



1-800-443-9354  
www.ncshiip.com  
N.C. Department of Insurance  
Wayne Goodwin, Commissioner

## FACT SHEET: Extra Help, the Medicare Low-Income Subsidy (LIS)

**The Extra Help Program – or the Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) – helps qualified Medicare recipients pay for their Medicare prescription drug program costs, such as premiums, deductibles and coinsurance.**

It's important to consider that any level of assistance provides:

- Elimination of a Part D coverage gap (donut hole)
- The opportunity to change Prescription Drug Plans at any time
- A reduced Part D deductible
- A reduced Part D copay
- A reduced cost of the drugs
- Elimination of a Late Enrollment Penalty if, when you apply for LIS, you haven't already signed up for a Part D plan

People who qualify for **full** Extra Help/LIS assistance will also receive these benefits:

- No Part D premium, based on plan selection
- No Part D deductible
- The lowest Part D copays, ranging from \$2.55 up to \$6.35

Eligibility guidelines for LIS are based on income and assets and change from year to year. The 2014 eligibility guidelines for this type of assistance are:

**Limits for an individual**  
Income – \$1,458.75 / month  
Assets – \$13,440

**Limits for a married couple**  
Income – \$1,966.25 / month  
Assets – \$26,860

Assets that are NOT counted in determining eligibility are your home, car and burial assets of up to \$1,500 in value per person.

### How to apply:

Call SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program, on weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at 1-800-443-9354 for assistance completing the application. Applications are processed and eligibility is determined by the Social Security Administration. SSA will notify you if you qualify for assistance and, if you do, at what level.



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is the Extra Help/Low-Income (LIS) Subsidy Program?**

The Extra Help/LIS Program helps beneficiaries pay for Medicare Part D prescription drug costs, including Part D premiums, deductibles, coverage gaps and copays.

### **Who can apply for the Extra Help/LIS Program?**

Any person who is enrolled in Medicare, either because of age or disability, and living with limited income and assets can apply for Extra Help/LIS.

### **If I qualify, what kind of benefits will I get with the Extra Help/LIS program?**

Depending on your income and asset levels and the Part D plan you choose, you may have either a reduced premium or no premium; your deductible may be covered or lowered; and your prescription copayments will be very small – from \$2.55 for a generic drug and up to \$6.35 for a brand-name drug. But perhaps the two biggest benefits to any amount of Extra Help/LIS assistance will be the elimination of a Part D coverage gap, also known as the “donut hole,” and the opportunity to change Prescription Drug Plans at any time.

### **What kind of information do I have to share to apply for Extra Help/LIS assistance?**

The Social Security Administration will need to have a complete picture of your total annual income and assets. This means you will need to list a wide variety of resources, including your Social Security benefit amount, any VA benefit amounts, Railroad Retirement benefit amounts, other pension or annuity amounts, alimony, net rental income or workers’ compensation awards. You’ll also need to report things like how much cash you have on hand, as well as your holdings in your bank accounts, certificates of deposit, independent retirement accounts (IRAs), stocks, bonds and trust funds. If you are married and live with your spouse, include financial information for both people.

### **I own a home. Will that count as an asset or resource?**

No. Your primary home and property, furniture, personal items, one licensed vehicle and some burial assets (up to \$1,500 per person) will not count as resources. Some of the assets that are taken into consideration during the application process include additional properties, such as rental properties, vacation homes or other properties that are not your primary residence.

### **How do I apply for the Extra Help/LIS Program?**

There are a couple of ways you can apply. You can work with SHIIP to get assistance completing an online application, or you can call the Social Security Administration (SSA) at 1-800-772-1213 to have a paper application sent to you. If you already receive some assistance with your medical expenses through a Medicare Savings Program (MSP), then you don’t need to apply for Extra Help/LIS – you will be automatically enrolled. Also, remember that when you complete an application for Extra Help/LIS, you can elect to start your application process for an MSP.

### **How will I know if I am approved for the Extra Help/LIS Program?**

SSA processes the applications, and then you will be notified by mail whether you qualify for assistance and, if you do, at what level.

### **How do I contact SHIIP for more information or help with applications?**

Call SHIIP’s toll-free call center in Raleigh at 1-800-443-9354, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., to talk to a specialist who can answer your Medicare-related questions. SHIIP also has trained volunteer counselors who can provide free one-on-one assistance in all 100 counties in North Carolina. Learn more at [www.ncshiiip.com](http://www.ncshiiip.com).