

2009 Low Income Subsidy (LIS) Targeting Spreadsheets: An Example of How the Spreadsheets Can Be Used

To aid local outreach efforts in targeting their resources, CMS has provided two files, in both comma separated value [CSV] and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, one at the county level and the other at the zip code level. These files contain the total number of Medicare beneficiaries eligible for Part D coverage, the estimated number of beneficiaries in the target audience, and the estimated percentage of the Medicare Part D eligible population in the target audience as of March 2009. The estimated number of beneficiaries in the target audience allows users to view the counties or zip codes that have the highest number of people estimated in the target audience. Outreach in these areas may reach the most beneficiaries. The estimated percentage of the Medicare population allows users to view areas with the highest density of people in the target audience. Outreach in these areas may be more efficient in that beneficiaries reached would be more likely to qualify for the low-income subsidy. Here we provide examples of how the data filters in the Excel files can be used to narrow the amount of data one looks at to target their efforts. The CSV files can be imported into other database programs for sorting and use of the information. A description of how the data was developed is at the end of this document.

The Excel spreadsheets have seven columns that reflect state, county, total Medicare beneficiaries eligible for Part D, estimated number in target audience, estimated percent in target audience, state fips code, and county fips code. The fips codes will allow use of the data with mapping software. The zip code spreadsheet has an additional column for the zip code. Each column has a filter which allows for a quick and easy analysis to find areas to target outreach. A filtered range displays only the rows that meet the criteria that are specified for a column. Figure 1 demonstrates how to filter for one state, in this case, North Carolina.

Figure 1: Filtering for a Particular State

State	State Abbreviations	County	Total Medicare Beneficiaries Eligible for Part D	Estimated Number in Target Audience	Estimated Percent in Target Audience	FIPS State & County Code
Alabama	AL	Autauga	7,721	287	3.72	01001
Alabama	AL	Baldwin	33,211	865	2.60	01003
Alabama	AL	Barbour	5,258	322	6.12	01005
Alabama	AL	Bibb	3,933	182	4.63	01007
Alabama	AL	Blount	9,534	528	5.54	01009
Alabama	AL	Bullock	1,806	86	4.76	01011
Alabama	AL	Butler	4,277	289	6.76	01013
Alabama	AL	Calhoun	22,985	1,835	7.98	01015
Alabama	AL	Chambers	7,351	604	8.22	01017
Alabama	AL	Cherokee	5,373	475	8.84	01019
Alabama	AL	Chilton	7,123	354	4.97	01021
Alabama	AL	Choctaw	3,359	218	6.49	01023
Alabama	AL	Clarke	5,392	342	6.34	01025
Alabama	AL	Clay	3,074	208	6.77	01027
Alabama	AL	Cleburne	2,943	357	12.13	01029
Alabama	AL	Coffee	8,508	459	5.39	01031
Alabama	AL	Colbert	12,080	1,111	9.20	01033
Alabama	AL	Conecuh	2,986	138	4.62	01035
Alabama	AL	Coosa	2,526	75	2.97	01037
Alabama	AL	Covington	8,448	564	6.68	01039
Alabama	AL	Crenshaw	2,997	161	5.37	01041
Alabama	AL	Cullman	15,613	986	6.32	01043
Alabama	AL	Dale	8,241	437	5.30	01045
Alabama	AL	Dallas	8,757	492	5.62	01047
Alabama	AL	Dekalb	12,562	1,067	8.49	01049
Alabama	AL	Elmore	12,042	349	2.90	01051
Alabama	AL	Escambia	7,406	617	8.33	01053
Alabama	AL	Etowah	21,635	1,651	7.63	01055
Alabama	AL	Fayette	4,115	392	9.53	01057
Alabama	AL	Franklin	6,180	670	10.84	01059
Alabama	AL	Genevieve	5,850	380	6.40	01061

Now that we've narrowed our analysis to North Carolina, we can filter the counties to meet our needs. We've decided to identify the counties with the greatest number of beneficiaries in the target audience and then sort them so those with the highest percentage of beneficiaries in the target audience are at the top. The result, Figure 2, was accomplished by filtering for the top 10% in the Estimated Number in Target Audience column and then filtering in descending order in the Estimated Percentage column. Figure 2 shows that in Johnston, North Carolina there are approximately 2,040 Medicare beneficiaries in the target audience, representing 10% of all beneficiaries eligible for Part D in that county. Figure 2 also shows that Mecklenburg County has the largest estimated number in the target audience, but that number represents only 3.5% of the total Medicare beneficiaries within the county.

How were estimates derived?

We used multiple sources of data and some approximations to estimate these numbers. First, we created a file of beneficiaries with no known source of prescription drug coverage. This file was created using Medicare Part D enrollment data, data reported by employers receiving retiree drug subsidies, and enrollment information about creditable drug coverage from other federal, state, and employer sources.

Next, we attempted to identify low income beneficiaries who might be eligible for the LIS. CMS does not have income information for beneficiaries. Therefore we needed to use an approximate method. We geo-coded each beneficiary's address into a census block group. We then assigned the median household income for the population age 65 and over for the block group (provided by the Census Bureau) to the beneficiary. Earlier CMS estimates indicate that up to 30 percent of beneficiaries may be eligible for the LIS. Using this as a guide, we created a file containing the 30 percent of beneficiaries with the lowest assigned incomes.

We then combined the two files above to create a file of beneficiaries with no known source of prescription drug coverage living in the lowest income areas. Counts of beneficiaries were aggregated to the zip code and county level. Zip codes and counties with fewer than 10 beneficiaries in the target population were excluded for confidentiality purposes.

The result is the county and zip-level files. Please remember that these are not actual counts of LIS-eligible individuals without prescription drug coverage. They are only estimates. We are providing these to partners to guide and support their LIS outreach efforts. These estimates can help to identify geographic areas with large numbers of beneficiaries who might be eligible for the low income subsidy and who have no other drug coverage. We encourage our partners to use these data in combination with their knowledge of local resources to help encourage enrollment of these vulnerable individuals in the Low Income Subsidy program.