

There's no need to fear: SSI WORK INCENTIVES ARE HERE!

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The Big Picture

- When a recipient works, their SSI payment goes down gradually as their wages go up.
- Social Security does not count all of a recipient's income when they go to work.
- The first \$20 from any source does not count. This is called the General Income Disregard.
- The first \$65 and $\frac{1}{2}$ the remainder of earned income do not count.

SSI Calculation Sheet 2021

Step	Calculations
Unearned Income	
General Income Exclusion (GIE) \$20	-
Countable Unearned Income	=
Gross Earned Income	
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-
Remainder	
GIE (if not used above) \$20	-
Remainder	
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE) \$65	-
Remainder	
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)	-
Remainder	
Divide by 2	
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-
Total Countable Earned Income	=
Total Countable Unearned Income	
Total Countable Earned Income	+
PASS Deduction	-
Total Countable Income	=
Base SSI Rate (\$794 individual, \$529.33 VTR, \$1,191 eligible couple)	
Total Countable Income	-
Adjusted SSI Payment	=
Adjusted SSI Payment	
Gross Unearned Income Received	+
Gross Earned Income Received	+
PASS, BWE and/or IRWE Expenses	-
Total Financial Outcome	=



Meet Maria

Maria is 19 years old. She has been offered a short-term job. She would work 20 hours per week and earn \$1,085 each month in October through April. Her family is worried about losing her SSI or causing an overpayment. They are also very worried about her Medicaid coverage.

SSI Calculation Sheet 2021

Step	Calculations
Unearned Income	0
General Income Exclusion (GIE) \$20	-0
Countable Unearned Income	=0
Gross Earned Income	1085
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-0
Remainder	1085
GIE (if not used above) \$20	-20
Remainder	1065
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE) \$65	-65
Remainder	1000
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)	-0
Remainder	1000
Divide by 2	500
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-0
Total Countable Earned Income	=500
Total Countable Unearned Income	0
Total Countable Earned Income	+500
PASS Deduction	-0
Total Countable Income	=500
Base SSI Rate (\$794 individual, \$529.33 VTR, \$1,191 eligible couple)	794
Total Countable Income	-500
Adjusted SSI Payment	=294
Adjusted SSI Payment	294
Gross Unearned Income Received	+0
Gross Earned Income Received	+1085
PASS, BWE and/or IRWE Expenses	-0
Total Financial Outcome	=1379



Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)

What is SEIE?

- SEIE stands for Student Earned Income Exclusion
- It allows SSI beneficiaries under the age of 22 who regularly attend school to exclude \$1,930 per month, up to \$7,770 per year. This amount changes every year due to the cost of living.
- This exclusion is applied before any other and is one of the most generous SSI incentives offered.

What is Social Security's Definition of regularly attending school?

- The student must take one or more courses of study and at least one of the following is true
 - In grades 7-12 for at least 12 hours a week
 - In a college for at least 8 hours a week
 - In a training course to prepare for employment 12 hours a week if the course is 15 hours if shop practice is involved
 - If a student attends less time for reasons beyond the student's control for example due to their disability still they must both study for the same amount of hours and have a home visitor who directs the study
- Home Schooling counts as long as the program meets the state regulations

How to use the Student Earn Income Exclusion?

If you receive SSI and start working contact your local social security office and report the earnings and ask the rep if you qualify for SEIE you can earn up to \$1930 per month for the benefits will not be reduced and for the year \$7,700

How does this apply to our scenario listed below?

As long as Maria is enrolled in College at least 8 hours a week or in an employment training program at least 12 hours a week. None of her income would be a counted as her gross earnings would not exceed \$7,700 for 2021 or 2022

SSI Calculation Sheet 2021

Step	Calculations
Unearned Income	0
General Income Exclusion (GIE) \$20	-0
Countable Unearned Income	=0
Gross Earned Income	1085
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-1085
Remainder	0
GIE (if not used above) \$20	-0
Remainder	0
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE) \$65	-0
Remainder	0
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)	-0
Remainder	0
Divide by 2	0
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-0
Total Countable Earned Income	=0
Total Countable Unearned Income	0
Total Countable Earned Income	+0
PASS Deduction	-0
Total Countable Income	=0
Base SSI Rate (\$794 individual, \$529.33 VTR, \$1,191 eligible couple)	794
Total Countable Income	-0
Adjusted SSI Payment	=794
Adjusted SSI Payment	794
Gross Unearned Income Received	+0
Gross Earned Income Received	+1085
PASS, BWE and/or IRWE Expenses	-0
Total Financial Outcome	=1879

SEIE Running Tally

A student earning less than \$1,930 per month will need to keep a running tally after deducting earnings each month since a total of \$7,770 per calendar year doesn't count.

