



Social Security Benefits 101

Benefits for Transition-Age Students

What will happen to my benefits if I go to work?

- Fear of losing benefits
- Misinformation from friends, family and others can heighten this fear
- Correct information can encourage work

Information + Work Incentives = SUCCESS!



Types of Disability Benefits

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Needs based
- Can receive as a child or adult
- Amount based on living arrangement and income
- Maximum is \$771 in 2019
- Medicaid health insurance

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Disability insurance program
- Must be age 18 or older
- Can receive on parent's record or their own work record
- Medicare health insurance



SSI Benefits and Age 18 Redetermination

- At 18, reapply for SSI as Adult. This test is more stringent.
- If no longer eligible but in a training program may be able to continue receiving SSI benefits temporarily (Section 301).
- Did not qualify for SSI due to parent(s) income might qualify now!



SSI Benefits and Work

- SSI payment usually reduced when working
- SSI counts less than half of monthly wages
- Nearly everyone has more money when they work than remaining on SSI benefits alone!

Earnings + Reduced SSI check > Just SSI Check



How SSI Check Is Adjusted When Working

Exclude first \$85 of income and then divides by $\frac{1}{2}$

= COUNTABLE INCOME

SSA will take the Base SSI rate and subtract countable income to determine monthly SSI check



Step One	Not working	20 hrs/wk at \$8.50 per hr	40 hrs/wk at \$8.50 per hr
Unearned Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
Subtract General Income Exclusion -	-\$20.00	-\$20.00	-\$20.00
Equals Countable Unearned income =	0.00	0.00	0.00
Step Two			
Gross Earned Income	0.00	\$688.00	\$1,376.00
Student Earned Income Exclusion -	0.00	0.00	0.00
Subtract Earned Income Exclusion -	-\$65.00	-\$65.00	-\$65.00
Subtract GIE (if not used above) -	-\$20.00	-\$20.00	-\$20.00
Remainder =	0.00	\$603.00	\$1,291.00
Impairment-Related Work Exp. -	0.00	0.00	0.00
Remainder =	0.00	\$603.00	\$1,291.00
Divide by 2 /2	/2	/2	/2
Remainder =	0.00	\$301.50	\$645.50
Blind Work Expenses -	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equals Countable Earned Income =	0.00	\$301.50	\$645.50
Step Three			
Total Countable Unearned Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Countable Earned Income +	0.00	\$301.50	\$645.50
Countable Income =	0.00	\$301.50	\$645.50
PASS Deduction -	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equals Total Countable Income =	0.00	\$301.50	\$645.00
Step Four			
Base SSI Rate	\$771.00	\$771.00	\$771.00
Deductions: (e.g., Overpayment) -	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Countable Income -	0.00	-\$301.50	-\$645.50
Equals Adjusted SSI Payment =	\$ 771.00	\$469.50	\$125.50
Before/After Work Illustration			
Unearned Income (if any) +	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gross Earned Income +	0.00	\$688.00	\$1,376.00
New SSI Payment +	\$771.00	\$469.50	\$125.50
Equals Total Income From All Sources =	\$ 771.00	\$1,157.50	\$1,501.50
Minus cost of IRWE (if applicable) -	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equals Total Adjusted Monthly Income =	\$ 771.00	\$1,157.50	\$1,501.50

Student Earned Income Exclusion

- Under 22 and regularly attending school or training program can keep all or most of their SSI payment and work.
- Students can earn up to \$1,870 per month (up to a limit of \$7,550 for the year) before their wages have any impact on their SSI payments!



Impairment Related Work Expenses

Expenses related to impairment and needed to work, like medical equipment, Rx co-pays, special transportation

John is working and earning \$585 per month and receives SSI. He takes Open Door and spends \$50/month on this and has \$50 in therapy costs/month. SSA approves a \$100 IRWE.



Before IRWE:

$\$585 - \$85(\text{exclusions}) = \500
 $/2 = \$250$ in countable income

Base SSI Rate $\$771 - \$250 =$
 $\$521$ SSI check

$\$585 - \$85(\text{exclusions}) = \$500 -$
 $\$100(\text{IRWE}) = \400
 $/2 = \$200$ in countable income

Base SSI Rate $\$771 - \$200 =$
 $\$571$ SSI check



Blind Work Expenses

Blind individuals can exclude most work-related expenses, and the cost doesn't have to be related to disability

Examples:

State and Federal taxes

Childcare

Union dues

Cost of service animal

Uniforms

Meals consumed at work

Transportation

Reader services

With Blind Work Expense, the full amount is disregarded when calculating a person's SSI check!



