

SSA benefits & the Employment Support Professional

Overview of SSI vs. SSDI

&

Medicaid vs. Medicare

NC APSE 2015

Today's focus

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Medicaid
- Medicare
- Federal benefits and work incentives
- Some state and local benefits
- Blindness & Self Employment & children

Questions:

- What have you heard about the Social Security Administration in regards to SSI and SSDI?
- What do you know about working while on Social Security Benefits?
- What has your experience been working with those who are receiving SSI or SSDI?

Title II

- Few different types of Title II benefits
 - Focus on SSDI: Social Security Disability Insurance
 - Even under SSDI there are a variety of benefits-we will focus on adult

SSDI

- Based off work record that parent paid taxes on (fica taxes), or your own work record or a spouses
- Meet disability determination
- Benefit amount based on average earnings
 - Other benefits/payments and children benefits might affect the amount determined

SSDI Work Incentives

- Trial Work Period months (TWP)
 - 9 months: do not have to be consecutive!
 - TWP counted when someone earns \$780 (in 2015) or more
 - Still receive full cash benefit as long as work activity is reported and you meet the definition of disability
 - Amount usually increases every year

TWP Example

- Chris started to receive SSDI in January 2015 and March 1st 2015 started working and is earning \$800.00 a month
- What will happen to his benefits (if he continues to earn this amount) June 30th 2015?
- What will happen to his benefits (if he continues to earn this amount) December 1st 2015?
- What if Chris stopped working August 30th 2015 and restarted in April of 2020?

SSDI Work Incentive

- Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)
 - 36 Consecutive months: happens regardless of earnings
 - Begins the month immediately following the TWP
 - If individual's earnings are above SGA: no cash benefit; if below SGA: will receive cash benefit
 - SGA can increase over an EPE

SSDI Work Incentives

- Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)
 - \$1090 (this amount can increase annually)
 - SSA uses this amount to determine eligibility for benefits
 - **If person earns more than SGA: receives NO benefit and can be terminated after the completion of the EPE**
 - Does not come into affect until after Trial Work Period Months (TWP) are complete

SSDI Work Incentives continued

- Incentives that can be used after the TWP-especially if beneficiary is hovering around SGA!
 - Impairment Related Work Experience (IRWE)
 - Be related to disability, paid for out of pocket and you need it in order to work
 - Subsidy/Special condition
 - Producing less but receiving the same pay and/or job coaching
 - SSA will speak to employer to determine rate of pay
 - Averaging

SSDI IRWE and SGA Example

- Person is earning \$10.00/hour and is working \$30 hours a week for total monthly earnings of \$1290
- Paying \$230 a month in job coaching as an APPROVED IRWE
- SSA would calculate SGA: $\$1290 - \$230 = \$1060$ (under 2015 SGA) so this person would still receive full cash benefit
- Blindness determination-different set of rules

Additional SSDI incentives

- PASS: Plan for Achieving Self Support
- Most often associated with SSI, but can be used when receiving SSDI
- Money set aside-does not affect SSI eligibility
- Tied to employment goal
- If SSDI only eligible-can put SSDI benefit into PASS plan, thus become eligible for SSI cash benefits (only if one meets SSI eligibility criteria)
 - Example: Receiving \$900 SSDI benefit; limited assets and resources. PASS Plan to save for technical training for promotion. Put \$900 into PASS account, become eligible for \$733 in SSI to cover living expenses, and/or earnings

Additional SSDI incentives

- Unsuccessful Work Attempt (UWA)
 - An attempt to do work at or above SGA that is stopped within a short time (6 months or less) due to disability, or the removal of a special condition. Earnings during UWA are not counted when making SGA decision
- Expedited Reinstatement (EXR)
 - Ability to request reinstatement of benefits within 5 years of when they ended if you stop working at the SGA level because of disability. It's possible to get 6 months of provisional benefits while decision is being made

Medicare

- Eligible for Medicare 24 months after eligibility for SSDI cash benefits
- Part A, Part B, Part C & Part D
 - Part A: Premium free, but there is a deductible; often referred to as hospital insurance
 - Part B: Premium a little over a \$100; referred to as medical insurance: x-rays, therapies, doc appointments, etc Can turn down part B when you become eligible.
 - Part C: Medicare advantage plans that can be purchased
 - Part D: Prescription drug coverage