It is important to keep this running tally to keep the student informed on how much SEIE remains.

Section 432 of the Social Security Protection Act extended the SEIE to all individuals on a record who are working under the age of 22 not just the SSI recipient this means that SEIE applies to earnings deemed from an ineligible spouse or parents and to the joint earned income of eligible couples when both members are under age 22.

The SEIE applies only once to the combined earnings of the couple, even if both members of the couple are students and working

The SEIE does not apply when one member of a couple is a non-working student and the other member of the couple works but is not a student



Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWEs) and Blind Work Expenses (BWEs)

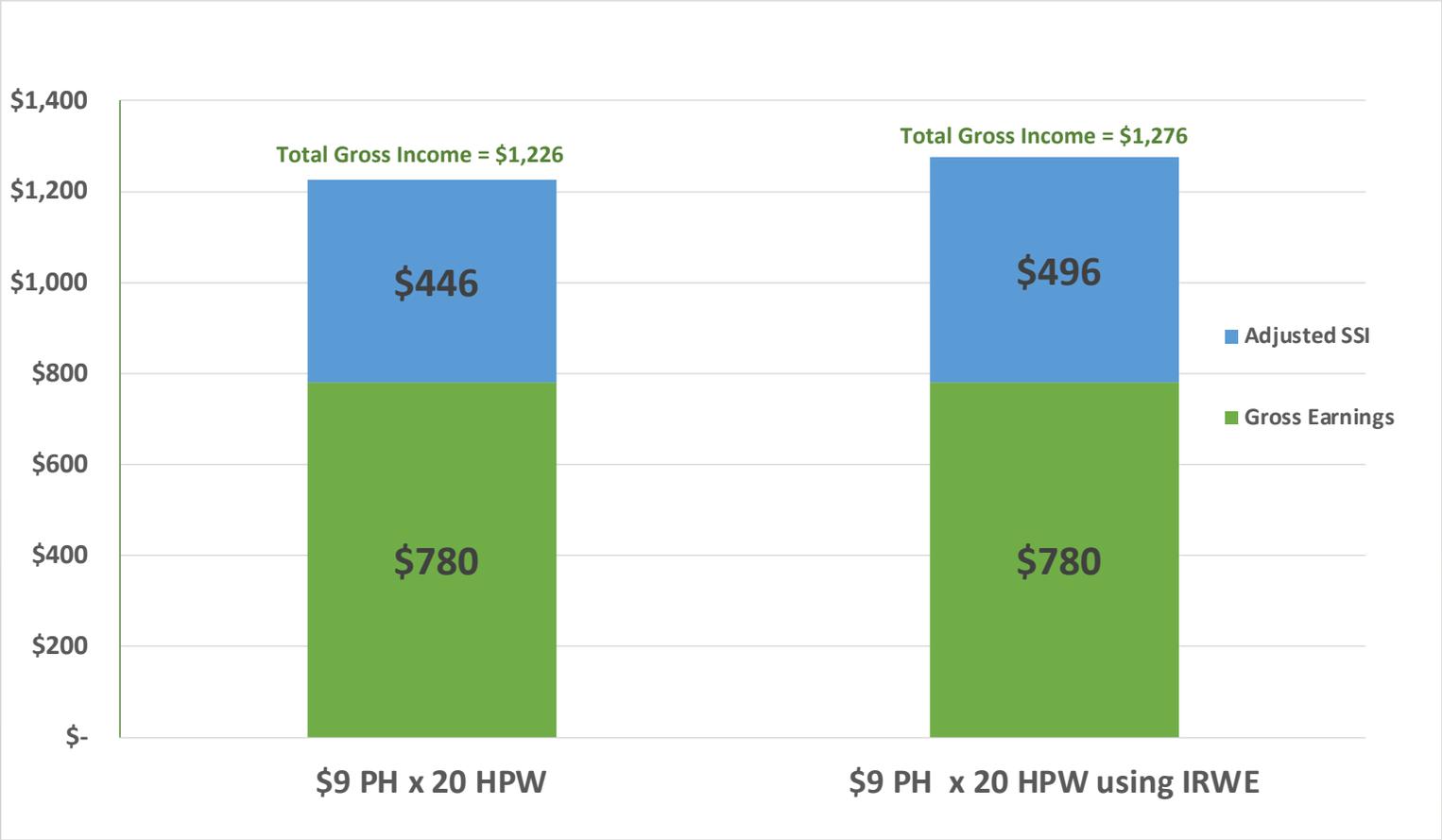
Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)

