ICRC | Integrated Care Resource Center

Helping states develop integrated programs for individuals who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid

November 23, 2026

Announcement: New SSA State Buy-In Navigator for Case Inquiries

Dear State Medicaid Agency colleagues,

On Wednesday, November 11, 2026, the Social Security Administration (SSA) launched the State Buy-In (SBI) Navigator, an automated solution designed to streamline the routing of case-specific SBI inquiries. SSA has requested that states use the submission guidelines described below to support a smooth transition to this new process. This new process does not change existing communication methods between states and CMS, such as with the Office of Hearings and Inquiries (OHI) and the Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO).

To submit SBI inquiries to SSA:

- **Send your inquiry to the new dedicated, centralized mailbox:** SSA.CMS.State.Buy-In.Inquiries@ssa.gov.

- **Include the beneficiary's residence zip code in the subject line.** SSA's new automated process will use the beneficiary's 5-digit residence ZIP code (provided in the subject line of the inquiry) to route the inquiry to the appropriate SSA servicing area.
    - DO NOT include the ZIP code as part of another word (zipcode12345) or use an extended ZIP code (ZIP+4).
    - Emails without a valid, standalone 5-digit ZIP code in the subject line will fail the filter logic, resulting in an error notice and need for resubmission.
    - The following are examples of appropriate subject lines for an inquiry about a beneficiary with the ZIP code 12345:
        - 12345 SBI Hardship
        - State Buy-In – 12345 AL resident
        - State Buy-In problem/Florida 12345

- **Submit One Record Per Email.** Send a separate email for each beneficiary or record. Do not include multiple individuals or records from different areas in a single request. Requests are routed based on the first 5-digit ZIP code identified in the email subject line.
    - **EXCEPTION:** Multiple individuals or records may be included in the same email only if they all fall within the same ZIP code.

- **Send Attachments and Encrypted Passwords Separately.** For documents that require an encrypted password, send the document to the dedicated, centralized mailbox.
    - After receiving the "Referred" notice, send the password in a separate email directly to the SSA servicing area office via their email address, which will be "Cc'd" on the referral notice.
    - Use the same subject line as the original submission to ensure the password can be accurately matched to the corresponding case.
    - **DO NOT** "Cc" or "Send" the email containing the password to the dedicated mailbox.

- **Coordinate with your SSA office if you use automated systems for exchange of Buy-In inquiries.** Due to strict subject line formatting requirements, states that use an automated system that requires account access or additional authentication should coordinate directly with their SSA servicing area office. In these cases, an SSA-approved workaround may be used instead of the SBI Navigator.

- **Allow Time for Review.** Upon receipt, the SSA servicing office will review the inquiry and contact you directly with status updates and the final resolution.
    - Please allow the servicing area adequate time to review the inquiry before requesting a status update. Duplicate submissions and repeated follow-up requests may delay processing.
    - If the need for a status request arises, please reach out directly to the servicing area via their email address "Cc'd" on the referral notice. **DO NOT "Cc" or "Send" status requests to the dedicated, centralized mailbox.**

SSA extends its gratitude for your support and collaboration as SSA implements this new process to strengthen the routing and management of SBI inquiries. For broader SBI-related questions, states should continue to work through their designated Area Director Office (ADO) contacts.

ABOUT THE INTEGRATED CARE RESOURCE CENTER

The Integrated Care Resource Center is a national initiative of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to help states improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of care for individuals dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The state technical assistance activities are coordinated by Mathematica and the Center for Health Care Strategies. For more information, visit www.integratedcareresourcecenter.com.

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