

# Health and Employment Counseling (HEC) Consumer Guide

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# Part 1: Overview of HEC

## What is Health and Employment Counseling (HEC)?

Health and Employment Counseling is a nine-month pre-employment program for people with disabilities who are not employed but are looking for work as a way to meet the work requirement for the Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP).

MAPP allows people with disabilities who are employed or enrolled in HEC to get Medicaid coverage by paying a monthly premium based on income. Individuals with low income may not have to pay a premium.

For more information about MAPP, see the fact sheet at [dhs.wi.gov/library/P-10071.htm](https://dhs.wi.gov/library/P-10071.htm).

## When should I apply for the Medicaid Purchase Plan?

Apply for MAPP before you start the HEC process. Contact your local agency to see whether you meet the eligibility requirements for MAPP.

Also, to participate in HEC and MAPP, you must be determined eligible for Medicaid based on disability. If you do not have a disability determination, your local agency can help start your application.

Visit [dhs.wi.gov/im-agency](https://dhs.wi.gov/im-agency) to find a local agency near you.

## What is the definition of working?

The definition of working is paid employment, self-employment, employment at a sheltered workshop, or employment in exchange for goods or services. No minimum number of hours is required.

Some examples of types of work are:

- A job where you get wages from an employer.
- Self-employment with a business that gives you income once a month.
- In-kind work where you provide a service for someone at least once a month in return for something of value, such as food, goods or services. Examples: doing yardwork in exchange for a meal, walking your friend's dog in exchange for transportation to appointments, or taking care of a family member in exchange for groceries.

If you are not doing one of these employment activities, you may instead meet the MAPP work requirement by enrolling in HEC. Contact your agency for more information about MAPP work requirements.

## How do I enroll in HEC?

To enroll in HEC, you will complete an HEC application, which is a self-assessment to help you find work. This is also called your employment plan.

You may write the employment plan on your own or with help from someone else, such as a caseworker, benefits specialist, or vocational counselor. The employment plan includes sections on benefits counseling, employment barriers, and community resources.

The plan should include your employment goals and how you plan to achieve them within a nine-month timeframe.

After completing your plan, submit it to the HEC program coordinator for final approval.

If your application is approved, you will receive a letter confirming your enrollment in the program. The HEC program coordinator will also share the approval with your local agency to let them know that you are meeting the work requirement by enrolling in HEC.

You are responsible for using the resources you identified in your employment plan to achieve your employment goals. **At the time your HEC enrollment ends, you must meet the work requirement to continue to receive Medicaid coverage through the MAPP.**

## Part 2: Completing the Employment Plan

The employment plan helps you organize your employment goals and identify things that may stand in your way.

If you need a blank copy of the employment plan, go to [dhs.wisconsin.gov/employment-skills/hec.htm](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/employment-skills/hec.htm). You can also contact your local agency or call 866-278-6440 to have one mailed to you.

There are eight sections to the employment plan. Fill out each section as completely as you can, and then send the completed plan to the HEC program coordinator for approval.

### Employment Planning

To start your employment plan, think about your goals:

- What kind of job do you want?
- What skills do you have?
- What skills do you need to be successful at the job you identified?
- What are the qualifications for the job?
- Would you qualify for this job in nine months or less?

You may also want to think about long-term career goals.

Remember, to continue in MAPP, you need to be working within nine months of being approved for HEC.

### Skills and Personality

Skills are things you do well. Your personality includes the qualities that describe you.

List your positive qualities and what you do well—those things that you think will help you succeed at your chosen job.

### Developing Skills

Think of the skills you already have but may want to improve. Write down any skills you need to work on to help you become a stronger job applicant.

## Employment Barriers

What's standing in the way of getting a job that's right for you? Is your work history limited? Do you have reliable transportation? Do you need assistive technology? Are you lacking necessary skills? These are example of employment barriers.

Write down your employment barriers. Then, think about the steps you can take to overcome them.

## Barriers Team

A barriers team are people who can help you move past whatever is holding you back.