- Must be related to an impairment and
 - Helps you to work
 - Paid by the beneficiary and not reimbursed by another source
 - Paid within the month in which you worked and are reporting earnings
 - Must be reasonable
-
- If eligible, Social Security will deduct the expense from your gross income thus lowering your countable income and increasing your SSI benefit.
 - You must report the expense when you submit your monthly paystubs.
 - Expenses can be receipts but they can also be written down with specific details such as mileage and dates to and from work.

SSI Increase Using IRWE

Example: Reduced SSI without using IRWE	Reduced SSI using \$100 IRWE
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Earnings = \$780 gross per month2. Full SSI = \$7943. $\\$780 - \\$85 = \\$695$4. $\\$695 / 2 = \\3485. $\\$794 - \\$348 = \\$446$ (Adjusted SSI)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Earnings = \$780 gross per month2. Full SSI = \$7943. $\\$780 - \\$85 = \\$695$4. $\\$695 - \\$100 = \\$595$5. $\\$595 / 2 = \\297.5 or \$2986. $\\$794 - \\$298 = \\$496$ (Adjusted SSI)

Total Financial Outcome



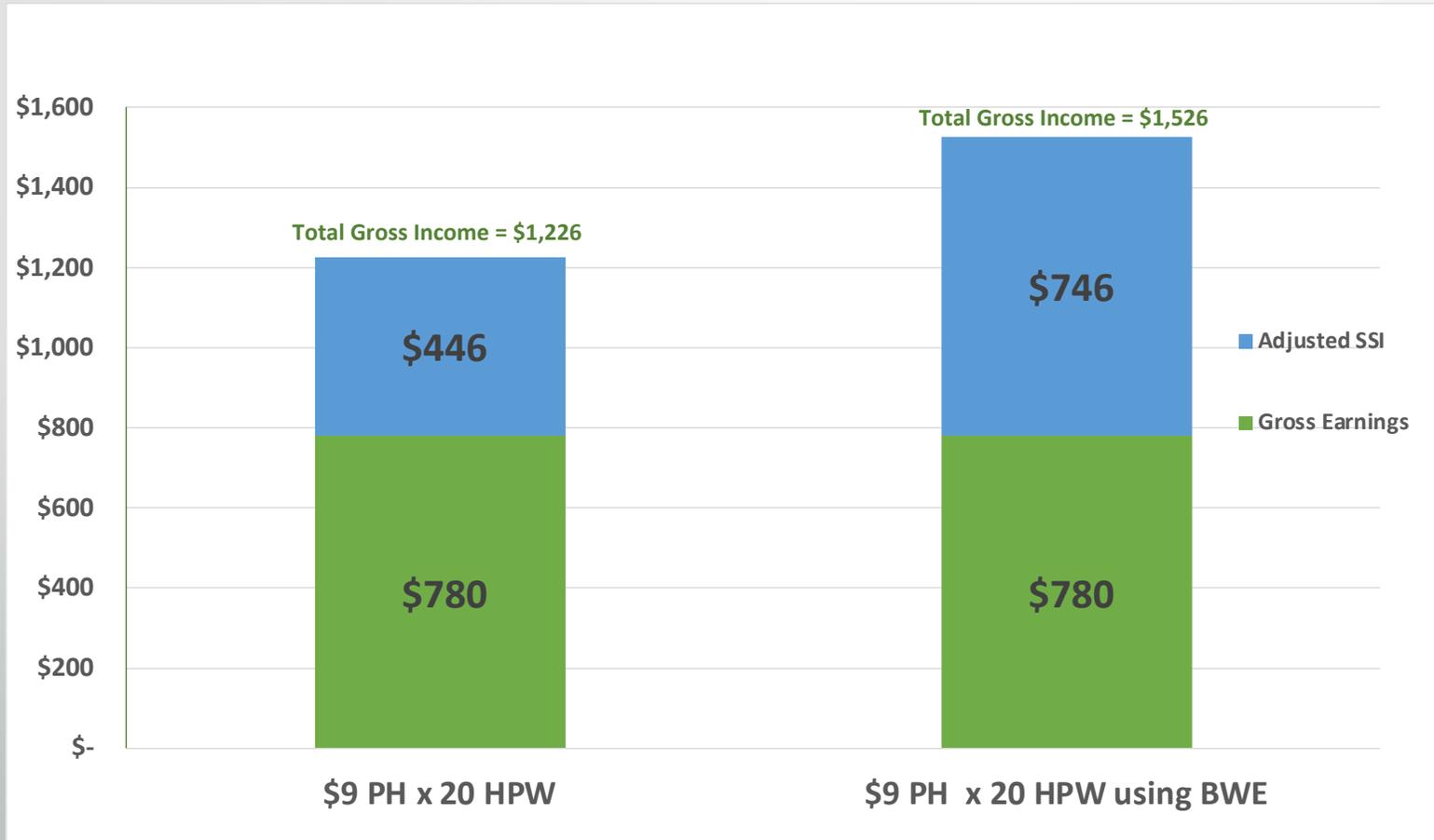
Blind Work Expense (BWE)

