

Message guide to communicate upcoming changes to Missouri Medicaid

How to explain work reporting requirements and changes to the renewal process

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About this guide

Federal changes from H.R.1, also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, will soon change how Missourians get and keep Medicaid coverage. Two of the biggest changes start on January 1, 2027, for members of the Adult Expansion Group:

- Work reporting requirements, also known as community engagement requirements, that require members and applicants to show they are working or doing other approved activities to get or keep Medicaid.
- Eligibility renewal process that will happen every 6 months instead of once yearly.

This guide was created to help enrollment assisters, community leaders, and organizations communicate effectively about upcoming changes to Missouri Medicaid. You can use this information when talking with people enrolled in Medicaid, people helping with enrollment and renewals, and other state and local partners.

This guide reflects the real concerns, questions, and needs of Missourians preparing for these changes. The recommendations come from [focus group research](#) (May/June 2026) with a diverse group of Missouri residents—including health care service providers, Medicaid members who will likely be affected by the requirements, members who are likely exempt from the requirements, and Spanish-speaking members.

This guide uses “members” to refer to people who have Medicaid, and “participants” to refer to people who participated in the focus groups.

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Key findings from focus groups

Awareness is low, and anxiety is high. Most focus group participants did not know about the upcoming changes to Medicaid. When they learned about the new work reporting requirements, they had immediate concerns. They worried about whether they could meet the requirements, whether they could lose coverage, and what counts as "work."

The term "community engagement" is unclear. When asked which phrases best described the new rules, most participants preferred "work requirements" or "new requirements." Many were familiar with "work requirements" from SNAP. The term "community engagement requirements" was unclear—some confused it with community service, and others thought it was too vague.

People want information about changes, even if the changes don't apply to them now. Participants recognized that life can change quickly. People can lose jobs, gain employment, experience health challenges, or take on caregiving responsibilities. Participants emphasized their situations could change, and they want to be ready if the new rules apply to them later.

It's important to explain the 2 major changes. Participants said people need clear information about both major changes to Medicaid:

- New work reporting requirements
- Renewals every 6 months

Messaging should explain what is new, what people need to do, and how often people will need to submit information.

People are eager for details. Participants expressed concern about the ability to gather and send in the documents they may need. They want clear guidance on how to prove work activity or show they are exempt. Specifically, they asked about:

- What counts as work or volunteering and how to prove it
- Who qualifies for exemptions and how to prove it
- How to document things like serious health problems, disabilities, or substance use disorders

Participants recognized that broad communications can't show examples of every possible circumstance, but they do expect the state website to have detailed information.

Everyone wants information early (and often). Even if the changes don't affect them immediately, participants said they will need time to prepare. That could mean tracking down paperwork or setting up medical appointments to support required documentation. They also expect repeated reminders when it's time to renew coverage and report information.

How to use this guide

These messages are shaped by research with Missourians and emerging guidance from the federal government. They're written in plain language so you can use them to help people understand what's changing and how to prepare. As the state releases more information, we'll update this guide.

Feel free to adapt these messages to match your communications style and audience. Use them individually or combine them to fit your needs.

Before you use these messages, remember these key details:

- Explain that Missouri Medicaid and MO HealthNet are the same thing.
- When you first mention work reporting requirements, also reference Missouri's term 'community engagement requirements' so people recognize the connection.
- If applicable, include your organization's contact information and describe how you can help—whether that's enrollment support, renewal assistance, language access, or other resources.

Top 10 messages

1. What's changing

The federal government is changing rules for Medicaid. In Missouri, Medicaid is also called MO HealthNet.

These changes do not affect everyone with Medicaid. They only affect people in the Adult Expansion Group. This is Missouri Medicaid's program for adults ages 19-64 whose household income is under the limit.

There are 2 big changes:

- You will need to show that you are working or doing other approved activities to get or keep Medicaid. This is called work reporting requirements or community engagement requirements.
- The state will now check your information every 6 months to make sure you still qualify for Medicaid. This is called a renewal. This review used to happen once a year.

These changes will start in 2027.

Children under 19, parents or caretakers enrolled in the MO HealthNet for Families program, seniors, and people with MO HealthNet for the Aged, Blind, or Disabled will not be affected.