Medicare

- Extended Period of Medicare Coverage (EPMC)
 - Up to 93 months of Medicare coverage after the completion of TWP
 - Healthcare coverage even if cash benefit gets reduced to \$0!
 - If benefits cease due to work, there is an option to purchase Medicare coverage

Check In



Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Needs based
- Disability Determination from the Disability Determination Bureau (DDB)
- Current Federal Benefit Rate (FBR): \$733.00 (individual), more for an eligible couple

SSI

- Disability determination
 - Condition to last for 12 or more months
 - Unable to earn above SGA
- Financial need
 - Asset limited to: \$2,000 individual \$3,000 couple
 - 1 home, 1 car, are not counted towards this determination

SSI

- Parents assets are counted and disqualify before age 18 (also a different definition of “disabled”)
- Medicaid eligibility

SSI

- Income paid in 1 month affects the cash benefit 2 months later
- Full benefit rate: \$733.00 monthly
- 1/3 reduction rate: \$488.67
 - When determined a recipient isn't paying for room/board
- NC: additional SSI state supplement to certain individuals

SSI Work Incentives

- Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)
 - Exclusion of income for individuals who are under the age of 22 and regularly attending school
 - SSA will not count up to \$1,780 monthly (max: \$7,180 per year)
 - This work incentive is applied first!

SSI Work Incentives

- General Income Exclusion (GIE)
 - \$20 disregard on unearned income; if not unearned income then applied to earned income
- Earned Income Exclusion (EIE)
 - \$65 and $\frac{1}{2}$ disregard on earned income

SSI Work Incentives

- Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)
 - Related to disability, paid for out of pocket and the beneficiary needs it in order to work
 - Only SSA can approve
 - SSA will “repay” the individual \$1 for every \$2 spent out of pocket
 - Individuals who are blind-IRWE is calculated and determined differently
 - Any examples???

Plan for Achieving Self Support

- Set aside money (other than SSI) to meet vocational goal
- Money in the pass plan: does not count towards SSI eligibility

SSI benefit Example

- Individual is receiving full benefit rate and is earning \$373.00 a month
- Not a student
- No IRWE
- Setting \$100 of the \$373.00 of earnings a month away in a PASS plan for a training program

SSI Benefit Example

- \$373.00 monthly earnings and subtract
- \$100.00 for the Pass Plan for a total of
- \$273.00 you would then apply the
- GIE: $\$273.00 - \$20.00 = \$253.00$ you would then
- Apply the EIE: $\$253 - \$65.00 = \$188$ and then...
- $\$188 / 2 = \94 and the final step:
- $\$733 - \$94 = \$639$
- \$639 will be monthly cash benefit 2 months later

- Total monthly income: $\$639 + \$273.00 = \$912.00$

SSI Benefit Example

- Sarah earns \$850.00 in September 2015
- Full time student; under the age 22
- No IRWE
- Eligible for the SSI full cash benefit
- No unearned income
- What will her cash benefit be in November 2015?

Answer...

- September earnings: \$850.00
 - $\$850.00 - \1700 (Student Earned Income Exclusion) = \$0
 - Sarah's benefit in November will be the full benefit because of the SEIE: \$733.00
 - Sarah still has \$6,3300.00 of the SEIE for the remainder of the year

Another One!

- Ben earns \$552 a month
- Not a student
- Eligible for the 1/3 reduction rate
- Pays \$80 a month for a job coach and has an approved IRWE for this
- What will his benefit be?

Answer...

- $\$552 \text{ Earnings} - \$20.00 \text{ (General Income Exclusion)} = \532.00
- $\$532.00 - \$65.00 \text{ (Earned Income Exclusion)} = \467.00
- $\$467.00 - \$80.00 \text{ (Impairment Related Work Expense)} = \387.00
- $\$387.00 / 2 \text{ (Earned Income Exclusion continued)} = \193.50
- $\$488.67 \text{ (1/3 Reduction rate)} - \$193.50 = \text{Benefit amount of: } \295.17
- Total Monthly financial Outcome: $\$295.17 + 552 = 847.17$

SSI/Medicaid

- Coverage:
 - medically necessary doctor visits
 - hospitalizations
 - prescription drugs
 - mental health services
 - dental care
 - vision care
 - alcohol and drug treatment
 - equipment and supplies and
 - transportation to medical appointments

