

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## SOCIAL SECURITY WORK INCENTIVES: THE BASICS

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## BENEFITS CHECKLIST

**BENEFICIARY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>FEDERAL BENEFITS</b>
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\_\_\_\_\_ **SSDI (TITLE II) AMOUNT/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **SSI (TITLE XVI) AMOUNT/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **MEDICARE: PART A** \_\_\_\_\_ **PART B** \_\_\_\_\_ **PART D** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>STATE BENEFITS</b>
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\_\_\_\_\_ **MEDICAID: APTD** \_\_\_\_\_ **MEAD** \_\_\_\_\_ **TANF** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **NO SPEND-DOWN**

\_\_\_\_\_ **SPEND-DOWN AMOUNT/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **MEAD PREMIUM/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **CASH ASSISTANCE AMOUNT/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **FOOD STAMPS AMOUNT/MONTH** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

\_\_\_\_\_ **HOUSING SUBSIDY:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **PUBLIC HOUSING**

\_\_\_\_\_ **SECTION 8**

\_\_\_\_\_ **OTHER**

**OTHER BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

\_\_\_\_\_ **FUEL ASSISTANCE AMOUNT/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **ELECTRIC ASSISTANCE AMOUNT/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE DISCOUNT PROGRAM AMOUNT/MONTH \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ **WAGES AMOUNT/MONTH (GROSS): \$** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **SELF-EMPLOYMENT NET EARNINGS/YEAR \$** \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPARISON OF SSI AND SSDI

	<b>SSI Supplemental Security Income</b>	<b>SSDI Social Security Disability Insurance</b>
<b>Program</b>	Public Assistance	Disability Insurance
<b>Status</b>	Recipient	Beneficiary
<b>Eligibility</b>	Disability; Unable to earn SGA and Low Monthly Income/Resources	Disability; Unable to earn SGA, and "Insured" status
<b>Work History</b>	None or Limited	Has worked or is working (Meets certain minimum work history requirements)
<b>Pay Date</b>	First day of month	Paid on Wednesdays - based on birthday (some exceptions for concurrent beneficiaries)
<b>Benefit Amount</b>	Cannot exceed monthly maximum set by SSA: \$733/single, \$1,100/couple in 2015	Amount determined by amount of FICA taxes paid through employment
<b>Effect of Earned Income on Benefits</b>	Gradual decrease in check amount as earned income increases	Total SSDI amount or zero (SGA)
<b>Effect of Savings on Benefits</b>	Cannot save more than \$2,000/\$3,000 couple	Assets are not counted against eligibility
<b>Health Insurance</b>	Usually Medicaid	Medicare eligibility after 24 months on SSDI (up to 93 months after TWP)
<b>Health Insurance and Earnings</b>	On SSI- Can earn up to \$39,503/year and stay on Medicaid (1619b). Can earn up to \$101,628/year and keep Medicaid through the MEAD program!!!	Keep Medicare for at least 7 1/2 years after the individual's Trial Work Period ends

## ***SSDI Work Incentives***

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### **Ways to test out work gradually:**

#### **Trial Work Period (TWP)**

- 9 months when the beneficiary can earn any amount of money and still receive the full SSDI check.
- The 9 months do not have to be consecutive, so a beneficiary can start and stop work if needed.
- If a beneficiary earns less than \$780 in a month in 2015, that month won't even be counted as one of your 9 Trial Work months.
- This threshold was lower in past years, so if a beneficiary previously worked after started receiving SSDI, she/he may have used some or all of the Trial Work months without realizing it.

