

Social Security Administration

Glossary

SSDI Specific Terms

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI): SSDI provides benefits to disabled or blind persons who are insured by workers contributions to the Social Security trust fund. These contributions are based on your earnings (or those of your spouse or parents). Your dependents may also be eligible for benefits from your earnings record. Social Security Disability Insurance is authorized under title II of the Social Security Act.

Medicare: Health insurance program for SSDI eligible beneficiaries (Title II). Medicare has four parts: Medicare Part A, Hospital Insurance; Medicare Part B, Medical Insurance; Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage), which was formerly known as Medicare + Choice; and Medicare Part D, prescription drug coverage.

Continuation of Medicare Coverage: If your benefits stop because you are working you can receive at least 93 consecutive months of Medicare coverage after your trial work period (TWP). This provision allows your health insurance to continue even after your benefits have stopped.

Childhood Disability Benefits (CDB): CDB benefits are for “Adult Children” who became disabled before age 22 and their parent is deceased or receives disability or retirement benefits. The “Adult Child” is an individual who is adopted, or, in some cases, a stepchild, grandchild, or step grandchild of an insured SSDI beneficiary. The Adult Child must be unmarried, age 18 or older, and have a disability that started before age 22. CDB beneficiaries are also referred to as “disabled adult child (DAC) beneficiaries”.

SSI Specific Terms

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): The SSI program makes cash assistance payments to aged, blind, and disabled persons (including children) who have limited income and resources. Supplemental Security Income program is authorized under title XVI of the Social Security Act.

Medicaid: Medical coverage provided to SSI eligible recipients (Title XVI).

1619(b): After you return to work, your Medicaid coverage can continue, even if your earnings (alone or in combination with your other income) become too high for an SSI cash payment.

Countable Income: The amount of money left after SSA subtracts all available deductions from your total income. SSA uses this amount to decide your SSI eligibility and payment amounts.

Resources: When SSA decides if you are eligible for SSI benefits, they evaluate your income and resources. Resources are anything you own. For example, bank accounts, stocks, business assets, real estate property, or personal property that you can use for your support and maintenance are considered resources. SSA does not count all of your resources; i.e., life insurance policies. You can contact SSA to find out which resources are counted.

Break-Even Point: The dollar amount of total income (after we apply all applicable deductions) that will reduce the SSI payment to zero for a particular case. Your break-even point depends on your earned and unearned income, living arrangements, applicable income exclusions, and state supplement, if any.

Federal Benefit Rate (FBR): The basic benefits standards used in computing the amount of your federal SSI payments. Benefit levels differ for individuals and couples living in households and for persons in Medicaid institutions. Federal benefit rates may be increased annually to reflect increases in the cost of living.

Work Incentive Terms

Note: There are many work incentives available. Some work incentives apply to SSDI while others pertain strictly to SSI. There are also some work incentives that are applicable to BOTH SSDI and SSI. Consult the SSA Redbook for a complete list of work incentives and the appropriate program.

www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook

Blind Work Expenses (BWE): If you are blind, we do not count any earned income that you use to meet expenses in earning that income when we decide your SSI eligibility and payment amount. Common examples of BWE include state and federal payroll taxes, and money spent for meals at work.

Expedited Reinstatement (EXR): EXR is a safety net if your cash benefits end because of your work. You may request reinstatement of your benefits within five years of when they ended if you stop working at the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level because of your impairment. You may get up to six months of provisional (temporary) benefits while we make a decision on your request.

Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE): EPE is a consecutive 36-month period that follows your Trial Work Period (TWP). During your EPE, you may still receive payments depending on how much you work and earn. SSA pays your disability benefits during your EPE if your condition is still disabling, and your work is not SGA. Your benefits will end if your work is substantial after the end of your EPE.

Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE): IWREs are items and services that you pay out of pocket and that you need to work because of your impairment. IWREs can

be deducted from the amount of money you earn from employment and can reduce your countable earned income. Some examples are: medicines, co-pays, service animals, counseling services, and attendant care services. It does not matter if you also need the items for normal daily activities.

Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS): Under an approved PASS, you may set aside income and resources over a reasonable time that will enable you to reach a work goal to become financially self-supporting. You can use the income and resources that you set aside to obtain training or education, purchase equipment, establish a business, etc. We do not count the income and resources that you set aside under a PASS when we decide SSI eligibility and payment amount.

Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE): If you are under age 22 and regularly attending school, the SEIE allows you to have some of your earnings excluded from your income. We usually adjust the amounts we can exclude each year based on the cost-of living.

Subsidies and Special Conditions: Supports you receive on the job that may result in more pay than the actual value of the work you perform. We use only the actual value of the work you perform when we make an SGA decision.

Trial Work Period (TWP): The TWP lets you test your ability to work or run a business for at least nine (9) months and receive full SSDI benefits if you report your work activity and your impairment does not improve.

Unincurred Business Expenses: Support contributed to your self-employment effort by someone else for example, free rent, donated supplies, or unpaid help from friends or family members. If you are self-employed, we deduct unincurred business expenses from earnings when we make an SGA decision.

Unsuccessful Work Attempt (UWA): An UWA is an effort to do substantial work (in employment or self-employment) that you stopped or reduced to below the SGA level after a short time (six months or less) because of your impairment, or the removal of special conditions related to your impairment that were essential to your work. We do not count earnings during a UWA when we make an SGA decision.

Generic SSA Terms

Benefit Planning Query (BPQY): The BPQY is an important planning tool for disability beneficiaries or any person who may be developing customized services for a disability beneficiary who wants to start working or stay on the job. The BPQY provides current information about your disability cash benefits, health insurance, scheduled continuing disability reviews, representative payee, and work history, as stored in our electronic records.

Continuing Disability Review (CDR): Our process of obtaining complete current information about your condition to decide if your SSDI or SSI benefits should continue.

Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA): We will evaluate your work activity if you are applying for or receiving disability benefits under SSDI, or if you are applying for benefits because of a disability (other than blindness) under SSI. Under both programs, we generally use earnings guidelines to evaluate your work activity to decide whether your work is substantial, and whether we may consider you disabled under the law.

Earned income: Earned income is money received from wages, including from a sheltered workshop or work activity center, self-employment earnings, royalties and payments for volunteer work speeches.

Unearned income: Unearned income is money received from all other sources; for example, gifts, interest, pensions, Social Security, and veteran's benefits. Unearned income also includes "in-kind income" (food or shelter) and "deemed income" (some of the income of a spouse, parent, or sponsor of an alien).

Ticket to Work (TTW): The TTW Program is for SSI or SSDI beneficiaries who want to work and participate in planning their employment. Participation in the TTW program increases your available choices when obtaining employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services you may need to get or keep a job. It is a free and voluntary service. When you participate in the TTW program, you are using your ticket. You might not be subject to a continuing disability review while you are using your Ticket.

Timely Progress Review (TPR): Periodic 12 month reviews of your progress after you assign your TTW to state VR or an Employment Network provider. Failure to pass Timely Progress Reviews, results in continuation of regularly scheduled Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs).

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): The VR program is a public program administered by a State VR agency in each State or U.S. territory to help people with physical or mental disabilities become gainfully employed.