- Work related expenses that do NOT have to be related to your disability, are reasonable and are excluded from your countable earned income.
- Must have a primary diagnosis of blindness.
- Must be tracked and reported each month when submitting your paystubs.

- ❖ **Examples of allowable Expenses:**
- ❖ Federal, state, local and Social Security income taxes
- ❖ Transportation to and from work
- ❖ Vehicle modifications
- ❖ Meals consumed during work hours
- ❖ Guide dog expenses
- ❖ Work related training
- ❖ Visual and sensory aids
- ❖ Translation of materials to Braille
- ❖ Attendant care services
- ❖ Medical equipment or supplies that help you work
- ❖ Therapy

Gives you
MORE SSI when
earning income
from
employment

Total Financial Outcome



What if Maria had IRWEs or BWE?

- What if Maria paid \$100 per month for medication she needed to work because of her disability?
- What if Maria were blind and paid \$100 per month for a bus pass to get to and from work.

SSI Calculation Sheet 2021

Step	Calculations
Unearned Income	0
General Income Exclusion (GIE) \$20	-0
Countable Unearned Income	=0
Gross Earned Income	1085
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-0
Remainder	1085
GIE (if not used above) \$20	-20
Remainder	1065
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE) \$65	-65
Remainder	1000
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)	-100
Remainder	900
Divide by 2	450
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-0
Total Countable Earned Income	=450
Total Countable Unearned Income	0
Total Countable Earned Income	+450
PASS Deduction	-0
Total Countable Income	=450
Base SSI Rate (\$794 individual, \$529.33 VTR, \$1,191 eligible couple)	794
Total Countable Income	-450
Adjusted SSI Payment	=344
Adjusted SSI Payment	344
Gross Unearned Income Received	+0
Gross Earned Income Received	+1085
PASS, BWE and/or IRWE Expenses	-100
Total Financial Outcome	=1329

SSI Calculation Sheet 2021

Step	Calculations
Unearned Income	0
General Income Exclusion (GIE) \$20	-0
Countable Unearned Income	=0
Gross Earned Income	1085
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-0
Remainder	1085
GIE (if not used above) \$20	-20
Remainder	1065
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE) \$65	-65
Remainder	1000
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)	-0
Remainder	1000
Divide by 2	500
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-100
Total Countable Earned Income	=400
Total Countable Unearned Income	0
Total Countable Earned Income	+400
PASS Deduction	-0
Total Countable Income	=400
Base SSI Rate (<i>\$794 individual, \$529.33 VTR, \$1,191 eligible couple</i>)	794
Total Countable Income	-400
Adjusted SSI Payment	=394
Adjusted SSI Payment	394
Gross Unearned Income Received	+0
Gross Earned Income Received	+1085
PASS, BWE and/or IRWE Expenses	-100
Total Financial Outcome	=1379



Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS)

PASS

- What is it?
- A PASS is a work incentive that allows individuals with disabilities to set aside income and/or resources to pay for items or services needed to achieve specific work goals.
- The purpose of a PASS is to increase or maintain income-producing capabilities, thus reducing reliance on government benefits.
- These plans allow individuals to receive higher SSI payments as they work toward self-sufficiency.
- How is it helpful?
- Income and resources, which could normally prevent SSI eligibility or reduce the SSI check, can be disregarded if they are placed in the PASS and used towards vocational objectives.
- The individual can use the extra SSI to pay for living expenses such as housing and food
- The income or resources set aside in a PASS is used for items or services needed to achieve the designated occupational goal (education or training, attendant care, supported employment services, transportation, job-related items, equipment to start a business)

Who qualifies for a PASS?