#### **Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)**

- The EPE begins automatically the month after the beneficiary has used his or her 9<sup>th</sup> Trial Work month.
- The EPE lasts for 36 consecutive months, whether beneficiary works or not.
- In the EPE, Social Security's SGA level becomes a consideration in whether a beneficiary will receive SSDI cash benefit. In 2015 SGA is \$1,090 **countable earnings** per month (or \$1,820 if you are blind). Someone earning more than SGA may not be eligible for SSDI payments, unless they can use work incentives (see below).
- If a beneficiary is in the EPE and the **countable earnings**\*\* are below the SGA level, beneficiary continues to receive monthly SSDI check.
- In the EPE, a beneficiary is not eligible for the SSDI check in any month when the **countable earnings** are at or above SGA.
- During the 36-month EPE, no new application is required to get the benefits restarted if the earnings fall back below the SGA level. A beneficiary just needs to call SSA and let them know whenever earnings are changed. It is equally important that beneficiary also report if the earnings go above the SGA level again.

***Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA): Social Security sets this amount each year. It is based on the national average wage index. For 2015, the SGA amount is \$1,090 per month. A beneficiary can use the incentives below to reduce the earnings that SSA counts (countable earnings).***

**\*\*Deductions that allow beneficiaries to earn over \$1,090/mo and keep their SSDI cash benefits:**

**Impairment Related Work Expenses:** Those items or services that the beneficiary pays for, are related to the person's disability, without which he/she could not work.

**Job Coach Subsidy:** Social Security can deduct the time for a job coach spends with the person related to job performance (the monthly deduction is usually the amount of the beneficiary's hourly wage multiplied by the job coach's hours with that person).

**Employer Subsidy:** Deduction of the value of any support or adjustment the employer provides because of the beneficiary's disability.

## **Extended Health Insurance Coverage for Beneficiaries Who Work:**

Extended Medicare Coverage: Once on Medicare, beneficiaries can keep Medicare throughout TWP, EPE and beyond, depending on the date SSDI cash benefits stopped. The beneficiary may be required to pay a premium.

### **“Easy Off, Easy On” Rules:**

**Expedited Reinstatement:** Beginning January 2001, new rules allow individuals who have lost their SSDI eligibility because they are working to get back onto SSDI benefits more easily if: 1) they lost their job due to their disability, and 2) they lost their job within five years of going off SSDI. Expedited Reinstatement allows the person to get six months of “provisional” SSDI payments again within a month or two of informing the SSA office.

### **VR “301” Extended Benefit Provision**

Continued Payment under a Vocational Rehabilitation Plan: If the recipient loses SSDI eligibility because of “Medical Recovery” but is still in a formal vocational plan with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Office or an improved Employment Network under the Ticket to Work option, the recipient can ask for extended eligibility for benefits.

## ***SSI Work Incentives***

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### **Ways to test out work gradually and generally have more money to live on:**

**Income Exclusions (Earned Income Exclusion):** The SSI recipient's SSI check is reduced by \$1 for every \$2 the person earns, after excluding \$65. Here is how it works:

- 1. General Income Exclusion:** The first \$20 of earnings is not counted (only if no other income)
- 2. Earned Income Exclusion:** The next \$65 of earnings is not counted.
- 3. Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE's):** Those costs the recipient pays for out-of-pocket, that are related to his/her disability, and that are related to the person's ability to work.
- 4. ½ Remainder Exclusion:** After discounting the above exclusions, the Social Security Administration divides what's left of the person's earned income to determine the portion of work income that they will count and be subtracted from the SSI total.

### **Plan for Achieving Self Support (P.A.S.S.):**

Under a PASS plan a recipient can set aside income in order to save for expenses related to a specific work goal, such as education, vocational training, buying equipment or inventory to start a business, etc. The funds must be saved in a separate bank account and the goal of the PASS must result in less dependence on SSI when the PASS is completed. While using a PASS, the money recipient set aside is not counted in calculating the monthly SSI payment. This allows a recipient to receive more SSI than he/she would without the PASS. If a recipient also is receiving SSDI, he/she may also be eligible to use PASS. Contact Social Security for more information.