What if I lose my job?

- 1619b allows individuals to stay on SSI roles if earnings decrease and to continue to have Medicaid coverage for at least 12 months if earnings below a threshold

For Indiana in 2019, the state threshold is \$38,506.



What About that Other Benefit???



Earnings and SSDI Benefit



- 9 months to receive full SSDI payment during your Trial Work Period, regardless of how much you may earn!
- \$880 (in 2019) in gross earnings in a month will be counted a Trial Work month, not always consecutive

TRIAL = TRY



After Trial Work Period

Social Security will decide whether or not your earnings show Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) effort.

In 2019, the SGA guideline is \$1,220 in gross monthly earnings (\$2,040 for blind individuals)

Under SGA = check Over = No check



Work Incentives if Earnings are over SGA

- **Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)**—after Trial Work Period 3 years of protection
- **Subsidies/Special Conditions**—extra assistance, a reduced production rate, frequent breaks, or fewer job duties
- **Impairment-Related Work Expense**—expenses related to impairment



SSDI Check Stops due to Earnings

Within 5 years of losing check, person can request for **Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits**, and get paid SSDI while Social Security determines if they still have disability



WELCOME BACK



Reporting to Social Security

One of the most important things for a beneficiary to remember is to report to Social Security!!!!

It is a common misconception that Social Security knows what you are earning monthly....NOT TRUE! They often only find out your annual earnings for the year, which can mean OVERPAYMENTS!!!

Reporting monthly is critical!!!!



How to report earnings?

1. Online through *mySocialSecurity* account
2. Taking copies of paystubs to your local Social Security office and getting a RECEIPT!!!
3. Mailing copies of paystubs to your local Social Security office
4. Only for SSI recipients: Calling the SSITWR toll free 1-800-772-0953 within the first 6 days of the month (there is also an app for SSI)



Asset Building Resources

- ABLÉ Account
- Individual Development Account
- Plan for Achieving Self Support
- Trust Funds

Set goals and build for a better future...maybe a future off benefits if possible!



ABLE Account



- Opportunity for individuals with disabilities to save money for qualified disability expenses without losing their eligibility for Medicaid and Social Security benefits (up to \$100,000 for SSI).
- Examples: school, housing, equipment, vehicle, etc.
- Individuals, family and friends can save up to \$450,000 in the account (\$15,000 per year)

Indiana ABLE Accounts: <https://savewithable.com/in/home.html>



Individual Development Account

- Save for the purchase of a lifelong asset, such as training, schooling, home ownership, purchasing a vehicle for employment/school purposes
- Most IDAs not counted as resources for SSI, Medicaid and other benefits resource eligibility requirements
- Usually matched at **three times** the size of each deposit the person makes!

<https://www.in.gov/ihcda/2403.htm>



Plan for Achieving Self Support

- If you need funds to reach a specific work goal, you may apply for a (PASS) with Social Security
- Funds not counted for most means based benefits
- Examples: School, starting a business, tools or adaptive equipment for work, vehicle or modifications if needed for work

<https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/pass.htm>



Waiver Services

For individuals receiving a Medicaid waiver, the income limit is \$2,313 per month (2019).

Individuals who exceed this amount will no longer be eligible for Medicaid and waiver services unless the individual is receiving Medicaid through MED-Works or has a valid Miller Trust.



Miller Trust

- Waiver recipients have a limit of \$2,313/mo. (2019) to keep waiver
- Excess income of that can be put in Miller Trust to protect Waiver
- <https://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/4860.htm>

EXCESS **INCOME**

Special Needs Trust

- A trust that allows people with disabilities to put excess resources into trust to maintain benefits eligibility
- Arranged through a private attorney, or it can be part of a pooled trust such as the ARC Special Needs Trust

EXCESS **RESOURCES**

Where can students go for help?

Vocational Rehabilitation—supports for getting to work or continued education/training and benefits counseling

- Get connected with Individualized Benefits Counseling through BIN project

Ticket to Work—people ages 18-64 who are receiving SSI or SSDI to access work supports and services

- Information on Employment Network and Vocational Rehabilitation, Work Incentives Planning and Assistance



Websites



Vocational Rehabilitation—find local office

<https://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2636.htm>

BIN Program—access fact sheets on work incentives

<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/bin>

Ticket to Work program—how to use and assign your ticket

<https://choosework.ssa.gov/>

Social Security office locator—find your local office

<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>





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