

Monthly tips and resources featured in **What's Next?** are created for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

Myth Busting: Work and Your Benefits

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One of the biggest reasons individuals with disabilities do not seek employment is because they worry that they will lose needed benefits. But this fear is often based on misinformation. In truth, there are many factors that influence benefits, and there is not a single answer about benefits that fits everyone. Let's explore some common myths about working and benefits.



Common Benefits Myths

1. If you work, you will lose all your benefits.

False. Lots of people can work and keep their benefits, both monthly checks and healthcare benefits. It depends on the type of benefit, the earnings level at which they are working, and if they are using a work incentive.

2. There is only one type of Social Security benefit.

False. There are two types of disability cash benefits: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Employment affects each of these differently, and some people can receive both.

3. Medicare and Medicaid are the same thing.

False. These are very different healthcare programs. The Social Security benefit you receive determines what program you are eligible for, and some people are eligible for both. SSI is tied to Medicaid, and SSDI is tied to Medicare. Depending on the program, earnings may or may not affect your coverage.

4. Social Security knows when you are working so you don't need to report work to them.

False. Not reporting can lead to huge overpayments. Social Security often runs two to six months behind, and due to COVID-19 and fewer personnel, it is even more vital to report wages each month. If you have both SSI and SSDI, you must report wages and any work incentives (if claiming) to Social Security each month.

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5. Working affects all benefits the same, so what happened to my friend's benefits is what will happen to mine.

False. Several factors determine the effect employment has on your benefits such as what benefits you receive, your past work activity, or your current earnings. The Social Security Administration must verify these factors to tell a person how working will affect their benefits.

6. Social Security doesn't want people to work.

False. Whenever someone works, even a little, it puts money back into the Social Security system, so they absolutely want people receiving benefits to work. Social Security has amazing work incentives to help people try to work and, if needed, keep their benefits while working.

For a person with a disability, the decision to work isn't easy, so it is important to have all the facts to make the best decision for you. Working with an employment provider or Vocational Rehabilitation counselor can help you find the right job fit and connect you to a benefits counselor. A benefits counselor (we call them *BIN Liaisons* in Indiana) can ensure that your earnings, work incentives, and benefits are reviewed and create a plan to help support you financially as you strive to be as independent as you want to be.

Resources

- [Benefits Information Network Fact Sheets](#)
- [Students in Transition: Working and Paying for Health Care](#)
- [Students in Transition: Social Security Disability Insurance](#)
- [Students in Transition: More State and Federal Benefits](#)

What's Next? is a project of the Center on Community Living and Careers and the Indiana Department of Education.

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