

## How to Enroll in Medicare During the Coronavirus Public Health Emergency



During the coronavirus public health emergency, local Social Security offices are closed to public, but many services are available online and over the phone. If you need help from Social Security:

- See if you can fulfill your request online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices)
- Call the national Social Security Administration helpline, at 800-772-1213

Social Security processes Medicare enrollment applications. Many people can use the online application to apply for Medicare Part A and Part B for the first time. However, not all Medicare applications can be done online.

### **If you cannot enroll in Medicare online, here is what you should do:**

- 1. Contact your local Social Security office.** Although local offices are closed to the public, they should still be able to receive mail and process enrollment paperwork. Call your local office to learn about how to submit your enrollment paperwork. Contact information for local offices can be found by using the online field office locator: [secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp](http://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp). If you need more assistance, ask to speak with a supervisor. Take down the name of any representative you speak to and the date and time of the conversation.
- 2. Gather necessary paperwork.** To enroll in Part B, first you should complete form CMS 40B, the application for Medicare enrollment. It is available online at [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov) or from your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (contact information on the next page).

If you recently lost your job and job-based insurance, you will also submit:

- **Form [CMS L564](#), available at [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov).** An employer usually fills out Section B of the form, but at this time, you are allowed to fill out Section B.
  - **Proof of employment or health insurance coverage.** Examples of this proof include:
    - Income tax returns that show health insurance premiums paid
    - W-2s reflecting pre-tax medical contributions
    - Pay stubs that show health insurance premiums were deducted;
    - Health insurance cards that show the date the policy began
    - Explanations of benefits paid by the job-based insurance
    - Statements or receipts that show you paid health insurance premiums
- 3. Send paperwork to your local office by certified mail.** When you use certified mail, you get a receipt and confirmation that your mail was delivered, which can be helpful in case there are any problems with your enrollment. If you cannot get

to the post office, you can access Priority Mail from home, which provides tracking information but no confirmation receipt.

If you experience any issues with your local Social Security office, such as being told your enrollment cannot be processed, contact your local federal elected official. Elected officials may be able to help you with your problem.

## **If you need more time to enroll in Medicare, you may be able to use equitable relief.**

Medicare has made temporary changes to a process called “equitable relief” so that you can request more time to enroll in Medicare Part B (or premium Part A).

### **You can use equitable relief for this reason if:**

- 1. You had** an Initial Enrollment Period (IEP), General Enrollment Period (GEP), or Part B Special Enrollment Period (SEP) between March 17, 2020 and June 17, 2020
  - **IEP:** Three months before, the month of, and three months after your 65th birthday month
  - **GEP:** January 1-March 31 each year if you missed your IEP and do not qualify for a Part B Special Enrollment Period (see next bullet)
  - **Part B SEP:** Time during which you are covered by insurance based on your, your spouse’s, or a family member’s current work, and up to eight months after you loses coverage because employment or insurance ends
- 2. And you did not** enroll in Medicare Part B (or premium Part A) or decline Part B during that enrollment period

To request equitable relief, submit your enrollment paperwork to Social Security by following the steps above. In the remarks section of [form CMS 40B](#) (the application for Medicare enrollment), then write that you are requesting equitable relief.

**Contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) if you need help enrolling in Medicare.**

<b>Local SHIP contact information</b>
<b>SHIP toll-free: 1-800-562-6900</b>
<b>SHIP website: <a href="http://www.insurance.wa.gov/shiba">www.insurance.wa.gov/shiba</a></b>
<b>Local SHIBA office: 509-458-2509</b>
<b>To find a SHIP in another state: Call 877-839-2675 or visit <a href="http://www.shiptacenter.org">www.shiptacenter.org</a></b>