

# Blind-Work Expense: Eligibility

To be eligible to use Blind Work Expenses, you must be under age 65 or have been receiving SSI payments due to blindness prior to age 65. You must also meet the Social Security Administration definition of being “statutorily blind.”

“Statutory blindness is defined in the law as central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of correcting lens.

An eye which has a limitation in the field of vision so that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees is considered to have a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less.”

*20 CFR 404.1581*

In other words, the Social Security Administration considers you to be blind if your vision cannot be corrected to better than 20/200 in your better eye or if your visual field is 20 degrees or less in your better eye. Statutory blindness is not necessarily the same as being considered “legally blind.” To be eligible for Blind Word Expense, **you must only meet the SSA’s definition** of statutory blindness.

You might be able to read print or walk without a cane, and still meet the statutory definition of blindness for Social Security programs. To determine if you meet the statutory definition of blindness, consult a qualified medical professional. You may need an evaluation to establish this diagnosis.

If you have a diagnosis that meets the statutory definition of blindness, you will then present this information to the Social Security Administration. To establish statutory blindness as the disability benefit diagnosis, you would request the Social Security Administration perform a medical Continuing Disability Review.

You can request a review to establish a diagnosis of statutory blindness at any time, like:

When an existing visual impairment becomes worse over time

With new onset vision loss due to a chronic condition such as diabetes

With sudden vision loss due to an injury or accident

The most advantageous work incentives are only offered to persons whose main disability of record is blindness. If you think you may meet the Social Security’s definition of “statutory blindness,” work with a qualified physician for a thorough eye examination.

Disability of Record

If you meet the statutory definition, listing blindness as your “Disability of Record” is important! Social Security provides special programs and rule options to blind individuals that are not available to any other disability category.

If your results show that you meet the definition of statutory blindness, next set up a Continuing Disability Review with Social Security to have blindness listed as your disability of record. This is to your advantage.

Remember

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