- To qualify for a PASS, a person must meet the following criteria:
- Be under age 65, or be previously entitled to an SSI benefit based on blindness or disability the month prior to reaching age 65;
- Meet Social Security's definition of disability or blindness;
- Meet all SSI eligibility criteria with the exception of the income and resources test; and
- Have earned income, unearned income, deemed income, in-kind support, or countable resources to set aside in the PASS.

*****Just because an individual is eligible for a PASS does not mean that they are a good candidate for a PASS!

Likely PASS candidate:

- A likely PASS candidate would typically have one or more of the following characteristics:
- Eligible for or already receiving rehabilitation services from a State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency, a state agency for the blind, other public agency (e.g., Department of Veterans Affairs) or a private agency (e.g., Employment Network, United Cerebral Palsy, Goodwill Industries, etc.);
- Enrolled in school or other training program, or interested in obtaining post-secondary education or occupational skill training of some type;
- Currently working, seeking employment, or interested in pursuing employment or self-employment;
- Interested in becoming self-supporting;
- In need of services or items in order to achieve a desired work or self-employment goal; or
- Social Security would otherwise deny initial SSI eligibility or suspend or terminate continued eligibility solely due to excess income or resources, or Social Security would otherwise reduce SSI benefits due to some form of countable income.

*Information on this page from VCU 2021 WIPA Manual Module 3, pages 183-184

Unlikely PASS Candidate:

- Unlikely PASS candidates would include those who:
- Already secured the needed items and services under a previous PASS and haven't tried to seek employment in the work goal for which they obtained the required items or services that they identified as being sufficient to make them employable;
- Are ineligible for SSI benefits for any reason other than excess income or resources;
- Are under age 15 or over full retirement age (with some exceptions);
- Don't have any income or resources to set aside in the PASS or are unwilling to use set aside funds strictly for the PASS;
- Don't require any additional items or services to become employed or self-employed; or aren't interested in working or decreasing dependency on public benefits.

PASS Requirements

Feasible Occupational Goal:

Each PASS must include, and clearly describe, a specific occupational goal

Limited to one PASS per occupational goal

The goal must be feasible: the individual must have a reasonable chance of performing the work associated with the goal

Viable Plan for Achieving the Goal:

Plan must be realistic, taking into account the individual's education and training needs, assistive technology required, and steps necessary to become employed (or start a business)

Individual must be able to live on the amount of disposable income he or she has once the PASS is in place

Earnings Requirements:

To approve a PASS, the Social Security Administration must expect that the plan will result in a level of earnings that will decrease dependence on Social Security benefits

PASS Example

- Charlie is 30 yrs old and receives a SSDI check of \$920 per month. He wants to go to college to obtain a degree in nursing. His goal is to then become employed as an RN. He applies for SSI and once this is approved, he applied for a PASS which is also approved. He will put aside his current countable unearned income of \$900 (SSDI payment of \$920-\$20 exclusion) toward PASS expenses (laptop, books, a car to get to work once employed). This means that the \$900 will not count toward his eligibility for SSI. Since he is not working and the SSDI is not counted, he will receive the full Federal Benefit Rate in SSI each month (\$794 in 2021) to use to pay his usual living expenses. When his PASS is completed, Charlie will have a degree and can obtain a full-time job that will decrease his dependence on Social Security benefits.

Applying for a PASS

- Application is: SSA-545-BK
- Consult a CWIC, Work Incentives Practitioner, or other professional with PASS experience
- Passonline.org is a website sponsored by Cornell University that provides specific information about PASS
- **POMS SI 00870.000 – Plans to Achieve Self-Support for Blind or Disabled People – Subchapter Table of Contents**
(<https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0500870000>)

SSI Calculation Sheet 2021

Step	Calculations
Unearned Income	
General Income Exclusion (GIE) \$20	-
Countable Unearned Income	=
Gross Earned Income	
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-
Remainder	
GIE (if not used above) \$20	-
Remainder	
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE) \$65	-
Remainder	
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)	-
Remainder	
Divide by 2	
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-
Total Countable Earned Income	=
Total Countable Unearned Income	
Total Countable Earned Income	+
PASS Deduction	-
Total Countable Income	=
Base SSI Rate (\$794 individual, \$529.33 VTR, \$1,191 eligible couple)	
Total Countable Income	-
Adjusted SSI Payment	=
Adjusted SSI Payment	
Gross Unearned Income Received	+
Gross Earned Income Received	+
PASS, BWE and/or IRWE Expenses	-
Total Financial Outcome	=



