

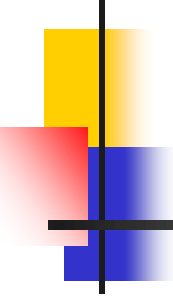


SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) FOR YOUNG ADULTS:

- **How to Get SSI and Medical Assistance, Go to Work...and Live to Tell About It**

Michael Dalto

High Note Consulting, LLC



Who's Eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

People who are:

- Disabled and any age (you can also qualify if you're at least 65 years old, even if you're not disabled), AND
- U. S. citizens or legal aliens who meet certain requirements, AND
- Have income and resources (assets) below certain limits



How Disabled is “Disabled”?

- An adult must have a severe disability that has lasted (or is expected to last) at least 12 months, or is expected to result in death
- The disability has to prevent the person from doing “substantial” work (usually, earning \$1,260/month or more in 2020, but sometimes earnings may be higher and the person may still qualify for SSI)
- A blind person (who has vision no better than 20/200 in the better eye with glasses, or has a field of vision no greater than 20 degrees) is not subject to the “substantial” work test



What's the Income Limit?

- It depends on the kind of income the person gets.
- If the person has only “unearned” income (such as Social Security checks or pensions), the income must usually be under \$803/month (in 2020).
- If the person has only “earned” income (like wages or earnings from self-employment), the earnings (before taxes) must usually be under \$1,651/month (in 2020).



What's the Resource Limit?

- \$2000
- That includes cash, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, investments, whole life insurance, retirement accounts, and property (but not the home you live in)
- SSI does NOT count:
 - The home the person lives in
 - One motor vehicle
 - Life insurance with no cash value (like term insurance)
 - Certain burial funds
 - Special needs trusts
 - Property used for a job or business
 - Up to \$100,000 in an ABLE account



What Is an ABLE Account?

- ABLE accounts are special accounts set up by or for people with significant disabilities that began before age 26 (though the person may be 26 or older when the account is set up)
- The first \$100,000 in an ABLE account does not count as a resource for SSI and Medical Assistance
- Up to \$15,000/year may be deposited into an ABLE account, and contributions up to that amount are not taxable



What Is an ABLE Account?

- Funds in ABLE accounts may be used to pay for:
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Employment training and support
 - Assistive technology and personal support services
 - Health, prevention and wellness



What Is an ABLE Account?

- Funds in ABLE accounts may be used to pay for:
 - Financial management and administrative services
 - Legal fees
 - Expenses for oversight and monitoring
 - Funeral and burial expenses, and
 - Other expenses approved by the IRS in the future



What Is an ABLE Account?

- Funds that remain in an ABLE account when the person with a disability dies are NOT generally claimed by the State of Maryland.
- An ABLE account can be opened in any state that allows out-of-state residents to participate.
- ABLE programs provide choices of investment options and fees
- Maryland's ABLE accounts became available on November 28, 2017.
- For more information, see ablenrc.org



What's the Most SSI a Person Can Get?

- \$783/month for an unmarried person (in 2020)
- The person needs to be paying for food and shelter to get the full amount. If a person doesn't pay for food and shelter, the most SSI she can get is \$522/month (in 2020).
- A person who has other income (besides SSI) usually receives less than the maximum SSI amount.



How Can a Person Who Receives \$522/Month SSI Have SSI Increased to \$783/Month?

- By paying for his/her fair share of food and shelter costs
- If the person lives with family as part of a group “economic unit”, s/he must pay his/her share of household food and shelter costs (e.g., if the family includes 3 people, the person must pay 1/3).

How Can a Person Who Receives \$522/Month SSI Have SSI Increased to \$783/Month?

- If the person lives with family, but as a separate economic unit (e.g., as a boarder), then s/he must pay the amount for food and shelter that the family would charge an unrelated boarder.
- Use SSA 8006 form to document:
www.reginfo.gov/public/do/DownloadDocument?objectID=50078503



What Medical Coverage Does a Person Get With SSI?

