



SSI and Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a cash benefit administered by Social Security. Youth with a severe medical or mental health impairment may be eligible to receive SSI. The current maximum SSI federal cash benefit rate is \$733. The rate may change at the beginning of each year, depending on cost-of-living increases being approved.

After youth are found eligible for SSI, the program follows simple rules. Here are the most important rules:

1. Youth resources must remain under \$2,000 at the beginning of each month. If a youth receives SSI, they must maintain basic eligibility requirements at all times. If they exceed the resource limit, SSI benefits will be suspended or possibly terminated. Also, they will be expected to **REPAY** any cash benefits received in the month(s) that their resources exceeded the limit.
2. If a youth's medical/mental health condition improves, they will not be eligible for SSI. Social Security will use medical reports to determine if conditions have improved. A youth will be expected to **REPAY** all cash benefits received, beginning with the fourth month after the month that Social Security determines conditions have improved and youth are no longer eligible for SSI.
3. Any income received or earned will reduce the amount of the youth's SSI cash benefits. SSI is a needs-based program.
4. ALL income, earned or unearned, must be reported by the tenth day of the following month. It is strongly recommended that this rule be followed AND that documentation (receipts) be kept. Gross income (before taxes) must be reported.

Social Security uses a simple formula to determine how much income (earned and unearned) counts and they will reduce your cash benefit by this amount. *There is a two-month delay before your cash benefit is changed due to countable income (Gross wages paid in January will affect the SSI benefit for March).*

Here is an example of the formula used, giving the example a youth earning \$1,000 gross income per month:

\$1,000.00	Gross Earned Income
\$	Deduct <i>STUDENT EARNED INCOME EXCLUSION*</i> (if youth is attending school)
-\$85.00	Deduct General & Earned Income Exclusions
\$	Deduct IMPAIRMENT-RELATED WORK EXPENSES
\$915.00	Amount
/2	Divide Amount by 2
\$457.50	Countable Earned Income
\$	Deduct PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF-SUPPORT or BLIND WORK EXPENSE
\$457.50	Adjusted Countable Earned Income
\$733.00	Federal Benefit Rate
-\$457.50	Adjusted Countable Earned Income
\$275.50	Adjusted SSI Payment

When youth begin to earn income, the cash benefit will come from either Section 1611 funds or Section 1619(a) funds. **The amount of \$1,551 is referred to as the BREAK EVEN POINT.** A youth is no longer qualified for SSI if their gross earnings exceed the BREAK EVEN POINT.

NOTE: A youth will not lose Medicaid eligibility if they work. The fact is, as long as they receive at least \$1 in SSI cash benefits, they are still eligible for Medicaid.