

Work Incentives for People on Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Work Incentives Connection Fact Sheet #2

January 2020

SSI Earned Income Exclusion - Social Security wants you to increase your income by working, so they count only a portion of your earnings in calculating your monthly SSI payment. The first \$65 of earnings is not counted, and then your SSI payment is reduced by \$1 for every \$2 you earn. Thanks to this formula, people on SSI are almost always better off working. ***Eligibility for the work incentives below may allow Social Security to pay you more SSI than you would otherwise be eligible to receive.***

Remember, SSI counts your gross earnings when they are received. Your earnings for the month are the total of the paychecks you received in the month before any deductions.

Impairment Related Work Expenses - If you pay out of your own pocket for things you need in order to work, those expenses may be deducted from your countable earnings. The expenses must be related to your disability or a medical condition that impacts your ability to work. Examples of Impairment Related Work Expenses include: medication co-pays, special equipment or vehicle modifications, and some other transportation expenses.

Blind Work Expenses – If you are blind, any earned income used to pay expenses related to working is not counted in calculating your SSI check amount. Expenses do not need to be related to blindness. Examples of Blind Work Expenses are: guide dog expenses, transportation, taxes, visual and sensory aides, and translation of materials into Braille.

Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) – If you have a specific vocational goal that will help you to become self-sufficient, a Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) may help you reach it. PASS can help you save for schooling, buying a vehicle, buying interview clothing, temporarily paying day care costs, or paying for new business start-up expenses.

Student Earned Income Exclusion - If you are a student and under age 22, the Student Earned Income Exclusion may help reduce your countable earnings. When figuring your SSI payment, Social Security will not count the first \$1,900 of earnings per month, up to a maximum of \$7,670 per year (in 2020).

SSI 1619(b) - If your earnings are high enough for your SSI payment to be reduced to \$0, you may be eligible for continued Medical Assistance coverage through the SSI 1619(b) program. In order to use SSI 1619(b), you must:

- continue to need and use Medical Assistance; remain disabled;
- continue to meet SSI asset limits (\$2,000 for an individual or \$3,000 for a couple); and
- respond to all Social Security requests for information.

As long as you meet these requirements, you will be eligible for 1619(b) until your annual earnings exceed \$53,658 (in 2019). If you have high health care costs, may be able to earn even more and still keep Medical Assistance coverage through the SSI 1619(b) program.

WORK INCENTIVES
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This is just a brief sketch of these work incentives. Please call the Work Incentives Connection for more information:

651-632-5113 or 1-800-976-6728

www.mnworkincentives.com

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