

Blind Work Expenses (BWE)

a program of **GOODWILL·EASTER SEALS®**
MINNESOTA

Using Blind Work Expenses allows you to keep more of your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment when you work.

Blind Work Expenses can be used if you are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits based on blindness. Important note: being “legally blind,” and/or qualifying for State Services for the Blind does not automatically qualify you for this work incentive. You must check that you can use Blind Work Expenses with your local Social Security office.

Examples of Blind Work Expenses include the cost(s) of:

- transportation to and from work
- meals consumed during work hours
- professional association fees and union dues
- federal, state, local income taxes, and Social Security taxes
- visual and sensory aids; translation of materials into Braille
- attendant care services
- guide dog expenses including food, vet bills and upkeep
- uniforms or other equipment needed for the job

Example of using Blind Work Expenses

- John receives \$783 of SSI when he is not working. If John starts working and has wages of \$885 per month, his SSI payment would be reduced to \$383 per month.
- However, if he earned \$885 and had \$200 in Blind Work Expenses, his SSI check would be \$583. This is \$200 more in SSI each month.

You report that when you work you will likely have the following potential Blind Work Expenses:

These Blind Work Expenses could increase your Supplemental Security Income payment when you work.

If you did not talk to anyone at the Connection, but believe that you may have Blind Work Expenses, write them out on the lines provided above.

If you want to know how SSI is calculated when you work and use BWE, call the Connection for more information.

To Use Blind Work Expenses:

1. Call your SSI Claims Specialist:

at: _____

Ask if you can use any of the expenses you listed on the front page as Blind Work Expenses.

Ask what information you need to send SSI so they can approve your Blind Work Expenses.

Ask how often you should send your paystubs and receipts.

2. Gather all the information the SSI Claims Specialist asks you to send in. This may include your paystubs and receipts for your Blind Work Expenses.

3. Send all the information to the Claims Specialist with a note asking her/him to call you to let you know if your expenses are approved.

4. **Do not assume you get to use Blind Work Expenses until your Claims Specialist says they are approved.** Call the Connection if you have problems or questions.

5. Keep all of your paystubs and receipts for Blind Work Expenses in a safe place so they are easy to find.

6. Be sure to send copies of you paystubs and receipts to Social Security when they ask for them.

NOTES TO KEEP

Date you called your Claims Specialist:

What you told your Claims Specialist and what they told you:

Did your Claims Specialist approve your Blind Work Expenses? Yes or NO

What do you need to send them?

When should you send the information in?

Date you sent the information to SSI:

If you need assistance or more information regarding how work will affect your government benefits call the Work Incentives Connection at 651-632-5113 or 1-800-976-6728.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Work Incentive Plan
Blind Work Expenses continued

This information was prepared for you by the Work Incentives Connection. The Connection cannot guarantee that you can use the work incentive, Blind Work Expenses. You must get this work incentive approved by your local Social Security office by following the steps outlined above.