





MA Health Care Learning Series

Massachusetts HealthCare Training Forum (MTF)

Summer 2024

MassHealth and the Health Connector

Agenda

- Health Connector Redeterminations and Renewals Process
- Health Connector ConnectorCare Premium Hardship Waiver Process
- Employer Sponsored Insurance (ESI) Verification Process and Noticing
- Income Verifications Forms for Applicants and Members
- MAhealthconnector.org System Updates





Poll Question 1

True or False: The Health Connector's Redeterminations and Renewals process takes place annually?

- True
- False





Poll Answer 1

True or False: The Health Connector's Redeterminations and Renewals process takes place annually?

- (True
- False

True, these are annual processes in preparation for the Health Connectors

Open Enrollment for coverage that will begin on January 1st of the following year.





Poll Question 2

True or False: The Health Connector's Premium Hardship Waiver program is available to anyone who is eligible for a Health Connector plan.

- True
- False





Poll Answer 2

True or False: The Health Connector's Premium Hardship Waiver program is available to anyone who is eligible for a Health Connector plan.

- True
- (False

False: The Health Connector's premium hardship waiver program is only for ConnectorCare members who may need help with their ConnectorCare premium cost and who meet eligibility requirements.





Poll Question 3

True or False: If an employee is offered coverage that is NOT comprehensive and considered affordable by state standards, they must shop only with their employer's current carrier for coverage.

- True
- False





Poll Answer 3

True or False: If an employee is offered coverage that is NOT comprehensive and considered affordable by state standards, they must shop only with their employer's current carrier for coverage.

- True
- (False

False: Employees who do not have access to comprehensive and affordable insurance company are allowed to shop for and enroll into plans available through the Health Connector or they can go directly to a carrier.





Poll Question 4

True or False: Sometimes applicants are asked to provide proof of income if the income they reported on their application doesn't match with state and federal income sources.

- True
- False





Poll Answer 4

True or False: Sometimes applicants are asked to provide proof of income if the income they reported on their application doesn't match with state and federal income sources.

- (True
- False

True: Applicants may need to provide proof of income, and in some cases, applicants may not have documentation from an employer that they can provide.





Poll Question 5

True or False: The online application at MAhealthconnector.org is an integrated system - which means that an applicant can find out if they are eligible for MassHealth or Health Connector coverage.

- True
- False





Poll Answer 5

True or False: The online application at MAhealthconnector.org is an integrated system - which means that an applicant can find out if they are eligible for MassHealth or Health Connector coverage.

• (True

False

True: The application on MAhealthconnector.org, also known as HIX, will determine for MassHealth, Health Connector, Health Safety Net (HSN), and the Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) eligibility.









Health Connector Updates



Health Connector Redeterminations & Renewals Process

Health Connector Annual Redeterminations & Renewals Processes

The Health Connector's Redetermination and Renewal Processes are a set of activities that happen each year before and during the Health Connector's Open Enrollment period.

- Individuals with health insurance coverage through the Health Connector have their eligibility redetermined so that they can be renewed into coverage for the upcoming year
- In August and September, the Health Connector will start preliminary eligibility determinations for actively enrolled Health Connector members and MassHealth members who are part of mixed households
- Be on the look out for more information (email updates through the MTF) about these processes and any plan changes that may be occurring for coverage. starting January 1, 2025

Preliminary
Eligibility
Determination

Preliminary
Eligibility Notice
and Review
Period

August - October

Final Eligibility

Determination &

Renewal Notice

October

Renewal into a Health Connector Plan

November

Billing and Payment for January 1
Coverage

December

August - September





Health Connector Premium Hardship Waiver Process Reminder

Health Connector Hardship Waiver Process Reminder

As you continue to help members who are transitioning from MassHealth coverage to Health Connector coverage, remember the Health Connector has an existing premium hardship waiver program for ConnectorCare members who may need help with their ConnectorCare premium cost.

