

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services News for Agents and Brokers

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An electronic source of information for Federally-facilitated Marketplace (FFM) Agents and Brokers

In This Issue:

- Agent and Broker Plan Year 2016 FFM Registration Kick-off Event
- Multiple Options for Completing Plan Year 2016 FFM Agent and Broker Registration and Training
 - FFM Agent and Broker Training Via CMS-approved Vendors
 - The New Marketplace Learning Management System (MLMS) Platform
- Enhancements for FFM Agent and Broker Registration and Training for Plan Year 2016
 - Continuing Education Credits
 - Streamlined Process
 - Agent and Broker Registration Status Page
- Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) Corner
 - SHOP Marketplace Registration Tips for Plan Year 2016
 - What's New in the SHOP Marketplace for Plan Year 2016
- Upcoming Webinars: Guidance on Plan Year 2016 FFM Registration and Training for Agents and Brokers
- FFM Agent and Broker Registration Completion List
- *Did You Know?* How to Update your National Producer Number (NPN)
- Registration and Training Resources for Plan Year 2016
- Follow us on Twitter
- Contact Us

Agent and Broker Plan Year 2016 FFM Registration Kick-off Event

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is excited to announce the launch of FFM Agent and Broker Registration for the 2016 plan year during the week of September 7, 2015. Special guest speaker Kevin Counihan, the Chief Executive Officer of the Marketplace and Director of the Center for Consumer Information & Insurance Oversight (CCIIO), will provide important information about FFM registration and training for the upcoming plan year 2016 and discuss the important role that agents and brokers play in assisting consumers in the Marketplace. More detailed information, including the exact date and time for the kick-off, will be provided via the [Agents and Brokers Resources webpage](#), CMS's twitter account (@CMSgov), and through email distribution to all FFM-registered agents and brokers.

Multiple Options for Completing Plan Year 2016 FFM Agent and Broker Registration and Training

CMS is pleased to announce that for plan year 2016, FFM agent and broker training will be offered through the MLMS and through CMS-approved vendors. While both training options satisfy the FFM agent and broker training requirement, if you complete training from one of the CMS-approved vendors you may qualify for continuing education unit (CEU) credits, depending on the state or states you operate in.



FFM Agent and Broker Training Via CMS-approved Vendors

New for plan year 2016, you may complete the required FFM agent and broker training through certain CMS-approved vendors. Completion of a training curriculum, including the associated exams, through one of the CMS-approved vendors will fulfill the FFM training requirement for agents and brokers registering to participate in the Individual and/or SHOP Marketplaces. CMS expects FFM agent and broker training from CMS-approved vendors to go-live in the coming weeks.

Vendors are required to cover, at a minimum, the same topic areas as those covered in the FFM agent and broker training offered by CMS through the MLMS, and pursuant to 45 CFR § 155.222 are required to offer CEU credits in a minimum of five states where the FFM is operating. The number of CEUs and the states where they are available may vary by vendor. Vendors may also charge a fee to agents and brokers that choose to take their FFM agent and broker training.

Once the training is live, it will be accessible via the Agent Broker Registration Status page on the [CMS Enterprise Portal](#). We will share additional details once CMS-approved vendor training is available via the [Agents and Brokers Resources webpage](#), CMS's twitter account (@CMSgov), and through email distribution to all FFM-registered agents and brokers.

If you have any questions, please email the FFM Producer and Assister Help Desk at FFMProducer-AssisterHelpDesk@cms.hhs.gov.

The New MLMS Platform

CMS is launching plan year 2016 FFM agent and broker training on the new MLMS training platform. The new MLMS replaces the previously-used Medicare Learning Network®, or MLN, and will be accessible via the Agent Broker Registration Status page on the CMS Enterprise Portal.

If you plan to participate in the FFM for plan year 2016, regardless of whether you participated in past years, you need to complete an agent/broker profile in the MLMS, enroll in the desired training curriculum, complete the required Marketplace training and exams, and accept the applicable Marketplace Agreements (which are also executed through the MLMS). CMS will offer the agent and broker training at no charge, however CEUs will not be available for training offered through the MLMS.

Enhancements for FFM Agent and Broker Registration and Training for Plan Year 2016

While some of the FFM agent and broker registration process will be the same as in plan year 2015, CMS has enhanced the FFM agent and broker registration and training process for plan year 2016.

CEU Credits

For the first time, you will have the option to take FFM agent and broker training from one of the CMS-approved vendors and receive CEU credits, depending on the state or states you operate in.



Streamlined CMS Enterprise Portal Account

CMS has also streamlined the registration and training process so that you will only need a CMS Enterprise Portal account to complete both registration and training (in contrast to prior years, which required both a CMS Enterprise Portal account for registration and a MLN account to complete the FFM agent and broker training and exams). The new training platform, the MLMS, is only accessible on the CMS Enterprise Portal.

Streamlined FFM Training Courses

CMS has also streamlined the FFM agent and broker training for plan year 2016 into 11 specific modules rather than the four courses used in plan year 2015. The total time to complete all trainings will be the same as in plan year 2015, but the more specific modules will allow you to review the different topics in smaller pieces.

Agent Broker Registration Status Page

CMS is also pleased to announce the creation of an Agent Broker Registration Status page on the CMS Enterprise Portal. This page will enable you to check the status of your completion of each registration component much sooner than in the past. In plan year 2015, agents and brokers could only view their registration status via the Agent and Broker Registration Completion List on the [Agents and Brokers Resources webpage](#), which is updated on a bi-weekly basis.

Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) Corner

SHOP Marketplace Registration Tips for Plan Year 2016

If you wish to assist consumers obtain health insurance coverage through the SHOP Marketplace in 2016, you must complete the 2016 Federally-facilitated SHOP (FF-SHOP) Agent/Broker Privacy and Security Agreement via the MLMS and establish a profile on the SHOP Marketplace Agent/Broker Portal. Once you have established your profile, employers in your area seeking assistance in the SHOP Marketplace will be able to search for you based on the information you provide and you will be able to manage and assist clients with their SHOP Marketplace application and enrollment. [Click here](#) to establish your profile on the SHOP Marketplace Agent/Broker Portal.

Agents and brokers are not required to complete SHOP Marketplace training, though it is highly encouraged.

What's New in the SHOP Marketplace for Plan Year 2016

- Employee Choice: Employers in all states will be able to offer a choice of health and dental plans through the SHOP Marketplace

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

News for Agents and Brokers

- Dental Only Option: Employers will be able to offer dental-only coverage through the SHOP Marketplace
- New Relaxed Minimum Participation Rate (MPR): Employers need to meet a MPR requirement to participate in the SHOP Marketplace, but beginning in 2016, employees with any form of health coverage will be counted toward an employer's participation rate, making it easier to meet the required minimum. Please note: employers who enroll between November 15 and December 15 each year do not need to meet a MPR requirement.

Upcoming Webinars: Guidance on Plan Year 2016 FFM Registration and Training for Agents and Brokers

Do you want to learn more about the FFM agent and broker registration and training requirements for plan year 2016? CMS is hosting a number of webinar sessions titled "Guidance on Plan Year 2016 FFM Registration and Training for Agents and Brokers" in the next several weeks. The sessions will walk agents and brokers through the new registration process, give a brief overview of the SHOP Marketplace, and describe the new option to complete training through one of the CMS-approved vendors. Each webinar will include a web-chat question and answer session immediately following the presentation. CMS will hold webinars on the following dates:

- September 9 from 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET
- September 10 from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM ET
- September 11 from 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET
- September 15 from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM ET
- September 17 from 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM ET
- September 18 from 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET
- September 25 from 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET

You should only register for one session, as space is limited and content will be identical in each session. To register, please visit [REGTAP](#) and complete the following steps:

1. Select "Training Events" from "My Dashboard."
2. Select the "View" icon next to event title "Guidance on Plan Year 2016 FFM Registration and Training for Agents and Brokers."
3. Select "Register Me."

If you require further assistance, you may contact the Registrar at 800-257-9520. The registrars are available by phone from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET, Monday through Friday. Registration closes 24 hours prior to each event. If you have questions regarding logistics and registration, contact registrar@REGTAP.info.



FFM Agent and Broker Registration Completion List

CMS maintains an FFM Agent and Broker Registration Completion List, which contains the National Producer Numbers (NPNs) for agents and brokers who have completed all the FFM registration and training requirements. Once registration for plan year 2016 begins, CMS will create a new list that contains the NPNs of agents and brokers who have completed the FFM registration and training requirements for plan year 2016. CMS will post this list on the [Agents and Brokers Resources webpage](#), and update it on a bi-weekly basis, reflecting data as of the Friday prior to posting. It is important to confirm that your name and NPN appear on this list after you complete the plan year 2016 registration and training process. Issuers will review the Registration Completion List to confirm that agents and brokers with whom they have agreements are authorized to assist consumers in selecting plans through the FFM. Users can search NPNs by clicking the arrow in cell A1, or by using the “Ctrl + F” (or “Command + F”) keystroke. All NPNs are self-reported by the agent or broker during FFM registration, and should be validated against state and/or other National Association of Insurance Commissioners records to confirm state licensure.

Did You Know?

Confirming that your NPN is entered accurately on your MLMS profile is necessary to ensuring you are included on the FFM Agent and Broker Registration Completion List. The NPN can be up to 10 digits long, must not begin with a zero, and must not include any special characters or letters. It is important to note that your NPN is not the same as your state license number, so please review and confirm that you have entered the NPN and not a state license number. To update or confirm the NPN associated with your MLMS profile, you can click on the “Complete Agent Broker Training” hyperlink on the Agent Broker Registration Status page of the CMS Enterprise portal. Clicking the link will open your MLMS profile, and from there you can update or confirm the NPN listed. Please note that entering an inaccurate NPN could result in a denial of compensation or credit by an issuer.

Registration and Training Resources for Plan Year 2016

Are you looking for additional help with the 2016 training and registration process? CMS will be releasing FFM agent and broker registration and training resources, such as quick reference guides and registration guided tour videos for different steps of the registration process as well as other topics of importance to FFM agents and brokers. Look for additional details in future editions of the “News for Agents and Brokers” newsletter and on the [Agents and Brokers Resources webpage](#).

Follow us on Twitter

Agents and brokers can find important information and updates by following the CMS Twitter handle ([@CMSGov](#)) or by searching the hashtags #ABFFM or #ABFFSHOP on Twitter.

Contact Us

For questions pertaining to the FFM agent and broker program, including the FFM registration requirements, please contact the FFM Producer and Assister Help Desk via email at FFMProducer-AssisterHelpDesk@cms.hhs.gov.