#### **A PASS Plan Must:**

- Be designed especially for a recipient and be in writing (SSA prefers that their form is used, the SSA-545-BK). You can get copies of the PASS form at your local SSA office, from any PASS Expert, or from the SSA web site at: [www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-545.html](http://www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-545.html);
- Have a specific work goal that you are capable of achieving;
- Have a specific timeframe for reaching a vocational goal;
- Show what money (other than an SSI payments) and other resources you have or receive that you will use to reach your goal;
- Show how your money and resources will be used to reach your work goal;
- Show how the money you set aside will be kept separate from other funds;
- Be approved by SSA; and

- Be reviewed by SSA periodically to assure your plan is actually helping you achieve progress.

The Social Security Administration has a group of staff members, called the PASS Cadre, who can help you understand all the aspects of a PASS. The PASS Cadre coordinates PASS activities from start to finish.

***Granite State Independent Living's Financial Planning for Employment has a program staff member who is specialized in preparing PASSes.***

## **Extended Medicaid coverage for recipients who work:**

Continued Medicaid Coverage for Individuals on SSI (1619b): People who have SSI and Medicaid will keep Medicaid as long as their annual gross income remains under the annual state threshold. The NH annual threshold in 2015 is \$39,503. To remain eligible, recipients must keep their assets below the SSI \$2,000 limit.

## **Medicaid for Employed Adults with Disabilities (MEAD):**

New Hampshire has a special Medicaid option for employed individuals with disabilities who may lose regular Medicaid eligibility, called MEAD. As long as the recipient's annual earned income stays under 450% of the Federal Poverty Level, after exclusions, or gross earnings of up to approximately \$101,628 (2014 figure), the person may qualify for this extended coverage. Individuals may also accumulate up to \$26,754 in assets under the MEAD program. **People who have SSI 1619 Medicaid coverage DO NOT NEED TO APPLY FOR MEAD unless they plan to have savings (assets) above the SSI asset limit or have increasing costs of care under the Medicaid waiver rules.**

## **Continued Payment under a Vocational Rehabilitation Plan:**

If the recipient loses SSI eligibility because of "Medical Recovery" but is still in a formal vocational plan with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Office or an improved Employment Network under the Ticket to Work option, the recipient can ask for extended eligibility for benefits.

## How Much SSI Will a Recipient Receive if Working?

Step 1:	Write in the amount of your SSDI check plus any other unearned income (skip to STEP 3 if no SSDI or unearned income)	= \$ _____
Step 2:	Subtract \$20.00	- \$20 \$ _____
Step 3:	The remainder is the amount of unearned income SSA counts	= Countable Unearned: \$ _____
Step 4:	Add up and write here what you earn each month before taxes	Monthly Earnings: \$ _____
Step 5:	Subtract \$20 if you didn't use it in Step 2	- \$20 \$ _____
Step 6:	Subtract \$65.00	- \$65 \$ _____
Step 7:	Subtract out-of-pocket disability-related expenses	- IRWE: \$ _____s
Step 8:	Write in what remains after subtractions	Remainder: \$ _____
Step 9:	Divide what's left (the Remainder) by 2.	/ 2 \$ _____
Step 10:	This is the amount of earnings that SSA counts	= Countable Earned \$: \$ _____
Step 11:	Add countable Unearned Income to countable Earned Income (Add amounts from Step 3 and Step 10)	+ Countable Unearned \$: \$ _____
Step 12:	The result is Adjusted Income	= Adjusted Countable \$: \$ _____
Step 13:	Subtract the monthly amount you spend on PASS	- PASS: \$ _____
Step 14:	The amount is Countable Income	= Countable Income \$ _____
Step 15:	Write in the amount of the most SSI you can receive in your living situation (\$733 individual, \$1,100 for a couple)	Maximum SSI Rate: \$ _____
Step 16:	Subtract Total Countable Income (from Step 14) from Maximum SSI Rate (step 15)	- Countable Income: \$ _____
Step 17:	This is your new SSI check based on earnings:	= New SSI Check: \$ _____