- 1. Members must meet criteria to be granted a waiver or reduction of premiums
- 2. Before reviewing the hardship waiver criteria, review the member's application and make any updates that may impact eligibility
- 3. To review the policy and the criteria go to: https://www.mahealthconnector.org/wp-content/uploads/NG-17-Waiver-or-Reducation-of-Premium.pdf
- 4. To assist the member with the premium hardship waiver process, go to Premium Payment Help Options Massachusetts Health Connector
 (mahealthconnector.org)



1. Hardship Waivers - General Eligibility

- Members and applicants who are eligible for or enrolled in a ConnectorCare plan may qualify for a premium waiver or reduction of premium via the hardship waiver process
- Members and applicants must also attest to and provide proof (in most circumstances) of their hardship
- An applicant does not need to be fully enrolled into a ConnectorCare plan to request a Waiver or Reduction of Premium, but they do need to have selected a ConnectorCare plan
- The member is not eligible if they're enrolled in or eligible for a Health Connector plan with APTCs or an unsubsidized plan
- Note that termed ConnectorCare members may also qualify for a premium waiver or reduction of premium via the hardship waiver process. If they are still eligible for ConnectorCare but has their enrollment termed, they can apply for a Premium Waiver and potentially have their past due balance waived if they have any



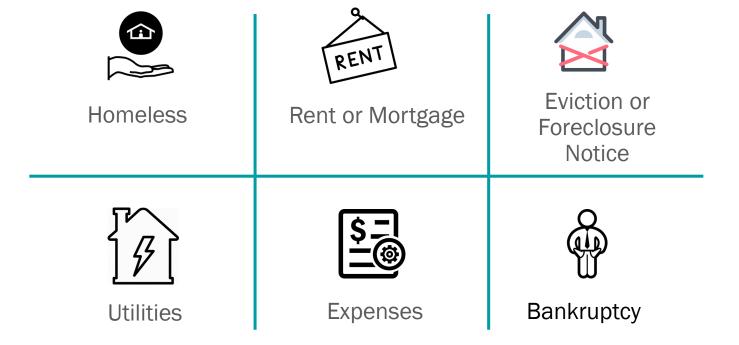
2. Review and Update the Member's Application

"If a member says their Health Connector premium is unaffordable, Assisters should first":

- Confirm their application is up to date by checking:
 - Income information, amounts, and sources
 - How many in the household are applying for coverage
 - And are they applying for financial assistance
- Review the list of allowable reasons with the member https://www.mahealthconnector.org/wp-content/uploads/NG-17-Waiver-or-Reducation-of-Premium.pdf



3. Examples of Financial Hardships





3a. Housing and Utility Related Questions

- Are you more than 30 days in arrears for paying their rent or mortgage?
- Have you received an eviction or foreclosure notice within the last 60 days?
- Have you received a shut-off notice, or has been shut off, or has a refusal to deliver essential utilities dated within the 60 days prior to application (gas, electric, oil, water, or landline telephone)?
- For each event the member states he or she is experiencing, they must submit evidence (proof of the hardship) that must include copies (not originals) of documentation such as bills, receipts, letters from a landlord, mortgage, utility company, etc.?



3b. Financial Questions

Have you incurred a significant, unexpected increase in essential expenses within the last 6 months resulting directly from the consequences of:

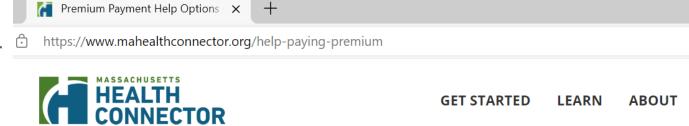
- Domestic violence
- The death of a spouse, family member, or partner that held primary responsibility for childcare
- Suddenly needing to provide full-time care for themselves, an aging family member, or for an extended illness of a child that requires a working parent to hire a full-time caretaker for the child
- If you or a person in your family suffered from a major illness, including COVID-19.
 This could include an increase in expenses related to the need to self-quarantine after risk of exposure to COVID-19. The increase in expenses could also be related to a working parent needing to leave employment or hire a full-time caregiver to provide care for a family member who is suffering from a major long illness
- Due to a fire, flood, natural disaster, or other unexpected natural or human-caused event. This could include circumstances due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, such as facing large expenses after losing your income. The event caused your necessary personal expenses to become unaffordable, or it caused large damage to you, your home, your property or personal possessions

Have you filed for bankruptcy within the last 12 months and the debts have not yet



4. Help the Member Apply for a Premium Hardship Waiver Process

To help the member with the hardship waiver process, go to Premium
Payment Help
Options —
Massachusetts
Health Connector
(mahealthconnector
.org)



Premium Payment Help Options

Having trouble affording your health insurance premium?