2. New work reporting requirements

Starting in 2027, you will need to meet work reporting requirements to get or keep Medicaid. This means you will need to show that you are working or doing another approved activity.

You can meet this requirement in 1 of these ways:

- Your household earns at least \$580 in a month, OR
- You complete at least 80 hours of approved activities in a month, like work, volunteering, school, and/or a job training program, OR
- You are in school at least half-time

You only need to show that you met 1 of these requirements for 1 month since your previous renewal.

Example: *You have pay stubs that show you earned \$580 in one month. That's enough to meet the work requirements. You don't need to show your hours or do any other activities.*

3. Renewals will happen more often

Starting in 2027, your Medicaid renewal will happen every 6 months instead of once a year.

Example: *Your renewal is in March 2027. Your next renewal will be in September 2027.*

You will get a notice in the mail from Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS) when it's your turn to renew. This notice will tell you what to do. Respond as soon as you can. This can help you keep your coverage.

At each renewal, you will need to show that you have met the work requirements in the time since your previous renewal.

4. Many people are exempt from work requirements

Many people don't have to report work. Children under 19, seniors, parents or caretakers enrolled in the MO HealthNet for Families program, and people with MO HealthNet for the Aged, Blind, or Disabled are not affected by any of these changes.

Some adults ages 19-64 are exempt from (are not affected by) the new work reporting requirements.

You do not need to report work or other approved activities if you:

- Are pregnant or have postpartum coverage from Medicaid
- Are a parent or caregiver of a child under 14
- Are a parent or caregiver of a person who has a disability

- Are American Indian or Alaska Native
- Are a veteran with a disability rated as total (100%)
- Were in foster care at age 18 and are currently younger than 26
- Are in jail or prison now or were in jail or prison in the past 3 months
- Are getting help for a substance use disorder, such as a treatment or rehabilitation program, and you cannot work (unless you have been in stable recovery for 5 or more years)
- Are living with a substance use disorder that keeps you from working
- Have a serious health condition that keeps you from working
- Are blind or have a disability and you cannot work

You may need to show proof that you qualify for an exemption.

5. SNAP and TANF

If you get SNAP (food assistance) and are subject to SNAP work requirements, you do not need to report work for Medicaid. You also do not need to report work for Medicaid if you already meet work requirements for TANF (cash assistance). The state will check with these programs, so you will not have to provide the same information twice.

6. Lookback period

When your Medicaid renewal happens, the state will check if you have met the work requirements. In Missouri, you need to show that you met the work requirements for 1 month anytime since your previous renewal.

Example: *Your previous renewal was in April 2026. Your next renewal is in April 2027. The state needs proof that you met the work requirements for one month between April 1, 2026–March 30, 2027.*

If you apply for Medicaid on or after January 1, 2027, you will need to show proof that you met the work requirements in the month before you applied.

Example: *If you apply in March 2027, you need to show that you met the work requirements in February 2027.*

7. Keep your documents

Save anything that shows your work, school, volunteering, job training, or other approved activity. This could include pay stubs, school enrollment letters, job training program letters, signed volunteer hour sheets, and other documents.

The state may need to see these to confirm you meet the work reporting requirements.

8. Free help is available

You can get free help. A trained person right here in Missouri can help you understand what is changing with Medicaid (called MO HealthNet in Missouri) and what you need to do. Find free, local help at **CoverMissouri.org** or call **1-800-466-3213**.

9. Stay connected

Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS) needs your current address, phone number, and email.

If your contact information is wrong, you might miss important notices. You could lose your Medicaid coverage. Double check and update your address, phone number, or email if anything has changed.

To update your contact information, go to **myDSS.mo.gov** and click "Report a Change."

10. More changes for immigrants

The federal government is changing Medicaid rules for immigrants. Starting October 1, 2026, most immigrants who are lawfully present in the U.S. – including people with work visas, refugees, asylees, and others with legal status – will no longer have access to Medicaid.

Make sure your citizenship/immigration status and contact information are up to date with Missouri Department of Social Services. If your status has changed and you are now a lawful permanent resident (green card holder) you may be able to keep your coverage. Cuban/Haitian entrants and Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants will continue to have access to Medicaid.