SSI Wage Reporting

Wages must be reported monthly

- Report wages by the 6th of every month.
- Call your local office.
- Visit your local office in person. (Offices are not currently open due to the COVID pandemic.)
- Use your my Social Security account.
- Use the mobile phone app.
- Find your contact information for your local Social Security office at www.socialsecurity.gov/locator and search by zip code.

Wage Reporting Tips

- Income earned this month will be used to calculate the SSI payment in 2 months.
 - For example, if a recipient worked in September 2021, then they should report wages by October 6, 2021. That wage information will be used to calculate the November 2021 SSI payment.
- If a recipient earns so much in wages that the SSI payment is reduced to \$0, then that person could be in 1619(b) status, if
 - Continue to be under the SSI resource limit
 - Earn less than the 1619(b) threshold amount
 - In Ohio, \$36,985 currently
 - Individualized threshold if higher than average Medicaid cost of care.
 - SSI payments can restart if wages fall.



SSI Resource Limit and STABLE Accounts

Resources Limits for SSI

Resources are defined as cash and any other personal property including any real property that an individual or a spouse owns has the authority to convert to cash and is not legally restricted for support and maintenance

To be eligible for SSI an individuals countable resources must not exceed \$2,000

If an eligible couple receives SSI the combined countable resources can't exceed \$3,000

When in doubt if whether or not a specific item counts as a resources for SSI purpose its always best to contact the local Social Security of for additional information.

Household Goods and Personal Effects. SSI will not count resources of cultural or religious significance to an individual and items required because of a person's impairment. However SSI will continue to count item that were acquired, or are held for their value or as an investment. Such as jewelry that isn't worn or held for Family significance or collectibles.

Medical Devices and Adaptive Equipment are excluded

Life insurance Policies Term Life insurance generally has no values except upon death

- Term policies generally have no cash surrender value while the person is alive and therefore would not count as a resource for SSI eligibility purposes however some term policies do have a cash surrender value that maybe countable. With Whole life policies cash surrender value of 1500.00 or more can be a countable resource

Resources Continued

A house that is the primary residence of an SSI recipient is excluded no matter how much it is worth

One car will be excluded if it is used for transportation needs of the SSI recipient if there is more than one car Social Security will excluded the car of higher value.

Each individual or spouse may have one burial fund up to a \$1500 value

Retirement funds

Are annuities or work-related plans of an employer or union and hold in an individual retirement account IRA Social Security makes resource determination for retirement funds based on an individual's ability to retrieve funds from the account. A retirement fund owned by an individual counts as a resource if they have the option to withdraw it in a lump sum. However a retirement isn't a resource if the person must terminate the job in order to obtain payment

Educational Grants

Social Security Excludes all student financial assistance grants, Scholarships, fellowships and gifts used to pay tuition

Stable Accounts

What is a Stable Account?

A Stable Account is an investment account that allows qualified individuals with disabilities to save and invest money without losing eligibility for Medicaid and SSI. Social Security disregards the first \$100,000 in a Stable account when counting resources.

What are the benefits of opening a Stable Account?

Stable Accounts allow Individuals with Disabilities to invest up to \$15,000 from any source and an additional \$12,760 from wages annually

Account funds can be used on the following expenses; education, housing, transportation, healthcare, assistive technology, employment needs and basic living expenses.

Who is eligible?

Someone whose disability occurred before the age of 26, has been living with their disability for at least 1 year

They must also do one of the following

Be eligible for SSI or SSDI

Have a condition listed on the Social Security Administration's Compassionate Allowance list or self-certify their diagnosis

What is the Stable Card?

- The stable card is a debit card that participants can easily send money from a STABLE best of all it is free!
- The Stable Card is a pre-loaded debit card is accepted anywhere MasterCard is accepted.
- How do I enroll?
- A STABLE account can be opened by a qualifying person with a disability, the parent or legal guardian or Power of Attorney.
- Online enrollment is free a minimum of \$25 is needed to open an account go to stableaccount.com to enroll for questions call 1-800-439-1653 or email team@stableaccount.com



**Time for
Questions**