You have options through the Health Connector.

If you are a currently enrolled in a health plan through the Health Connector and are experiencing financial hardship, you may have options to qualify for a lower health insurance premium.

Please choose from the options below and follow next steps to help you manage your health coverage.

- I'm making less money now because of a job loss or fewer hours worked. I'd like to see if I can qualify for a lower-cost Health Connector health plan going forward.
 - I'm having a hard time paying my bill right now because of special circumstances. I'd like to
- O see if I can get a hardship waiver or reduction to lower my premium for a limited period of time.



4b. Applications Available in English & Spanish

Applications can be downloaded or mailed to the member

Apply for a premium waiver or reduction

Are you a ConnectorCare member and already updated your income and find your premium is still unaffordable?

If you are experiencing extreme financial hardship and want to find out if you qualify for a waiver or reduction of your monthly insurance premium. If you qualify, you may be able to get up to an 12-month waiver (meaning you don't have to pay) or reduction (meaning you pay less) for the cost of your monthly premium. This could be for money that you owe the Health Connector for a previous balance, or money that you will owe for your future premium.

Download an application

⚠ Application for a Premium Waiver or Reduction
Aplicación de un Reducción o Exención de Prima

Would you like an application mailed to you?

Complete the form below by filling in the information for the **Primary Subscriber.**

* You can find the billing account number on your Health Connector Bill.

Billing Account Number



4c. How are Requests Processed?

- For Hardship Waiver requests, if documents submitted are acceptable, the Health Connector will calculate the new premium
- If documents are not acceptable, the Health Connector will outreach the member to request acceptable documents. Once a member submits proper documentation, process starts again
- There are exceptions for not requesting additional documentation along with a hardship or premium waiver application, for example if the member attests to being homeless or a victim of domestic violence, their attestation is proof of their request



5. How Long are Requests in Place?

- An approved premium hardship waiver may be authorized for up to 12 months
- A reduction or waiver for a prospective premium will begin on the 1st of the month of the next full billing cycle following the date the premium waiver was granted
- A prospective waiver or reduction can only be applied to the current enrollment year, meaning the member would need to reapply for a new enrollment year





Employer Sponsored Insurance (ESI) Verification Process and Noticing

Employer-Sponsored Insurance (ESI) Verification Process

Applicants and members who receive affordable employer-sponsored insurance (ESI) are not eligible for Advanced Premium Tax Credits (APTCs).

- If an applicant or member is not offered ESI or is offered an unaffordable plan, they may be eligible for APTCs if they meet other eligibility requirements
- The Health Connector does not have an electronic data source to verify access to ESI, so it relies on the information provided by applicants and members
- The Health Connector pulls a random sample of members from HIX who reported working at least 35 hours at a job and reported not having an offer of affordable ESI



ESI Verification Notices

- A notice will be sent to the Member to let them know that the Health Connector will contact their job to verify ESI access information
- This notice will instruct members to update their accounts with the correct ESI information, if needed
- Members must provide updates within three weeks of receiving notice
- The Health Connector will also contact the employers of these members via mail to verify whether the ESI information they provided in their application is correct

Note:

- The Health Connector will not update the Member's account without the member's consent
- Additional notices will also be sent to these members and all notices sent will be available for download and viewable in the Member Portal



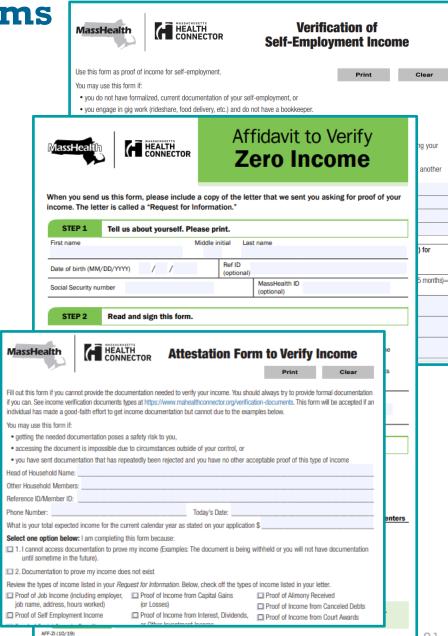




Income Verifications for MassHealth and Health Connector Applicants & Members

Income Verification Forms

- Applicants and members may receive a Request of Information (RFI) notice for income when a data match does not occur, and verification of their income information is unavailable
 - Proof of income is a requirement
- Income verification forms can be used to report: Self Employment income, Zero Income, or All other income types





