

Student Earned Income Exclusion

Quick Look: The Student Earned Income Exclusion helps working students who receive SSI and earn income while attending school. Through the Student Earned Income Exclusion, the Social Security Administration allows students to keep more of their SSI check, continue taking classes, and thereby improve their employment outcomes.

If you are receiving SSI benefits, are under age 22, and are regularly attending school, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will not count up to \$2,410 of earned income (wages) per month while you are attending school and working. The maximum yearly exclusion is \$9,730. These amounts are for the year 2026; they will be adjusted for future years based on the Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA).

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SSA's definition of "regularly attending school" is that you take one or more courses of study and attend classes:

- in a college or university for at least 8 hours a week.
- in grades 7–12 for at least 12 hours a week.
- in a training course to prepare for employment for at least 12 hours a week (15 hours a week if the course involves shop practice).
- online, through an online school or university (SSA must approve the school).
- for less time indicated above for reasons beyond the student's control, such as illness.

Note: If you are home schooled because of a disability, you may be considered regularly attending school by:

- studying a course or courses given by a school (grades 7–12), college, university, or government agency.
- having a home visitor or tutor who directs the study.

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How It Works

- If you receive SSI and you start working, you must report your earnings to Social Security. You can do this by calling or visiting your local Social Security office and talking to an SSI claims representative.
- If you meet the qualifications described above, ask the SSA claims representative if you are eligible for the Student Earned Income Exclusion.
- If so, you can earn up to \$2,410 in a month, and your SSI benefits will not be reduced. If your earnings for the year reach \$9,730, part of your earnings will then begin to affect your SSI benefits.
- SSA uses a Countable Income Formula in calculating SSI checks. After the Student Earned Income Exclusion is deducted, SSA will also deduct a \$20 General Income Exclusion and a \$65 Earned Income Exclusion. If no other work incentives apply, then following these exclusions,

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they will count \$1 for every \$2 that you earn when they calculate the amount of your new SSI payment.

A Community Work Incentives Coordinator can help you understand the Student Earned Income Exclusion and the Countable Income Formula that SSA uses to calculate your new SSI payment.

Source: www.ssa.gov. Reviewed by the Center on Community Living and Careers.

**For more information, contact the
Indiana Benefits Information Network
812-855-6508 | www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc**

**Indiana's Work Incentive Planning and
Assistance Program
North/Central: 855-641-8382 | Southern: 502-
548-4492**