## How Much SSDI Will a Beneficiary Receive if Working?

*If the beneficiary is in the Trial Work Period, he/she still receives the full SSDI check amount, no matter how much he/she earns.*

If the beneficiary is in the Extended Period of Eligibility or after it, do this:

Step 1:	Add up what the person earns in each month before taxes.		Monthly Earnings: \$ _____
Step 2:	Subtract out-of-pocket disability-related expenses (IRWE's)	-	\$ _____
Step 3:	Subtract (hours of job coach support x wages/hour).	-	\$ _____
Step 4:	Subtract the value of employer supports.	-	\$ _____
Step 5:	The remainder is the amount of earnings that SSA counts.	=	Countable Income: \$ _____
Step 6:	See if Countable Income is above or below \$1,090	✓	Get SSDI check if below \$1,090
		✓	Stop SSDI check if above \$1,090
			If still in EPE, get check back automatically when Step 5 is below \$1,090.

## How Much APTD Cash Assistance Will a Beneficiary Receive if Working?

Effective March 1, 2012 there was a change in the calculation of Aid to the Permanently & Totally Disabled (APTD) cash assistance.

1	Gross Earned Income	\$
2	Less Earned Income Disregard (EID) \$20	- 20
3	Remainder	\$
4	Less \$30 <b>or</b> ½ the remainder (whichever amount is smaller) <b>MAX DEDUCTION ON THIS LINE IS \$30</b>	-
5	Remainder	\$
6	Less \$18 <b>OR</b> actual employment expenses (if greater than \$18)	-
7	This is your <b>TOTAL COUNTABLE EARNED INCOME</b>	
8	Total <b>Unearned</b> Income	\$
9	Add Total <b>Countable Earned</b> Income from line 7	+
10	Total	\$
11	Less Adult Standard Disregard ( <b>\$13 for individual/ \$20 for couple</b> )	-
12	Remainder	\$
13	Less PASS Deduction	-
14	<b>Total Countable Income</b>	\$
15	Base APTD Standard of Need ( <b>SEE BELOW</b> )	\$
16	Less Total Countable Income from line 14	-
17	Adjusted APTD CASH Payment	\$

### Standard of Need (SON) Amounts (line 15)

- Independent Living \$747 for individual; \$1,101 for couple
- Residential Care Facility \$927
- Community Residence
  - \$809 (subsidized);
  - \$869 (unsubsidized) or
  - \$927 (enhanced family care)

### **What Will Happen to the Recipient's Medicaid if He/She Works?**

Although effective March 1, 2012 there was a change in the calculation of Aid to the Permanently & Totally Disabled (APTD) cash assistance, **earnings are treated differently when determining Medicaid eligibility and spend-downs.**

1	Gross Earned Income	\$
2	Less Earned Income Disregard (EID) \$65	- 65.00
3	Remainder	\$
4	Less Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)	-
5	Remainder	\$
6	Divide Line 5 in half	\$
7	Subtract Line 6 from line 5. This gives <b>Total Countable Earned Income</b>	\$
8	Total <b>Unearned</b> Income	\$
9	Add Total <b>Countable Earned</b> Income from line 7	+
10	Total	\$
11	Less Adult Standard Disregard ( <b>\$13 for individual/ \$20 for couple</b> )	-
12	Remainder	\$
13	Less PASS Deduction	-
14	<b>Total Countable Income</b>	\$
15	Base APTD Standard of Need ( <b>SEE BELOW</b> )	\$
16	Less Total Countable Income from line 14	-
17	<b>ADJUSTED APTD SON TOTAL</b>	\$
	<i>If Adjusted APTD SON TOTAL is more than \$0, individual is Medicaid eligible with no spend-down.</i>	
	<i>If Adjusted APTD SON Total = \$0.00 or a negative, figure Medicaid spend-down amount using 18-20</i>	
18	Total Countable Income from line 14	\$
19	APTD Protected Income Level ( <b>\$591 individual/\$675 couple</b> )	
20	APTD Medicaid Only Monthly Spend-down amount	\$

