


Blind Work Expense



Quick Look: Blind Work Expense (BWE) is a work incentive for individuals receiving SSI who have a primary diagnosis of blindness and who earn income. To qualify for a BWE you must be under age 65, or age 65 or older and receive SSI payments due to blindness before reaching age 65.

When the Social Security Administration (SSA) decides your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility and payment amount, it will not count any earned income that you use to help you work. These work-related expenses do not have to be related to your blindness, but they must be considered reasonable and something that you pay for related to your job or things that you pay for that help you maintain your employment.

How It Works

Some examples of Blind Work Expenses may include:

- Guide dog expenses
- Transportation to and from work
- Dues or fees (such as licenses, union dues, etc.)
- Vehicle modifications
- Work-related training
- Federal, state, and local income taxes, and Social Security taxes
- Visual and sensory aids
- Translation of materials into Braille
- Medical equipment or supplies that help you work
- Attendant care services
- Meals consumed during work hours
- Therapy

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When SSA calculates your new SSI payment, it will apply income exclusions, including a \$20 General Income Exclusion and a \$65 Earned Income Exclusion. After applying these exclusions, SSA will count half of your remaining earned income when calculating your payment. If your disability on record with SSA is blindness, it will also exclude any expenses that meet the criteria for Blind Work Expense in calculating your SSI payment. You must track and report these expenses to SSA when you report your monthly earnings.

A Benefits Information Network (BIN) Liaison can help you identify and calculate the Blind Work Expenses that are applicable to your situation.

For general information:

Indiana Works

Indiana's Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program

Northern and Central Indiana:

1-855-641-8382 (toll free)

or

Southern Indiana:

1-800-206-6610 (toll free)

For the Benefits Information Network:



<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc>

812-855-6508

The Social Security Administration, Office of Employment Support Programs, has reviewed this information for accuracy. However, the viewpoints of this fact sheet do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the Social Security Administration.