Self-Employment Income Form

This form can be used when the applicant/member:

- Has no formalized documentation (selfemployment ledger, profit, or loss statement, or previous 1040) showing their current self-employment income
- Does gig work (temporary short-term work like rideshare, food delivery, etc.) and does not have a bookkeeper
- Has fluctuations in income that are not easily represented via current documentation







Attestation Form to Verify Income

This form is used to verify all forms of income and can be used when:

- Getting the needed documentation poses a safety risk
- Accessing the documentation is impossible due to circumstances outside of the member's control
- Documentation sent is repeatedly rejected and the member has no other acceptable proof of income
- Existing documentation is outdated or not representative of current income

MassHealth Attestation Form to Verify Income		
Pi	rint Clear	
Fill out this form if you cannot provide the documentation needed to verify your income. You should always try to provide formal documentation if you can. See income verification documents types at https://www.mahealthconnector.org/verification-documents. This form will be accepted if an individual has made a good-faith effort to get income documentation but cannot due to the examples below.		
You may use this form if:		
getting the needed documentation poses a safety risk to you,		
 accessing the document is impossible due to circumstances outside of your control, or 		
you have sent documentation that has repeatedly been rejected and you have no other acceptable proof of this type of income		
Head of Household Name:		
Other Household Members:		
Reference ID/Member ID:		
Phone Number: Today's Date:		
What is your total expected income for the current calendar year as stated on your application \$		
Select one option below: I am completing this form because: [] 1. I cannot access documentation to prove my income (Examples: The document is being withheld or you will not have documentation until sometime in the future).		
□ 2. Documentation to prove my income does not exist		
job name, address, hours worked) (or Losses) □ Proof of Proof of Self Employment Income □ Proof of Social Security Benefits □ Proof of Oscial Security Benefits □ Proof of Os	Alimony Received Income from Canceled Debts Income from Court Awards Income for Jury Duty Pay Other Income from other source	
the frequency with which it is received (monthly, quarterly, seasonally, or one time only).		
AFVF-0822		





Affidavit To Verify Zero Income

An affidavit can be used when:

- An individual is currently not working and was asked to submit proof that they have no income, they may submit a signed written statement (also called an "affidavit"). The affidavit does not have to be notarized
- These forms (English and Spanish) can be found at <u>MAhealthconnector.org</u> and the MassHealth websites, available languages: Chinese, Haitian Creole, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese
- Resource:
 - MassHealth Member Forms | Mass.gov
 - <u>Verification Documents Massachusetts</u>
 Health Connector (mahealthconnector.org)











MAhealthconnector.org System Updates

System Updates

MAhealthconnector.org is the single, integrated process to determine eligibility for the full range of health insurance programs including MassHealth, the Health Connector, HSN, and CMSP for applicants and members younger than 65.

EOHHS, MassHealth and the Health Connector are moving forward to Modernize the HIX system by streamlining and simplifying the member experience with the first significant system update on **July 25, 2024**.

- Following any systems release or update, members with an account and Assisters should clear their cache or internet history before accessing the online application or the Assister Portal for a better web experience (if you need assistance, please check with your PC support team)
 - For more technical information, visit the <u>Getting Started Guide</u>: scroll down to choose the subsection: How to clear your browser's cache (history/memory)





What to Expect: Updates

Updates will include:

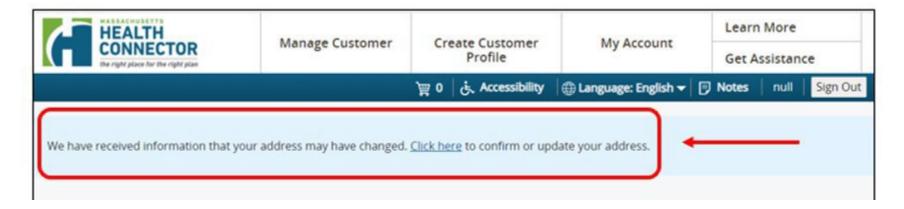
- Address Change
- User Interface Updates





Updating Mailing Address

 In R28, a banner message alerted the member or account holder they need to confirm or update their mailing address within 15 days. In R29, members will now have 30 days to update or confirm their mailing address information



 The Click here hyperlink will navigate users to the Eligibility Application screen with further instructions to review/update/confirm the address information. If they need to make a change, instructions is provided for the user to the Report a Change feature

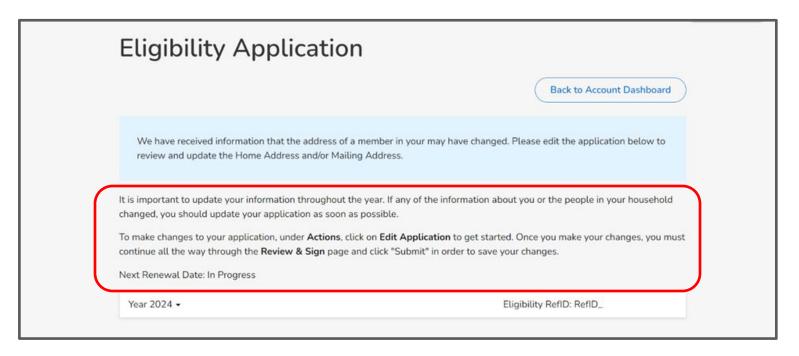




Address Change

New banner message on the Eligibility Application screen, if member/account holder does not respond within the timeframe provided, a termination notice will be sent for one of the following reasons:

- "Whereabouts unknown"
- "Moved out of state"







Returned MassHealth Renewal Notice Due to Incorrect Mailing Address

Renewal notices returned to MassHealth, with missed renewal deadline

- MassHealth receives a lot of return mail, such as for RFI notices, address updates, renewal, etc. due to incorrect mailing address
- MassHealth will attempt to alert members of the need to update mailing address by: email, text, or notice (using the new address)
- When a renewal notice is returned to MassHealth, R29 will display the new banner message alerting the member/account holder they need to update/confirm the mailing address
 - Members have 30-days to update/confirm the information
 - Members need to contact MassHealth (phone, letter, or in-person) to request reinstatement of their benefits
 - If they qualify for reinstatement, a new renewal packet will be sent to the member using the confirmed/updated mailing address, and they will have 45 days to submit the renewal





What to Expect: User Interface Updates

Updates will include:

- User Interface Updates:
 - Plain language and accessibility improvements
 - Less text on main screens
 - Improved user interface more streamlined, intuitive to use
 - New tool tip area for complex topics and other opportunities for users to learn more, if needed
 - Modern user interface for members and Assisters

