

# “For Such a Time as This” Pray. Fast. Act.

## MEDICAID, MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

As public discussion increases around [anti-poverty programs](#), it is helpful to clarify the role of these three major federal programs. Often called the social safety net, their impact on poverty alleviation has dwindled. Many families working for minimum wage are still dependent on these programs to try to make ends meet. Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security are also commonly referred to as entitlement programs, based on the concept that all people are intrinsically entitled to a baseline quality and dignity of life.

We highlight these programs in the campaign to pray, fast and act, as we prepare to advocate for reform. We hope you will take a moment to reflect on the mission and purpose of these programs.

**MEDICAID** is the largest health insurance program in the United States serving over 68.2 million American families and individuals [according to October 2017 estimates by Medicaid](#). Children account for 50.4 percent of total Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enrollments. [Over 1 in 3 American children](#) receive health insurance coverage through Medicaid and CHIP. Medicaid also covers people with severe disabilities and provides additional services and support to seniors. States and the federal government jointly finance Medicaid, which is designed to expand in times of economic downturn and contract in periods of recovery following a recession.

**MEDICARE** was created in 1965 and was designed to provide health care coverage for individuals aged 65 and older. It also currently covers people under the age of 65 with permanent disabilities. According to the [Congressional Research Service](#), “Medicare, which consists of four parts (A–D), covers hospitalizations, physician services, prescription drugs, skilled nursing facility care, home health visits, and hospice care, among other services. Generally, individuals are eligible for Medicare if they or their spouse worked for at least 40 quarters in Medicare-covered employment, are 65 years old, and are a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.”

**SOCIAL SECURITY** is [the nation’s premier retirement security plan](#) for older adults providing cash benefits each month to “retired or disabled workers and their family members, and to the family members of deceased workers.” A retired worker is generally eligible for Social Security benefits if he or she has worked for at least 10 years in “Social Security-covered employment,” usually with both employers and employees paying 6.2 percent of covered wages into the Social Security Trust Fund. Under current conditions, the Social Security board of trustees estimates that, “based on the program’s current financing and benefit structure, benefits scheduled under current law can be paid in full and on time until 2034.”

### LEARN MORE ABOUT:

[The U.S. federal health care system](#)

[U.S. Medicaid system](#)

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