



Innovative COUNSELING PARTNERS

Sliding Fee Scale Discount Policy

Subject: Sliding Fee Scale [SFS] Discount Program

Effective Date: January 1, 2023

Policy: To provide affordable services to those in need.

Purpose:

This program is designed to provide free or discounted care to those who have no or limited means to pay for their medical services. In addition to quality mental healthcare, patients are entitled to financial counseling by someone who can understand and offer possible solutions for those who cannot pay in full. The inSync patient care coordinator role is that of a patient advocate, or one who works with the patient/guarantor to find reasonable payment alternatives.

Innovative Counseling Partners [ICP] will offer a Sliding Fee Scale [SFS] Discount Program to ALL who are unable to pay for their services. ICP will base program eligibility on a person's ability to pay and will not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, sexual orientation, creed, religion, disability, or national origin. The Federal Poverty Guidelines, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty>, are used in creating and annually updating the sliding fee schedule to determine eligibility.

Procedure:

The following guidelines are to be followed in providing the SFS discount program.

1. **Notification:** Professional staff will notify patients of the SFS program by:
 - a. Payment and financial policies will be made available to each patient at time of service.
 - b. Notification of the SFS discount program will be offered to each patient at time of service.
 - c. SFS discount program will be offered to those having difficulty paying their bills to ICP.
 - d. An explanation of our SFS discount program and our application form are available at all six ICP offices with some information available on our website: www.innovativecounselingpartners.com

- e. ICP places notification of our SFS discount program in the clinic waiting areas.
2. All patients seeking healthcare services at ICP are assured that they will be served regardless of ability to pay. No one is refused service because of lack of financial means to pay.
3. **Request for discount:** Requests for discounted services may be made by patients, family members, social services staff, or others who are aware of existing financial hardship. The SFS discount program will only be made available for clinic visits. Information and forms can be obtained from the reception area and/or the inSync patient care coordinator.
4. **Administration:** The SFS discount program procedure will be administered through the inSync patient care/billing coordinator or her designee. Information about the SFS discount program policy and procedure will be provided and assistance offered for completion of the application. Dignity and confidentiality will be respected for all who seek and/or are provided charitable services.
5. **Completion of application:** The patient/responsible party must complete the SFS discount program application process; persons authorize ICP/inSync access in confirming income as disclosed in the application. Providing false information on the SFS discount program application will result in all SFS program discounts being revoked and the full balance of the account(s) restored and payable immediately.
If an application is unable to be processed due to the need for additional information, the applicant has two weeks from the date of notification to supply the necessary information without having the date on their application adjusted. If a patient does not provide the requested information within the two week time period, their application will be redated to the date on which they supply the requested information. Any accounts turned over for collection as a result of the patient's delay in providing information will not be considered for the SFS discount program.
6. **Eligibility:** Discounts will be based on income and family size only. ICP uses the Census Bureau definition of each.
 - a. **Family is defined as:** a group of two people or more (one of whom is the house holder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together: all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family.
 - b. **Income includes:** earnings unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, Social Security, SSI, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, assistance from outside the household, and other miscellaneous sources. Noncash benefits, such as food stamps and housing subsidies, do not count.
7. **Income verification:** Applicants must provide one of the following: prior year W-2 two most recent pay stubs, letter from employer, or form 4506-T (if W-2 not filed)

Self-employed individuals will be required to submit details of the most recent three months of income and expenses for the business. Adequate information must be made available to determine eligibility for the program.

- 8. Discounts:** Innovative Counseling Partners, PLLC is required to provide a sliding fee scale discount to clients who meet the eligibility guidelines. Sliding fee scale clients are those with household incomes that fall at 100% and below poverty up to 200% of federal poverty. The eligibility requirements are based on the federal poverty guidelines published annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

2023 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,140 for each additional person.	
1	\$14,580
2	\$19,720
3	\$24,860
4	\$30,000
5	\$35,140
6	\$40,280
7	\$45,420
8	\$50,560

Innovative Counseling Partners, PLLC has established a schedule(s) of sliding fee scale discounts based on Figure 1 above.

The sliding fee scale discounts can range from 10% to 100% off of the charges for the date of service. If the patient is able to demonstrate that total household size and income results in a 100% discount. If the client is verifiably homeless, presently a resident of a homeless shelter, transitional, doubling up or truly living on the street, then they are not required to pay for services.

- 9. Applicant notification:** The SFS discount program determination will be provided to the applicant(s) in writing and will include the percentage of SFS discount program write off, or if applicable, the reason for denial. If the application is approved for less than a 100% discount or denied, the patient and/or responsible party must immediately establish payment arrangements with SFS discount program applications to cover outstanding patient balances for six months prior to application date and any balances incurred within 12 months after the approved date, unless their financial situation changes significantly. The applicant has the option to reapply after the 12 months have expired or anytime there has been a significant change in family income. When the application reapplies, the look back period will be the lesser of six months or the expiration of their last SFS discount program application.
- 10. Refusal to pay:** If a patient verbally expresses an unwillingness to pay or vacate the premises without paying for services, the patient will be contacted in writing regarding their payment obligations. If the patient is not on the sliding fee schedule, a copy of the SFS discount program application will be sent with the notice. If the patient does not make an effort to pay or fails to respond within 60 days, this constitutes refusal to pay. At this point in time ICP can explore options not limited to, but including offering the patient a payment plan, waiving of charges, or referring to the patient collection efforts.
- 11. Record keeping:** Information related to SFS discount program decisions will be maintained and preserved in an encrypted, confidential, electronic file, in an effort to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.
 - a. Applicants that have been approved for the SFS discount program will be logged in a password protected, encrypted file.
 - b. The inSync billing manager will maintain a monthly log identifying SFS discount program recipients and dollar amounts. Denials will also be logged.
- 12. Policy and procedure review:** Annually, the amount of the SFS discount program provided will be reviewed by the ICP director. The sliding fee scale will be updated based on the current Federal Poverty Guidelines. Pertinent information comparing the amount budgeted and actual community care provided shall serve as a guideline for future

planning. This will also serve as a discussion base for reviewing possible changes in our policy and procedures and for examining institutional practices which may serve as barriers preventing eligible patients from having access to our community care provisions.

- 13. Budget:** During the annual Budget process, an estimated amount of Sliding Fee Scale discount program service will be placed into the budget as a deduction from revenue. Approval for the SFS discount program will be sought as an integral part of the annual budget.

Effective date: 01/01/2023