#### **Standard of Need (SON) (for line 15)**

- Independent Living \$747 for individual; \$1101 for couple
- Residential Care Facility \$927
- Community Residence
  - \$809 (subsidized);
  - \$869 (unsubsidized) or
  - \$927 (enhanced family care)

## ***What Will Happen to the Recipient's Medicaid if He/She Works continued***

People who receive SSI will stay on the SSI program and work if he or she has received any amount of SSI cash benefits the month before, and can earn up to \$38,505 (NH Threshold) per year in 2014 and keep regular Medicaid benefits. Individuals who were on SSI cash benefits before going to work can work and earn up to \$38,505/year and still have Medicaid with no additional costs (1619b SSI program).

Individuals who had spend-downs before going to work can eliminate those spend downs by working and switching to the Medicaid for Employed Adults with Disabilities (MEAD) program. MEAD allows individuals who work, and who remain medically eligible for Medicaid, to retain Medicaid benefits as long as his or her COUNTED Earned income is less than 450% of the Federal Poverty Level (**\$51,705 in 2014**). COUNTED Earned income is after the APTD formula and exclusions are applied. Recipients who have income of more than 150% (**\$17,235 in 2014**) but less than 450% of the FPL will have a small monthly premium to pay.

### **To determine eligibility for MEAD and the potential premium, do this:**

Step 1:	Add up earnings before taxes.	Monthly Earnings: \$ _____
Step 2:	Subtract \$65	- \$65: \$ _____
Step 3:	Subtract out-of-pocket disability expenses.	- IRWE's: \$ _____
Step 4:	The remainder is the earned income subtotal:	= Subtotal: \$ _____
Step 5:	Divide subtotal by 2 to Equal Countable Earned Income:	/ Countable Earned : \$ _____
Step 6:	Insert amount of SSDI check amount and other benefits (non-state unearned income).	+ Unearned Income: \$ _____
Step 7:	The result is the Income Subtotal:	= Income Subtotal: \$ _____
Step 8:	Subtract \$13 disregard.	- \$13 \$ _____
Step 9:	The result is countable income:	= Countable Income: \$ _____

Step 10:	Compare amount in Step 9 to income limit (\$4,309/month in 2014) If countable income is under \$4,309 then the person is eligible for MEAD.	
Step 11	Figure premium from chart below based on income in Step 9	
Step 12	Subtract any other medical insurance premiums the individual pays including Medicare, Part D premiums, etc	
Step 13	Balance is the premium for MEAD that will be billed to the individual monthly	

**PREMIUM AMOUNTS BY DOLLAR VALUES FOR 3/1/13-2/28/14**

<b>FPL</b>	<b>Monthly Net Income (STEP 9)</b>	<b>Monthly Premium</b>
<150%	<\$1,436	\$0
> 150% ≤ 200%	≥ \$1,436 ≤ \$1,915	\$108
> 200% ≤ 250%	> \$1,915 ≤ \$2,394	\$144
> 250% ≤ 300%	> \$2,394 ≤ \$2,873	\$180
> 300% ≤ 350%	> \$2,873 ≤ \$3,351	\$215
> 350% ≤ 400%	> \$3,351 ≤ \$3,830	\$251
> 400% ≤ 450%	> \$3,830 ≤ \$4,309	\$287

## ***Web Resources***

- The Social Security Administration website: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/>
- Social Security Administration disability rules and policies: <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/home!readform>
- Social Security Ticket to Work program website: <http://www.ssa.gov/work/>
- NH Work Incentives and Resource Center: <http://nhwirc.org/>
- NH Department of Health and Human Services publications: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dfa/publications.htm>
- Information about the Medicaid for Employed Adults with Disabilities (MEAD) program: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/ombp/medicaid/mead.htm>
- Granite State Independent Living Employment Services: <http://nhatwork.com/>
- NH Vocational Rehabilitation: <http://www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational/index.htm>
- Cornell University Work Incentives Support Center: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/c-benefits.cfm#workincentives>
- Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire: <http://www.iod.unh.edu/Home.aspx>
- Medicare Basics <http://www.medicare.gov/>
- University of Montana Rural Institute PASS resource: <http://www.passplan.org/>

