

Income Guidelines for Getting Extra Financial Assistance to Pay for Health Care Costs

The marketplace divides plans into four categories based on how much health care each plan pays for. These categories are bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. Bronze plans pay for the least of your health care, so you have to pay more money during the year for services like doctor visits (but you pay the least in monthly fees, also called premiums). Silver plans pay a little more of your health care costs and have slightly higher premiums compared to bronze plans. Gold plans pay for even more of your health care costs, and platinum plans pay the most (but you pay the most in monthly premiums).

If you have a low income, you may be able to get extra financial assistance to help pay for health care services. To get this extra assistance, you must buy a special, low-cost plan in the silver category of your state's marketplace. These special silver plans charge the same premiums as regular silver plans, but they pay for more of your health care than a regular silver plan would.

Everyone who can get this extra financial assistance can buy a special silver plan that lowers the maximum amount they pay for health care in a year (their "out-of-pocket limit"). People with low enough incomes can buy special silver plans that also have smaller copayments, co-insurance, and deductibles that are similar to what they would have in gold or platinum plans. (These costs are also called "out-of-pocket costs.")

The table on page 3 shows how much extra financial assistance you could get if you buy a special, low-cost silver plan. The table shows how much lower your out-of-pocket limit would be. It also shows which category of plan your out-of-pocket costs (like copayments and co-insurance) would be similar to. (The table includes both individual and family coverage for families of two or more. This is because some family members might be able to get a different kind of health insurance, like a plan from their job or Medicaid. So, a man with a wife and one child might buy a family plan, but he might instead buy an individual plan just for himself if his wife and child can get other insurance.)

MORE INFORMATION

Learn more about marketplace plans.

Fact sheet: "Understanding the Differences between Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Plans"

MORE INFORMATION

Learn more about extra financial assistance with health care costs.

Fact sheet: "Getting Extra Financial Assistance to Pay for Health Care Costs"

Examples

1. A single man with an income of \$21,000 buys a special silver plan for himself. His out-of-pocket limit is \$2,250. His plan also has lower out-of-pocket costs, so he gets the same value as he would have with a gold plan.
2. A single mom has two kids, makes \$28,000, and lives in a state where her children can get Medicaid health coverage. She buys a special silver plan just for herself (an individual plan). Since she has three people in her family, she is able to get the most financial assistance. With her special silver plan, she has an out-of-pocket limit of \$2,250, and she has smaller copayments and deductibles, so she gets the same value as she would have with a platinum plan.
3. A single mom has two kids, makes \$28,000, and lives in a state where her children *cannot* get Medicaid coverage, so she buys a special silver plan for herself and her children. The out-of-pocket limit for her family is \$4,500. As in example 2, she also has smaller copayments and deductibles, so she gets the same value as she would have with a platinum plan.

Table 1. Guidelines for Extra Financial Assistance

Annual Household Income in 2015	Limits on Out-of-Pocket Costs for Individual/Family Plans*	You Will Get the Same Value as This Category of Plan**
Individual	Individual Plan	
\$11,770-\$17,665	\$2,250	Platinum
\$17,655-\$23,540	\$2,250	Gold
\$23,540-\$29,425	\$5,200	Silver (regular)
Family of 2	Individual Plan/Family Plan	
\$15,930-\$23,895	\$2,250/\$4,500	Platinum
\$23,895-\$31,860	\$2,250/\$4,500	Gold
\$31,860-\$39,825	\$5,450/\$10,900	Silver (regular)
Family of 3	Individual Plan/Family Plan	
\$20,090-\$30,135	\$2,250/\$4,500	Platinum
\$30,135-\$40,180	\$2,250/\$4,500	Gold
\$40,810-\$50,225	\$5,450/\$10,900	Silver (regular)
Family of 4	Individual Plan/Family Plan	
\$24,250-\$36,375	\$2,250/\$4,500	Platinum
\$36,375-\$48,500	\$2,250/\$4,500	Gold
\$48,500-\$60,625	\$5,450/\$10,900	Silver (regular)

*These out-of-pocket limits are lower than they would be for a regular silver plan (\$6,850 for an individual or \$13,700 for a family).

**Your lower out-of-pocket costs will be the same as they would be if you bought the type of plan listed.

The complete *What You Need to Know about Health Insurance* series:

Applying for Health Insurance

Answering Questions about Your Family When Applying for Health Insurance

Answering Questions about Your Family's Income When Applying for Health Insurance

Applying for a Marketplace Plan if You Can Get Health Insurance through Your Job

What to Do if You Are Uninsured after February 15, 2015

Getting Financial Assistance

Getting Financial Assistance to Pay for Health Insurance

Deciding How Much Financial Assistance to Use to Lower Your Monthly Premiums

Will I Be Able to Get Financial Help to Pay for Health Insurance?

How Getting Financial Assistance to Pay for Health Insurance Affects Your Taxes

Getting Extra Financial Assistance to Help Pay Health Care Costs

Choosing a Health Plan

Choosing the Health Plan that's Right for You

Choosing a Health Plan You Can Afford

Understanding the Differences between Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Plans

Understanding Catastrophic Health Insurance

Buying Children's Dental Coverage through the Marketplace

Keeping and Using Health Insurance

How to Use Your Health Insurance

How to Keep Your Marketplace Health Insurance

What to Do after You Buy Health Insurance in the Marketplace

Understanding the Requirement to Have Health Insurance

Understanding the Requirement to Have Health Insurance

Understanding Minimum Essential Coverage

Reference Charts and Graphics

Income Guidelines for Getting and Using Financial Assistance for Health Insurance

Income Guidelines for Getting Extra Financial Assistance to Pay for Health Care Costs

Types of Exemptions from the Requirement to Have Health Insurance

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