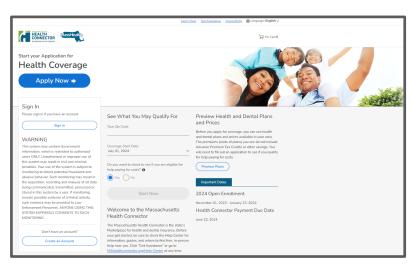


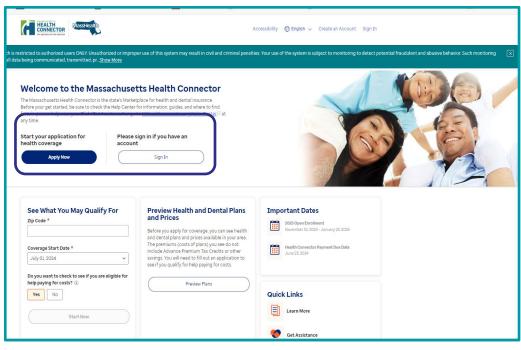


System Updates: Sample Landing Page

Before Update

New Interface

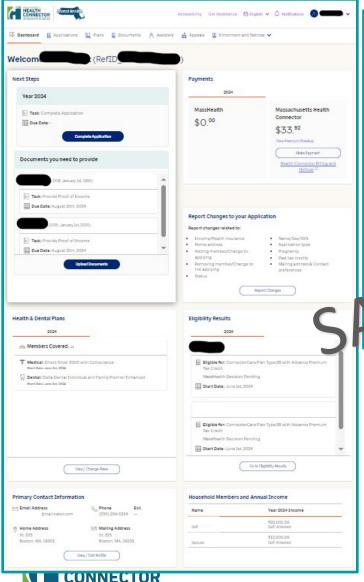


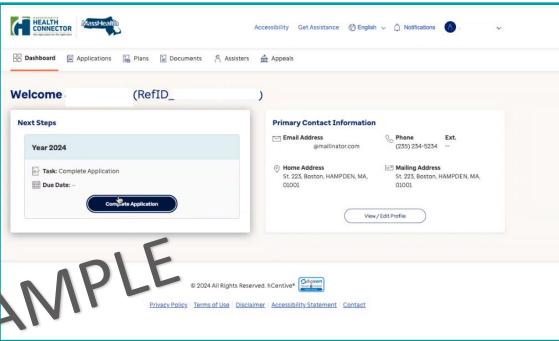






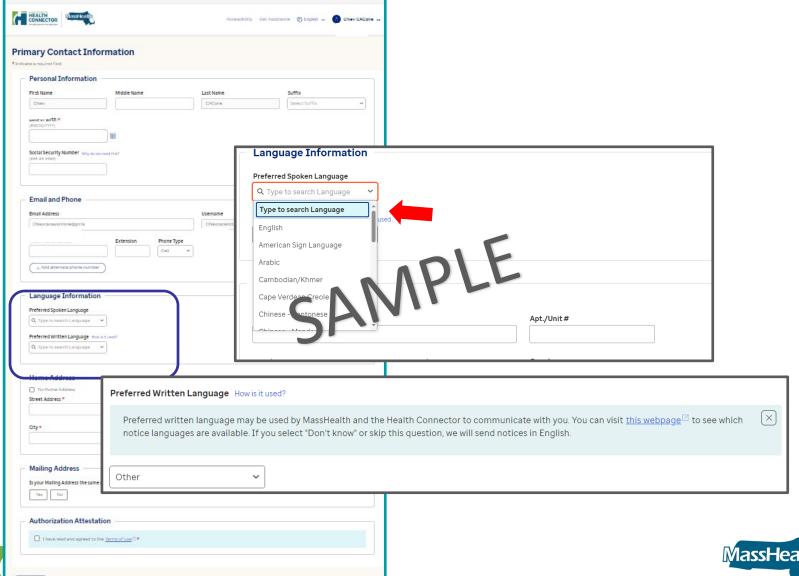
Sample Screenshot: Welcome Screen



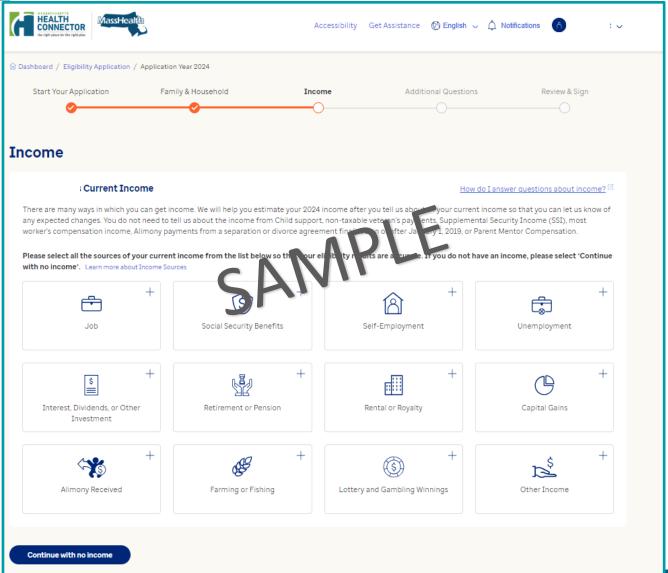




Sample Screenshot: Primary Contact Information Screen

