

## What is the “Message”?

- Paid employment and Social Security disability benefits are NOT necessarily mutually exclusive – beneficiaries do not have to choose between one or the other.
- It is possible to work (even full-time) and keep Medicaid and/or Medicare in almost every case.
- It is possible to work and come out ahead financially even if public benefits are reduced or ceased entirely.
- It is possible to get benefits back again if they are lost due to employment.

## Supplemental Security Income Disability (SSI) Working While Disabled

- **Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA).** A blind individual is eligible for SSI payments even if engaging in SGA, provided the other requirements for eligibility are met (income and resources). For all other disabilities, SGA only applies when the initial disability decision is made. After the prerequisite month is met, SSI recipients who are disabled may continue to receive payments until their countable income exceeds the SSI limits.
- **General Income Exclusion.** \$20 per month of any income is excluded.
- **Earned Income Exclusion.** \$65 per month of earned income plus one-half of the remaining earned income in the month is excluded.
- **Student/child Earned Income Exclusion.** For a blind or disabled individual under age 22 who is a student regularly attending school, up to \$1,790 per month of earned income (but not more than \$7,200 in a calendar year) is excluded.
- **Impairment Related Work Expense.** Certain expenses for things a person with a disability needs because of his or her impairment in order to work may be deducted when counting earnings to determine if a person is eligible and to figure the payment amount.
- **Blind Work Expenses.** Represents any earned income of a blind person which is used to meet any expenses reasonably attributable to earning the income.
- **Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS).** A SSI recipient who is blind or disabled may set aside income and resources toward an approved Plan for Achieving Self-Support.
- **Continuation of Medicaid Eligibility (1619B).** Medicaid may continue for SSI recipients who are blind or disabled and earn over the SSI limits if they cannot afford similar medical care and depend on Medicaid in order to work. There is a "Threshold test" and a "Medicaid use test".

Threshold test. Cannot have earnings sufficient to replace SSI cash benefits, Medicaid benefits, and publicly-funded personal or attendant care that would be lost due to his or her earnings. SSA has computed a threshold amount for each State. However, if the individual is not eligible using the charted threshold amount, they may be eligible under an individualized threshold calculation.

Medicaid use test. An individual must depend on Medicaid coverage to continue working. An individual depends on Medicaid if he or she: used Medicaid coverage within the past 12 months; or expects to use Medicaid coverage in the next 12 months; or would be unable to pay unexpected medical bills in the next 12 months without Medicaid.

- **Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits.** Within 60 months from the month of termination of benefits due to work, if the individual is unable to work because of the same medical condition, they can file a request for reinstatement of benefits. While Social Security is making a new determination, the individual may receive up to six months of provisional benefits, including Medicare and Medicaid, as appropriate.
- **Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation.** If a person recovers while participating in a vocational rehabilitation program that is likely to lead to becoming self-supporting, benefits may continue until the program ends (Section 301 benefits).

## **Social Security Disability (SSDI) Working While Disabled**

- **Trial Work Period.** A period of nine months (not necessarily consecutive) in a rolling 60 consecutive month period when earnings of a Social Security beneficiary who is blind or disabled will not affect his or her benefit. Effective 01/2017 months with earnings of more than \$840 are counted as a trial work months.
- **Substantial Gainful Activity Level (SGA).** \$1,170 a month effective 01/2017 for people who are disabled, \$1,950 a month for people who are blind.
- **Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)/Subsidy and Special Conditions.** Things a person with a disability needs because of his/her impairment in order to work are impairment related work expenses and may be deducted when counting earnings to determine if the person is performing substantial gainful activity. Subsidy and Special Conditions are also considered to determine SGA and are supports received on the job such as job coaching, extra supervision, and fewer or simpler tasks. These may be provided by the employer or a third party.
- **Extended Period of Eligibility.** For three years after a trial work period, a Social Security beneficiary who is blind or disabled may receive a disability check for any month that his/her earnings are below the substantial gainful activity level.
- **Continuation of Medicare.** If Social Security disability payments stop because of substantial gainful activity, but the person is still disabled, Medicare can continue for at least 93 months after the trial work period. Hospital Insurance (HI/Part A) is free. However, a premium is required for Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI/Part B) unless the State is paying the premium.
- **Medicare for the Working Disabled.** After the 93-month period of continuation of Medicare, the individual loses free Hospital Insurance. However, for as long as they continue to have a disabling impairment, a disabled individual who loses premium-free HI solely because they are working may enroll in hospital insurance only or hospital and medical insurance by paying monthly premiums. They may qualify for a reduced hospital insurance premium and/or the State may pay for their hospital insurance if they meet the criteria.
- **Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits.** Within 60 months from the month of termination of benefits due to work, if the individual is unable to work because of the same medical condition, they can file a request for reinstatement of benefits. While Social Security is making a new determination, the individual may receive up to six months of provisional benefits, including Medicare and Medicaid, as appropriate.
- **Recovery During Vocational Rehabilitation.** If a person recovers while participating in a vocational rehabilitation program that is likely to lead to becoming self-supporting, benefits may continue until the program ends (Section 301 benefits).



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# **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY MEDICAID WHEN I GO TO WORK?**

## **Continued Medicaid Eligibility – Section 1619 (b)**

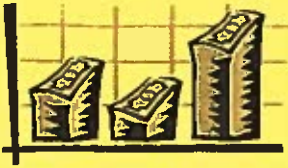
**This incentive continues Medicaid coverage for most working SSI beneficiaries even after earnings become too high to allow a cash benefit. To qualify for this incentive the person must:**

- **Have been eligible for SSI cash payment for at least one month.**
- **Still meet the disability requirement.**
- **Meet the Medicaid “needs” test. (used Medicaid within the past 12 months, or expects to use in the next 12 months, or would be unable to pay unexpected medical bills in the next 12 months without Medicaid)**
- **Have GROSS annual earned income less than the current state “threshold amount”.**
- **Have countable unearned income of less than the current FBR (\$733) and resources under the current limit (\$2,000) for SSI.**

**What does the 1619 (b) provision do?**

- **Enables people who are ineligible for continued Medicaid coverage because earnings exceed the threshold amount to get SSI cash payments again if earnings fall below the break-even point within twelve months.**
- **Allows people who are ineligible for continued Medicaid coverage because earnings exceed the threshold amount to regain Medicaid eligibility if earnings drop below the threshold amount within twelve months.**
- **Allows eligible 1619 (b) recipients to get a SSI cash payment at any time earnings fall below the break-even point.**
- **Enables people to maintain eligibility for SSI cash payments or continued Medicaid coverage after a period of ineligibility without filing a new application.**





# Did You Know?



You can work and earn up to **\$1,790** per month with no change in your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability check if you are:

- **Under age 22 and**
- **Regularly attending school**



If you qualify, SSA does not count the first **\$1,790** of your earned income up to a calendar year maximum of **\$7,200**. SSA calls this the Student Earned Income Exclusion (**SEIE**).

## If this is you:

When you report your work to your local Social Security Office, also take proof that you are attending school.

If you have more questions, contact your local Social Security Office.



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Amounts effective  
01/01/17