## ***Reporting Tips for Beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Programs***

### **What information is supposed to be reported to SSA?**

The answer depends on the type of benefits the person receives receive. The SSI program involves a lot more reporting than the Social Security title II disability programs like SSDI because the SSI program is means-tested. Below is a chart that indicates in general terms what beneficiaries need to report to SSA. Keep in mind that for the SSI program, these reporting requirements apply not only to the SSI eligible individual, but also to the parents of children under 18 and to the spouse of an SSI eligible individual:

<b>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</b>	<b>Title II Disability Programs (SSDI, CDB, DWB)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unearned income including things like other SSA payments, child support payments, or any other cash received that is NOT wages.</li> <li>2. Any gross wages/earnings and net earnings from self-employment. This includes in-kind items received in lieu of wages (like room and board).</li> <li>3. In-kind support and maintenance received from others. This includes any assistance with food and shelter provided by another person.</li> <li>4. Change of address</li> <li>5. Changes in living arrangements</li> <li>6. Changes in marital status</li> <li>7. Resources or assets received that cause total countable resources to be over the \$2,000 limit.</li> <li>8. Use of any specific work incentives.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Any gross wages/earnings and net earnings from self-employment. This includes in-kind items received in lieu of wages (like room and board).</li> <li>2. Changes in marital status (generally only applies to CDB and DWB).</li> <li>3. Change of address.</li> <li>4. Receipt of any public disability benefits such as Worker’s Compensation.</li> <li>5. Use of any specific work incentives.</li> </ol> <p>** Unearned income and resources are NOT considered by the title II disability programs, thus are not required to be reported to SSA.</p>

### **How is the person supposed to report this information to SSA?**

Theoretically, there are many ways to report information to SSA, but some methods are more reliable than others. Tips for reporting relevant information include:

1. ALWAYS report information in writing to you local office– NEVER use the telephone to report information under any circumstances!

2. Report of starting and stopping work can be made to the Social Security Administration's 800-772-1213 number. A receipt should automatically be sent to you but be sure to ask for a receipt just in case.
3. Keep a copy of all correspondence sent to or received from SSA when attempting to report relevant information
4. When reporting employment initially, or employment changes, always send a letter describing the critical information SSA needs to know about the job. This includes:
  - The person's name, address, phone number and Social Security Number
  - Type of SSA benefits the person is receiving
  - Name, address and phone number of employing company
  - Name of direct supervisor
  - Date of hire/date of termination
  - Pay rate and average number of hours worked per week
  - Pay dates
  - Job title
5. After the initial letter reporting employment or an employment change, make sure to keep all of the pay stubs. Local SSA Field Offices vary in terms of how frequently they want the pay stubs mailed in to verify earnings. Check with the Claims Representative BEFORE mailing in pay stubs. Be sure to keep a copy of the pay stubs before they are mailed in!
6. SSI recipients have to report earnings more frequently than SSDI beneficiaries. Unless instructed otherwise by local FO staff, SSI recipients should mail in their pay stubs by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month to minimize or/and eliminate overpayments.
7. The Social Security Administration had implemented Wage Report for SSI recipients by phone. It's recommended that report is done during the first six (6) days of the month by calling 866-772-0953. But, a recipient will not be able to report wages using the special 800 number after the six day of the month. There are other limitations for the phone reports. For more information contact SSA.
8. Do NOT assume that the check received from SSA is correct and has had wages accounted for. The beneficiary needs to know what the disability check amount SHOULD be and needs to watch to make sure adjustments are made.
9. If the individual receives both SSI and a title II disability benefits, he or she needs to report their earnings twice – once to the SSI program and again to the title II program.
10. The beneficiary should NOT spend checks that he or she is not entitled to! The checks should be deposited in the bank while working with SSA to get the income accounted for.

