6328 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET
- Calling the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) at 1-855-306-8959 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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If you are enrolled through a Managed Care Organization (MCO), you can also call the member services number on the back of your health insurance card.