Medicaid “incentives”

- 1619b: Continued Medicaid coverage if cash benefit is \$0 due to EARNED income
 - Continued coverage if the individual continues to need Medicaid in order to work, assets/resources remain below \$2,000 and:
 - NC Medicaid threshold: \$34,098
 - First 12 months of this: “Suspension Period”
 - Benefits are reinstated if earnings decrease-causing the need for a cash benefit-without having to reapply

SSI & SSDI

- It's possible to receive both benefits
- When someone receives both Medicaid and Medicare:
 - Part B Premiums are covered
 - All deductibles and co-pays are between \$0-\$6

Example: SSI/SSDI and earnings

- Receiving \$607 in SSDI and receives \$146.00 in SSI
 - Calculation for SSI payment:
 - $\$607 - \$20 \text{ (GIE)} = \$587.00$
 - $\$733.00 \text{ current FBR} - \$587.00 = \$146.00$

Example SSI/SSDI and earnings

- Receiving \$607 in SSDI and receives \$146.00 in SSI and starts earning \$199.95 a month
 - $\$199.95 - \$65 \text{ (EIE)} = \$134.95$ then divide by 2 (EIE continued) = $\$67.48$ (countable earned income)
 - $\$587 \text{ (countable unearned income)} + \$67.48 \text{ (countable earned income)} = \654.48
 - $\$733 \text{ (current FBR)} - \$654.48 = \$78.52$ SSI cash benefit
 - Total monthly earnings with work: $\$607 + 199.95 + \$78.52 = \$885.47$
 - **No TWP months used, not over SGA, Still receiving Medicaid and Medicare. Earnings MIGHT affect Co benefits**

Example SSI/SSDI and earnings

- Receiving \$607 in SSDI and receives \$146.00 in SSI and gets a raise and is earning \$400.00 a month
 - $\$400.00 - \$65 \text{ (EIE)} = \$335$ then divide by 2 (EIE continued) = $\$167.50$ (countable earned income)
 - $\$587 \text{ (countable unearned income)} + \$167.50 \text{ (countable earned income)} = \754.50
 - $\$733 \text{ (current FBR)} - \$754.50 = \$0$ SSI cash benefit
 - Total monthly earnings with work: $\$607 + 400 + \$0 = \mathbf{\$1007}$
 - **No TWP months used, not over SGA, Still receiving Medicaid (under threshold) and Medicare. Earnings MIGHT affect Co benefits**

Ticket to Work

- All person receiving SSI or SSDI have a “ticket”
- Can assign to local Employment Network to receive assistance obtaining employment
- More information:
<http://ssa.gov/work/aboutticket.html>

State and Local Benefits

- Medicaid
 - NC offers a type of Medicaid Buy In-Health Coverage for Workers with Disabilities
 - Resources under \$23,844 dollars
 - Income limit based on unearned income
 - Might have enrollment fee
- Food Assistance
 - Applications submitted to the local county department of Social Services or SSA offices (SSI recipient)
 - Household income below 130% of FPL
 - Household countable resource test-higher if a person in the house is 60+ or has a disability

State and Local Benefits

- Sec 8 Housing
- Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
 - 1 time payment/assistance
 - Assets/resources below \$2,250
- Lifeline
 - SSI, Sec 8, Energy Assistance, etc recipients might be eligible for a very low cost home telephone assistance
- ePass
 - Online screening and auto application tool for Medicaid and local benefits

Important Take Away Messages

- When beneficiaries work-they earn MORE money
- Big changes can occur
 - With change in earnings and/or living situation
 - when beneficiary turns 18
 - is no longer a student
 - parent dies/retires or becomes disabled themselves or
 - enough work credits are earned
- Refer ALL beneficiaries for Benefits Counseling prior to graduation
- There are ways to maintain health insurance!

Important Take Away Messages

- Encourage families & beneficiaries to inform SSA of all earning and housing changes!
- Earnings can affect other benefits: Food Stamps, Housing

Resources

- Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE):
 - Free, internet based seminar that gives Social Security Beneficiaries information they need to make a decision about going g back to work or working for the first time.
- WIPPA: Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Projects. Funding through SSA to provide SSDI and SSI beneficiaries CWIC services
 - Two in NC: VR in the “west” and Service Source in Fayetteville
- SSA Redbook

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