

Health Coverage for Small Businesses

Maryland's Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) helps small businesses and nonprofit organizations provide health and dental insurance coverage to their employees. Businesses can sign up at any time of the year.

SHOP also is the only place where small businesses may qualify for a federal tax credit to lower the cost of coverage for their employees.

Benefits for your growing business:

- Tax credits to help pay your share of employee premium costs, if you qualify
- Large-group style employee benefits for your small business
- Flexible enrollment options to offer a single health plan option or a choice of options
- You decide how much to contribute toward the cost of employee coverage
- Consolidated billing and simplified plan administration are available

Who is eligible for SHOP?

To be eligible to participate in SHOP, you must:

- Have a principal business address within Maryland
- Have at least one employee on payroll (not including a business owner, owner's spouse or family members)
- Employ 50 or fewer full-time-equivalent employees (FTEs)
- Offer SHOP coverage to all FTEs

Health Care Tax Credit

The Small Business Health Care Tax Credit covers up to 50 percent of health insurance premiums paid by eligible small businesses and up to 35 percent paid by eligible nonprofits or other tax-exempt organizations. Employers must contribute at least 50 percent toward employee-only premiums to qualify.

The tax credit is available for two consecutive tax years. To be eligible for the tax credit, the coverage purchased must be a SHOP-eligible plan offered by Maryland's SHOP marketplace.

Use the IRS Small Business Health Care Tax Credit Estimator to assess what your credit may be. For more information, visit www.irs.gov.



When can I sign up for coverage through SHOP?

You can sign up through SHOP any time of the year. Your group's effective coverage date will depend on how quickly you move through the process of selecting the plans that you make available to employees, how long the employees have to select their coverage and how quickly you make your first payment to your selected insurance company.

Who can help my small business enroll?

Small businesses can use a SHOP-authorized insurance broker or contact the SHOP Program manager directly. All Maryland Health Connection authorized brokers are trained and credentialed. They are knowledgeable of the enrollment process and will not ask for compensation from your small business for their assistance.

Get started today

To enroll your business or nonprofit organization through Maryland's SHOP any time of the year, follow these steps:

1.

Complete the SHOP application online at **MarylandHealthConnection.gov/Small-Business/Shop-Eligibility**.

You can expect a response from Maryland Health Connection regarding your business' eligibility within 10 business days.

2.

Select a SHOP-authorized broker to assist with your SHOP plan selection and enrollment. These licensed professionals provide free help choosing a plan that works for your business.

3.

Browse SHOP health plans and insurance companies. Work with your authorized broker to select and complete enrollment in a SHOP plan.