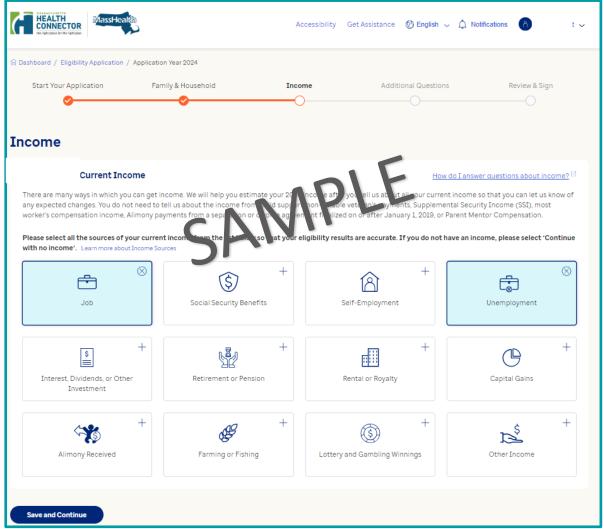


Sample Screenshot: Income Screen



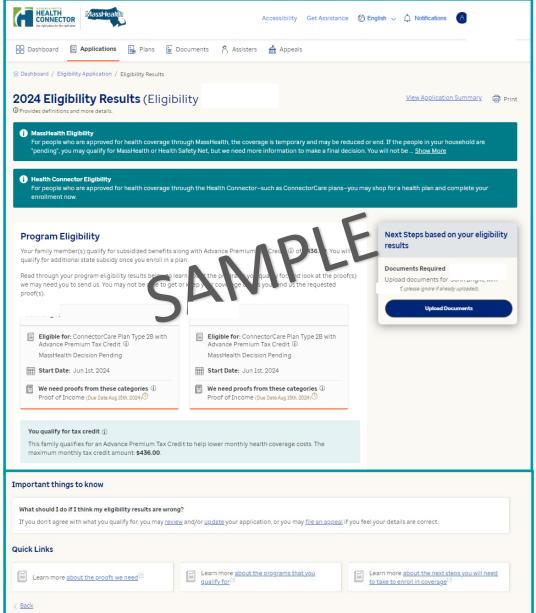


Sample Screenshot: Reporting Income





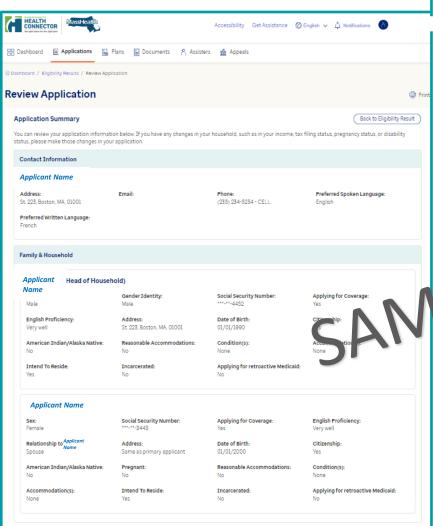
Sample Screenshot: Application Summary Screen Accessibility Get Assistance © English Q A Notifications 6

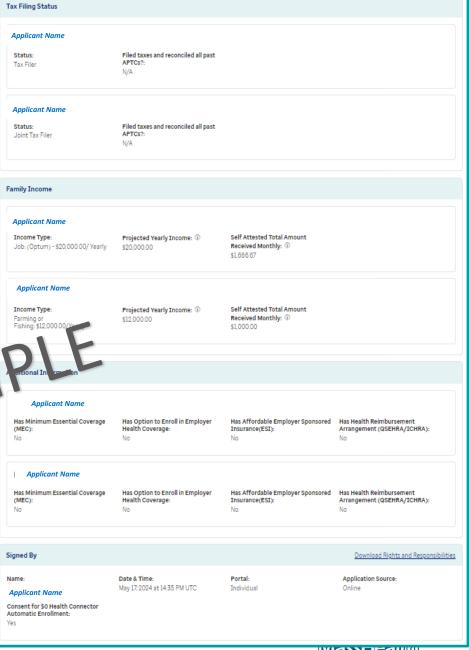






Summary Screen









Thank you