11. Self-Employment situations are very different from wage employment in terms of how income is reported to SSA and when it is reported. Get assistance from your local Work Incentives Coordinator to make sure proper record keeping.
12. Keep receipts for all of the specific work incentives being claimed. SSI recipients should submit receipts during the annual redetermination. Title II beneficiaries should submit receipts when a work CDR is being conducted.

## ***GLOSSARY OF TERMS***

**Administrative Law Judge (ALJ)** – Conducts SSA hearings and decides matters of fact and law in accordance with the Social Security Act for claimants who are appealing unfavorable rulings regarding SSA decision on SSDI and SSI cases.

**Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled (APTD)** – A federally mandated and state funded and operated program of cash assistance and medical benefits for people with disabilities who are low income.

**Beneficiary** – A person who receives Social Security Benefits such as SSDI.

**Blind Work Expenses (BWE)** – BWE represent any earned income of a blind person which is used to meet any expenses reasonably attributable to earning the income.

**Break - Even Point (BEP)** – An income break even point is the earned or unearned income about an individual can have so that countable income equals the applicable Federal Benefit Rate (FBR); i.e., SSI would not be payable at or above that break-even point.

**Continuing Disability Review (CDR)** – After an individual is determined to be disabled, SSA is required by statute to perform a review from time to time to determine if the individual continues to be disabled. To carry out this statutory requirement, a continuing disability review (CDR) will be conducted at selected intervals.

**Countable Income (SSI)** – The amount of money left after SSA has subtracted all available deductions from an individual's total income. SSA uses this amount to decide an individual's SSI eligibility and payment amount.

**Cessation & Grace Period** – Cessation is a work incentive that is available to SSDI beneficiaries the first time he/she earns over SGA during or after Extended Period of Eligibility. Two months of Grace Period comes consecutively after Cessation month. Cessation & Grace Period is an automatic three months of cash benefits to help a beneficiary transition from benefits if earnings continues been over SGA.

**Deemed Income (SSI)** – When the SSA determines the eligibility and amount of payment for an SSI recipient, the income and resources of people responsible for the recipient's welfare are also considered. It does not matter if money is actually provided to an eligible individual for deeming to apply. There are two main situations where income and resources are "deemed":

From an ineligible spouse to an eligible individual

From an ineligible parent(s) to a child

**Disregard** – When calculating the amount of a person's benefit, some portions of income are often not included or are subtracted from the equation.

**Exclusion** – Income which is not counted when calculating any cash or medical benefit eligibility. The type of exclusion will depend on the type of benefit and income.

**Expedited Reinstatement (EXR)** – Qualified individuals may request reinstatement of benefits, within 5 years of benefits having stopped, without having to file a new application. Up to 6 months of provisional benefits are available while SSA makes a decision on the request.

**Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE) (SSDI)** – During the 36 consecutive months following the trial work period, if beneficiary qualify; SSA may restart SSDI benefits without a new application, disability determination, or waiting period.

**Earned Income** – Money received from wages, including from a sheltered workshop or work activity center, self-employment earnings, and some royalties and honoraria.

**Earned Income Exclusion Formula (EIEF)** – Social Security Administration uses this formula when determines countable earned income of employed SSI recipient.

**Federal Benefits Rate (FBR)** – Is the maximum dollar amount that individual or couples can receive in SSI cash benefits on a monthly basis.

**Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)** – For SSDI, SSI, APTD and MEAD, this provision allows the cost of certain items or services needed and paid for by the person in order to work to be deducted from earnings.

**Income** – Income falls into several categories: earned and unearned. Income is anything that the individual can use for food, shelter, etc. The different types of income are treated differently by the benefit rules.

