DHS Explains Treatment of Minnesota’s Public Program Frontline Worker Payments

TOPIC
Treatment of Minnesota Frontline Worker Payments for public programs.

PURPOSE
This bulletin provides information about how to treat Frontline Worker payments when determining eligibility for public programs.

CONTACT
Counties and Tribal Nations should submit:
- Health Care policy questions via HealthQuest.
- Cash and food policy questions to PolicyQuest.

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TERMINOLOGY NOTICE
The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.
I. Background

To thank those Minnesotans who worked on the frontlines during the COVID-19 emergency, Governor Tim Walz signed Frontline Worker Payments into law on April 29, 2022. This law provides one-time payments to frontline workers, whose work during the state peacetime emergency put them at risk of getting COVID-19. Complete information about the eligibility criteria and the application is available on the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry’s Frontline Worker Pay website at frontlinepay.mn.gov.

After all the applications received are processed, and the appeals period has ended, money dedicated to Frontline Worker Pay will be evenly distributed among all eligible frontline workers. The payments will not exceed $1,500. Payments are expected to occur in early fall 2022.

This bulletin describes how to treat Frontline Worker Pay when determining eligibility for public programs.

II. Frontline Worker Pay and Eligibility for Public Programs

A. Minnesota Health Care Programs

1. MA Applicants and Enrollees Not Subject to the MAGI Methodology

The following applies to Medical Assistance (MA) eligibility determinations for people who are not subject to the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) methodology, including:

- Medical Assistance for People Age 65 or Older, Blind or Disabled (MA-ABD)
- Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD)
- Medicare Savings Programs: Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries, Service Limited Medicare Beneficiaries, Qualified Individuals and Qualified Working Disabled
- Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) for people who are age 65 or older, are blind or who have a disability
- Medical Assistance for Families with Children and Adults (MA-FCA) with a spenddown

For these populations and programs, do not count Frontline Worker Pay as income. In addition, do not count Frontline Worker Pay as an asset if retained after the month of receipt. The payment does not have to be held in a separate account to be excluded from assets.

2. MA and MinnesotaCare Applicants and Enrollees Subject to the MAGI Methodology

The following applies to applicants and enrollees whose eligibility for health care programs is determined using the MAGI methodology, including:

- Medical Assistance for Families with Children and Adults (MA-FCA)
- Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) for people with a Families with Children and Adults basis of eligibility
• The Minnesota Family Planning Program (MFPP)
• MinnesotaCare

The MAGI methodology is based on the Internal Revenue Code and Frontline Worker Pay is subject to federal income tax. Therefore, for individuals who apply for these programs on or after the Frontline Worker Payments are made, **count** Frontline Worker Pay as income in the month received. For MinnesotaCare, Frontline Worker Pay received in 2022 is only included in a person’s 2022 projected annual income.

For the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency, coverage must be maintained with limited exceptions, for MA, MinnesotaCare and MFPP enrollees. Therefore, for people who are currently enrolled in these programs, this payment will have no effect on their eligibility.

**B. Minnesota Cash, Food and Child Care Assistance Programs**

For participants in the following programs, **do not count** Minnesota Frontline Worker Pay Program as income or assets:

• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
• Child Care Assistance Program
• Minnesota Family Investment Program
• Diversionary Work Program
• Refugee Cash Assistance
• General Assistance
• Minnesota Supplemental Aid
• Housing Support

**III. Action Required**

County, tribal and DHS workers must follow the policies outlined in this bulletin and instructions issued in advance of, and following, the publication of this bulletin.

**IV. Legal Authority**

*Laws of Minnesota, 2022, chapter 50, article 2, section 2, subdivision 8*
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-297-3862 or toll free at 800-657-3672, or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency’s ADA coordinator.