

Medicaid for Incarcerated Individuals Questions and Answers

What is a public institution?

A public institution is any facility where individuals are involuntarily held under law enforcement authority, such as juvenile detention centers, adult jails and lockups, and correctional institutions.

Can I receive Medicaid services if I am an inmate of a public institution?

Per federal law, Medicaid coverage is generally suspended for inmates of public institutions. Upon release, individuals who remain eligible for Medicaid will typically regain full coverage of Medicaid benefits.

Medicaid-enrolled individuals admitted to a medical institution for an inpatient stay over 24 hours may meet an exception to the suspension of coverage, during the inpatient stay.

[Section 5121](#) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) introduces a new exception for incarcerated youth and young adults, requiring Medicaid coverage for specific services for certain youth and young adults during the 30 days before the individual is released from a public institution. For more information on available pre-release services, see *Available Services for Incarcerated Youth and Young Adults* below.

Can I apply for Medicaid if I am an inmate of a public institution?

Although an individual will generally not be eligible for full Medicaid coverage while they are an inmate of a public institution, they can complete an application prior to their release. If the application is processed and the individual is Medicaid-eligible, their Medicaid coverage becomes effective on the day of their release (or during the 30 days prior to release for certain eligible individuals).

Applications can be completed in one of the following ways:

- Online at iserve.nebraska.gov
- By calling one of the following phone numbers:
 - (855) 632-7633
 - In Lincoln: (402) 473-7000
 - In Omaha: (402) 595-1178
 - By paper application

I was released from a public institution. How do I regain my suspended Medicaid coverage?

Submit a change report in one of the following ways:

- Online at iserve.nebraska.gov
- By calling one of the following phone numbers:
 - (855) 632-7633
 - In Lincoln: (402) 473-7000
 - In Omaha: (402) 595-1178
 - By paper application

Enrollment Assistance for Incarcerated Individuals

What enrollment assistance is available?

[Nebraska Revised Statute 47-706](#) requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to offer enrollment assistance to inmates in select **covered facilities**.

For individuals who are inmates of a covered facility and have **at least** 60 days prior notice of their anticipated release date:

- DHHS provides Medicaid enrollment assistance onsite, via telephone, or via live video call at least 60 days before the individual's release from the facility, unless the individual elects in writing not to apply or the inmate is already enrolled in Medicaid with suspended coverage.
- DHHS is required to process each individual's Medicaid application prior to their release so that their Medicaid coverage becomes effective on the day of their release.

For individuals who are inmates of a covered facility and have **less than** 60 days prior notice of their anticipated release date:

- DHHS provides Medicaid enrollment assistance onsite, via telephone, or via live video call as soon as possible before the individual's release from the facility, unless the individual elects in writing not to apply or the inmate is already enrolled in Medicaid with suspended coverage.
- DHHS is required to process each individual's Medicaid application prior to their release so that their Medicaid coverage becomes effective on the day of their release or as soon as possible after their release.

Am I eligible for enrollment assistance?

DHHS provides Medicaid application assistance for incarcerated individuals throughout Lancaster, Douglas, and Sarpy Counties who have a pending release from one of the **covered facilities** listed below.

County Facilities:

- Douglas County Youth Center
- Douglas County Department of Corrections-Jail
- Douglas County Department of Corrections-Criminal Justice Center
- Lancaster Youth Services Center
- Lancaster Department of Corrections

- Sarpy Juvenile Justice Center
- Sarpy Department of Corrections

State Facilities:

- DCS Community Corrections Center – Omaha
- DCS Omaha Correctional Center
- DCS Nebraska Correctional Center for Women – York
- DCS Tecumseh State Correctional Institution
- DCS Work Ethic Camp – McCook
- DCS Reception and Treatment Center – Lincoln
- DCS Nebraska State Penitentiary – Lincoln
- DCS Community Corrections Center – Lincoln
- DCS Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility – Omaha

Available Services for Incarcerated Youth and Young Adults

What services are available to incarcerated youth and young adults who are transitioning out of public institutions?

Beginning October 19, 2025, Nebraska Medicaid offers a limited set of health services to qualifying youth and young adults who are transitioning out of public institutions. These services are offered during the 30 days prior to and following the individual's release from the public institution.

Services Covered During the 30-Day Pre-Release Period:

- Targeted Case Management (TCM): Includes comprehensive needs assessments, creation of individualized care plans, coordination of services, and follow-up.
- Screening and Diagnostic Services: Services for those under 21 follow the guidelines set by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and include medical, behavioral, dental, and vision screenings. Immunizations must follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.
- Immunizations: Administered based on the CDC's recommended schedule.
- Diagnostic Testing: Provided when screenings indicate a medical necessity for further evaluation.

Services Covered During the 30-Day Post-Release Period:

- Targeted Case Management (TCM): Includes comprehensive needs assessments, creation of individualized care plans, coordination of services, and follow-up.
- On the day of their release from a public institution, individuals generally regain full Medicaid coverage as long as they remain Medicaid-eligible. This full Medicaid coverage is available during and after the 30-day post-release period.

Am I eligible for these services?

To receive pre-release services, individuals must:

- Be under 21 years old and enrolled in any Medicaid group, **or** be between 18–26 years old and part of the Former Foster Care (FFC) group, **and**
- Be incarcerated in a public institution, adjudicated, and within 30 days of community release.



General information on Medicaid eligibility is available at: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-Eligibility.aspx>.

How can I receive these services?

Individuals who were enrolled in Medicaid before becoming incarcerated and are still Medicaid-eligible will typically regain full Medicaid coverage upon release without needing to reapply. An individual's managed care organization will coordinate their pre-release and post-release services during the 30 days prior to and after release.

Individuals who were **not** enrolled in Medicaid before becoming incarcerated and wish to apply may do so while they are residing in a public facility. DHHS will review the application promptly to ensure that eligible individuals can receive pre- and post-release services when possible.