

# Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and Stimulus Checks: What You Need to Know

Updated August 2021

Medicaid home and community based services (HCBS) assist a person in living at home or in a residence like an assisted living facility. Under recent COVID-19 legislation, most people receiving Medicaid HCBS have received multiple stimulus payments.

**This money belongs to you and will NOT affect your Medicaid eligibility!**

## Do Stimulus Payments Count as Income for Medicaid?

No. Under federal rules, a stimulus payment (also called an “economic impact” payment) is not counted as income. Therefore, receiving a stimulus payment will not affect your eligibility for Medicaid services. If you currently have to “spend down” some of your income in order to qualify for Medicaid, your monthly spend-down amount will remain the same.

In addition, the stimulus payments do not count as a Medicaid resource. This means that holding on to the payments cannot cause you to have “too much” savings.

### EXAMPLE

Mary receives \$1,100 per month in Social Security benefits deposited to her checking account. On April 30, 2021, the IRS deposited her third \$1,400 stimulus payment into her account.

Mary qualifies for home-based Medicaid services through an HCBS waiver in her state, and has a \$35 per month spend-down. After receiving the stimulus payment, her monthly spend-down amount remains \$35.

Mary also has \$1,000 in savings in a bank account. After receiving the third stimulus payment, her savings will increase to \$2,400. Her state has a \$2,000 resource limit for Medicaid. She can hold on to her stimulus payment and retain her Medicaid eligibility, but once she spends down her savings to under \$2,000, she must stay under that resource limit.

## Are There Restrictions on How I Can Spend the Stimulus Money?

In general, you can spend the stimulus money as you wish. This is also true for people who live in a residential setting such as an assisted living facility; the money belongs to you, not the facility.

## Do I Need to File a Tax Return to Receive a Check?

Most people will not need to do anything to get their stimulus payments. Action is only required if you do NOT receive Social Security (including retirement, survivors, disability, and SSI), Veterans Administration, or Railroad Retirement benefits AND did not file a tax return for 2018, 2019, or 2020.

## What if I don't receive federal benefits and didn't file a tax return?

If you are not required to file a 2020 tax return, didn't file a return and don't plan to, you can use the new IRS [Non-Filer Sign-Up](#) tool to provide your information to the IRS to receive any of the three stimulus payments.

If you are required to file a 2020 tax return and have not filed yet, you can use the [IRS Free File](#) program or contact your [local VITA program](#) for assistance.

## Where Can I Find More Information About the Stimulus Check?

- IRS:
  - » [Q&A About First EIP](#)
  - » [Q&A About Second EIP](#)
  - » [Q&A About 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit](#)
  - » [Q&A About Third EIP](#)

## Who Else Can I Contact?

People who receive Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services, their family, or caregivers can contact the [Elder Care Locator](#), 1-800-677-1116 for more information. They can ask for a referral to legal aid offices or to their state's Protection and Advocacy System (often known as Disability Rights), or Center for Independent Living.

People who live in a residential setting, such as an assisted living facility, personal care home or similar can contact the [Long-Term Care Ombudsman](#) if they have questions or issues, or the Elder Care Locator for information or a referral to help get a problem resolved. You can also find more information here: [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) for State Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\) Agencies](#).

**Please contact [ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov) for free case consultation assistance, available for professionals assisting older adults. Sign up for our email list and access more resources at [NCLER.acl.gov](https://www.ncler.acl.gov).**