

Safeguard Access Grants

Ends on September 4, 2020

Safeguard Access Grants

\$700,000 in COVID Relief Funds have been made available for eligible providers to support on-site Certified Application Counselors to help Montanans find and sign-up for comprehensive health coverage. Helping Montanans find and enroll in affordable, comprehensive health insurance coverage is critical in light of the COVID-19 public health emergency so individuals do not avoid seeking testing or medical care for fear of cost. By helping rural and safety net providers sign up rural and under-served Montanans, we're making sure Montanans who need affordable health care coverage can get it and help keep themselves and their families safe during this pandemic.

Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

Award Amounts: Grants of \$30,000 to eligible providers to support on-site Certified Application Counselors to help Montanans find and sign-up for comprehensive health coverage.

Eligible Providers include:

- Hospital
- Community Health Center
- Urban Indian clinic
- Tribe
- Any provider who currently employs a certified application counselor.

Applicants must:

- Have or commit to having a Certified Application Counselor on staff and trained prior to the 2021 Open Enrollment Period.
- Commit to using the funds to support the Certified Application Counselor position and conduct outreach and enrollment through December 2020.

- Commit to conducting outreach and enrollment efforts in accordance with the requirements of the Affordable Care Act and to participating in training and coordination work conducted by Cover Montana.

* Funds must be expended by December 31, 2020

Funding can be used for:

- Personnel costs including [Certified Application Counselor Training](#) (free online but requires about 30 hours to complete)
- Outreach and consumer assistance

Ineligible expenses include: property taxes and capital improvement projects that are not necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

What support is available to provider organizations?

Cover Montana, a project of the Montana Primary Care Association that provides training and support to enrollment assisters across the state has been contracted to support grantees. Cover Montana will assist grantees through the process of becoming a Certified Application Counselor Designated Organization and onboarding of a new CAC, if applicable, and will provide training and technical assistance to Certified Application Counselors. This support will include:

- Regular Zoom training about relevant outreach and enrollment topics such as: outreach 101, building referral networks from other direct service providers, in-reach to your current uninsured patients, changes to 2021 plans, and more.
- Regular email newsletters with updates leading up to and throughout Open Enrollment.
- One-on-one coaching for new enrollment assisters.
- One-on-one support for outreach and enrollment questions and challenges.
- Making local connections between enrollment assisters to help support and facilitate local coordination.

What does an organization need to do to qualify to hire a Certified Application Counselor? What are the requirements?

In order to have a Certified Application Counselor (CAC), an organization must first apply to become a Certified Application Counselor Designated Organization (CDO) with CMS. Information is available from CMS here:

<https://marketplace.cms.gov/certified-application-counselor-designated-organization-cdo-program-information>

For organizations that are not currently a CDO, the deadline to apply to become a CDO is August 31, 2020.

For organizations that are currently a CDO, CMS is currently in the biennial process of recertifying them this summer.

What are the training requirements to become a Certified Application Counselor?

CMS requires that individuals successfully complete a 30-hour Certified Application Counselor training from CMS to become federally certified. This must be completed annually by all CACs.

Training for the 2020 Open Enrollment period, for 2021 plans, will open in “late summer,” according to CMS. Enrollment assisters who want to provide enrollment assistance in November will need to complete the new training. The current CAC training will be removed at the end of August and the new training is expected to be available shortly after.

The State of Montana has additional training requirements overseen by the Montana Commissioner of Securities and Insurance (<https://csimt.gov/insurance/marketplace-certification/>)

Who should I contact with questions?

For questions about what is involved with becoming or being a Certified Application Counselor Designated Organization, how to hire and train a Certified Application Counselor, or the support available to organizations, please contact Olivia Riutta at Cover Montana, oriutta@mtpca.org or 406-880-3374.

For questions about eligibility for the grant or how to complete the application, please contact DPHHS at 1.888.333.0461.

If you are experiencing technical difficulties with the application, please contact support@submittable.com.

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Please note that it will not be possible to edit your application once it's submitted; to make changes you'll need to withdraw your application and resubmit. We encourage you to take your time and fill out the application completely and accurately and review before submitting.

Reporting Requirements: All recipients will be required to complete a final report that includes a detailed financial expenditure report and information on how the grant assisted them in the format provided by the State of Montana.

Applicants will be required to sign a Certification Statement.

As a recipient of a public grant, the amount of the grant received and awardee name will be public information.

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