List the names of the people on your barriers team, their telephone numbers, and what role they will take in helping you succeed. This section is to help you keep track of who is on your barriers team. The HEC program will not contact anyone you list in this section.

## Networking With Community Resources

Use this section of the employment plan to write down the resources you are working with or plan to contact to pursue your employment goals. Write down a name, agency name, and phone number for all resource contacts.

This section is to help you keep track of your resources and their contact information. The HEC program will not contact any of the resources you list in this section.

## Creating a Plan

Your plan of action will help you find and keep a job. In this section, you will write down the steps you need to take, the deadlines for each step, and who you need to talk to or work with to achieve employment.

For example, to learn more about your job goal, you may want to set up a meeting with someone in a job like the one you want to ask questions and get advice. You may need to take a class or figure out how to get to and from work.

## Benefits Counseling

The HEC program encourages you to connect with a work incentives benefits specialist before you start to work. To find a work incentives benefit specialist, go to [dhs.wi.gov/benefit-specialists/work-incentives.htm](https://dhs.wi.gov/benefit-specialists/work-incentives.htm).

A benefits specialist can review your current benefits and answer your questions, such as:

- Will my benefits be affected when I start a job and increase my earnings?
- How will MAPP affect my other benefits?
- Will higher assets in MAPP decrease or eliminate any other benefits?
- Are any work incentives available?

# Part 3: Next Steps

## Where to Send Your Application

Submit your signed, completed application to the HEC program coordinator.

**Mail** Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
HEC Program Coordinator  
P.O. Box 7851, Room 335  
Madison, WI 53707-7851

**Fax** 608-223-7755

**Email** [DHSHECMailbox@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSHECMailbox@dhs.wisconsin.gov)

## What to Expect Next

If your application is approved, you will receive a letter from the HEC program coordinator.

The HEC program coordinator will share your HEC enrollment information with your local agency. If you meet the eligibility requirements for MAPP, then your enrollment will be complete, and you will be able to use your Medicaid benefits.

If your application is not approved, you will receive a letter explaining why. The HEC program coordinator will share the decision letter with your local agency. Your local agency will then determine your eligibility for MAPP, but you may need to meet the work requirement.

## Your Responsibilities

After you receive an approval letter from the HEC program coordinator, you have nine months to put your plan into action and start working in exchange for money or goods or services.

When you start working, you must report it to your local agency and the HEC program coordinator.

# Part 4: Frequently Asked Questions

## How long can I be enrolled in HEC?

You can be enrolled in the HEC program for up to nine months. At the end of nine months, your HEC enrollment will end, and you must meet the work requirement to continue to receive your Medicaid coverage through MAPP. The nine-month enrollment period begins on the date DHS approves your application.

Important dates, including the start and end dates of your HEC enrollment period, will be included in the approval letter.

If you feel like you are making progress but might not be employed by the end of your nine-month HEC enrollment period, you may apply for a three-month extension. You must apply before the end of the seventh month of HEC enrollment to prevent any gaps in your Medicaid coverage.

You may participate in HEC twice within a five-year period. There must be at least six months between the end of your first and the start of your second enrollment. Any period of HEC enrollment, whether you use the entire nine months available or not, will count as one HEC period.

## Why is HEC enrollment limited to nine months?

The HEC program is for people who can be employed within a short amount of time. If your job search will take more than nine months, wait to apply for HEC when you are closer to becoming employed.

## How do I get a disability determination?

If you have not been determined eligible for Medicaid based on disability, you can apply for a disability determination through your local agency. Visit [dhs.wi.gov/im-agency](https://dhs.wi.gov/im-agency) to find a local agency near you.

It sometimes takes a few months to obtain the determination, so the sooner you start the paperwork, the sooner you can participate in MAPP.

## What should I do when I start working?

When you start working during your HEC period, report this to your local agency and the HEC program coordinator right away.

To tell the HEC program coordinator about your job, use the HEC Employment Report form and follow the instructions to complete and submit the form. Download at [dhs.wi.gov/employment-skills/hec.htm](https://dhs.wi.gov/employment-skills/hec.htm).



**HEC questions?**

**Call 866-278-6440**