

Blind-Work Expense: Overview

Blind Work Expense is a program of the Social Security Administration. Blind Work Expense is a work incentive. Blind Work Expenses make it possible for a person who is considered blind under the statute to earn income - without jeopardizing income limits that would lessen or stop SSI benefits. By using Blind Work Expenses, the Social Security Administration will adjust the figure considered as earned income when determining your SSI eligibility and payment amount.

The Blind Work Expense option allows you to recoup your personal expenses and may help to increase your SSI benefit check to the maximum amount. Blind Work Expenses are used to reduce your countable income to determine your monthly SSI payment while working. So you receive both your paycheck and an SSI check!

Blind-Work Expenses could include:

Expenses related to your blindness, like assistive technology, a guide dog, or transportation to and from work

Expenses related to a second disability or medical condition, like the cost of medical supplies or physical therapy

Blind Work Expenses may be deducted for any reasonable, work-related expense, even if it is not related to a disability. For example, the cost of meals that you eat during work hours or the cost of union dues.

Blind-Work Expenses could also include:

Social Security and Medicare taxes taken out of your paycheck

Money you paid into Federal, state, and local income taxes

Any mandatory pension contributions taken from your paycheck

The total of your Blind Work Expenses could be high enough to reduce your total countable income to zero, allowing you to receive the maximum SSI payment each month – while also receiving a paycheck. That's why the Social Security Administration calls the Blind Work Expense program a "work incentive."