**Medicaid** – Medical coverage provided (Title XIX of the Social Security Act) to a person by the state. Assistance program that is funded by federal and state dollars, specifically for certain eligible low-income elders, children and adults. The state Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) operates the New Hampshire Medicaid program.

**Medicaid for Employed Adults with Disabilities (MEAD)** – NH Medicaid Buy-In program. MEAD is a Medicaid eligibility group that allows qualified adults with disabilities who are working to obtain Medicaid coverage.

**Medicaid, 1619(a) (SSI)** – Medicaid eligibility program available to qualified SSI recipients who are employed and has wages equal or above SGA but below Break-Even Point

**Medicaid, 1619(b) (SSI)** – Medicaid eligibility program available to qualified SSI recipients who are employed and has wages over Break-Even Point but below NH Threshold.

**Medical Improvement Expected (SSDI & SSI)** – When SSA decide if a person has disabling impairment, they also decide that the disabling impairment(s) may improve; SSA document that a person will need a future review.

**Medicare (SSDI)** – This is a medical insurance program (Title XVIII of the Social Security Act) to pay for the certain eligible insured individuals. People with disabilities receive Medicare if they have received SSDI for 24 months, or certain child-dependents may qualify.

**Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) (SSI)** – This is a special program for SSI – eligible individuals to set aside income and/or assets over a reasonable time period that will enable an individual to reach a work goal to become financially self-supporting. PASS plan must be approved by the Social Security Administration. Income and/or resources which are set aside under a PASS, not counted when SSA decide SSI eligibility and payment amount.

**Resources (or Liquid Assets) (SSI, Medicaid)** – Cash or assets that can easily be turned into cash are considered resources in the SSI and Medicaid programs. Example of resources: a bank account, stocks, business assets, real property, or personal property that a person can use for self-support and maintenance.

**Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)** – Insurance benefits which paid to disabled insured qualified worker under Title II of the Social Security Act.

**Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)** – Social Security Administration does not count up to certain amount of earned income per month/per year when determine SSI eligibility and payment to students under age of 22.

**Subsidies and Special Conditions (SSDI & SSI)** – A subsidy is the value, in dollars, of additional support a person receives that enables him/her to perform work. The Social Security Administration uses only actual value of the work a person performs when they make a SGA decision.

**Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) (SSDI & SSI)** – A Social Security concept of the level of employment at which a person is no longer considered disabled. SGA is the Social Security Administration's defined point at which the individual earns enough and the work is meaningful enough to be considered competitive in the general marketplace. SGA is gross earnings of \$1,070.00 in 2014. The amount of SGA is a subject to annual COLA increase.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** – Benefits program that paid to disabled individuals who has no or very limited work history under Title XVI of the Social Security Act.

**Ticket to Work - The Ticket to Work Program** can help Social Security beneficiaries go to work, get a good job that may lead to a career, save more money, and become financially independent, all while they keep their health coverage. Ticket to Work is a free and voluntary program that gives beneficiaries real choices that can help them create and lead better lives. Individuals who receive Social Security benefits because of a disability probably already qualify for the program.

**Trial Work Period (SSDI)** - A trial work period provides an incentive for personal rehabilitation efforts for a disabled worker, disabled widow(er), or childhood disability beneficiary (who is still disabled) to return to work. It allows a beneficiary to test his/her ability to work for up to nine months (available none-consecutively) within a 60-consecutive-month period without earnings for those months affecting beneficiary's benefits.

**Unearned Income** – Money received from all other sources such as SSDI, SSI, veteran's benefits, gifts, interest, pension, child support, alimony and other.

**Unsuccessful Work Attempt (UWA)** – An effort to do substantial work (in employment or self-employment) that a person stopped or reduced to below the SGA level after a short time (6 months or less). This change must have result because of person's impairment, or the removal of special conditions related to person's impairment that was essential to the further performance of his/her work. The SSA does not count earnings during an unsuccessful work attempt when they make an SGA decision.