- Medical Assistance (Medicaid)
- Medical Assistance covers most medical expenses and the person pays nothing except a very small co-payment for prescriptions (\$3.00 for name brand drugs; \$1.00 for generic drugs in 2019)
- The person has to find health care providers who accept Medical Assistance



What Medical Coverage Does a Person Get With SSI?

- If the person has other insurance, Medical Assistance can sometimes cover some costs that the other insurance does not
- The person gets Medical Assistance automatically if she has any amount of SSI (even just \$1 a month)



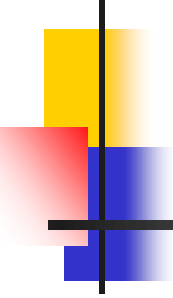
How Do You Apply for SSI?

- Call 1-800-772-1213 (voice) or 1-800-325-0778 (TTY) to make an appointment to apply at your local Social Security office
- Some forms can be completed in advance
 - SSA 8000 (SSI Application)
 - SSA 3368 (Disability Report – Adult) (<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-3368.pdf>)
 - SSA 827 (Authorization to Release Information) (<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-827.pdf>)



How Do You Apply for SSI?

- You can now file for SSI online at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/>, but only if you:
 - Are between the ages of 18 and 65;
 - Have never been married;
 - Aren't blind;
 - Are a U.S. citizen residing in one of the fifty states, District of Columbia, or the Northern Mariana Islands;
 - Haven't applied for or received SSI benefits in the past; and
 - Are applying for Social Security Disability Insurance at the same time as your SSI claim.



Is It Easier to Qualify Once You're 18?

- Sometimes.
- When a child (under age 18) applies, some of his or her parents' income and resources are counted. This makes many children ineligible.
- Once a person is 18, only his or her own income and resources are counted.
- A child who gets SSI before age 18 has to undergo a "redetermination" around age 18 to see if she or he can keep SSI. This is because the disability standards for adults are different than those for children.



What are Some Tips to Help Get SSI Approved More Quickly?

1. If you can, fill out forms that Social Security sends you before your appointment.
2. When you fill out forms, focus on how the disability limits your son's or daughter's activities, especially the ability to work (such as standing, walking, lifting, handling, seeing, hearing, speaking, understanding and following instructions, etc.).
3. Get as many school and medical records as you can that explain your son's or daughter's disability. Social Security may tell you that you don't need to bring these to the interview, but it will save a lot of time if you do.



What are Some Tips to Help Get SSI Approved More Quickly?

4. If Social Security needs more information, give it to them as soon as possible.
5. After Social Security has sent the application to Disability Determination Services (DDS) to review the disability, contact the DDS examiner to see if s/he needs anything else to make a decision. Call 410-308-4350 to get the name and number of the examiner who has the file.
6. If they schedule you for an appointment for a medical evaluation, keep the appointment.



What are Some Tips to Help Get SSI Approved More Quickly?

7. KEEP COPIES OF ANYTHING YOU GIVE TO SOCIAL SECURITY, AND ANY LETTERS OR FORMS THEY SEND YOU.
8. GET A RECEIPT FROM SOCIAL SECURITY ANY TIME YOU GIVE THEM ANYTHING.



What Should You Do If You're Denied?

- **APPEAL** within 60 days
- Use the SSA 861 (Request for Reconsideration form)
(<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-561.pdf>)
- Get more (or better) records to prove the disability, if possible
- If you're denied again, **APPEAL AGAIN**
- More than half of SSI applications that are denied the first time are approved the third time (the second level of appeal)



What Happens if You Get SSI and Go to Work?

- When you get SSI and start work, your SSI may be affected, but
- SSI offers some safety nets called “work incentives” that limit the effect of work on your benefits.



First Net: Earn Money and Keep Both SSI and Medical Assistance

- You can work and keep at least some of your SSI check until you earn above a certain amount. The amount you can earn depends on how much SSI you got before starting work.
- A person who starts out with \$783/month SSI can earn up to \$1,650/month gross wages and still get \$1 of SSI. Along with SSI you keep Medical Assistance (Medicaid).
- If you get SSI, you always have more money if you work than if you don't. This is because SSI is reduced by less than half the amount of earnings.



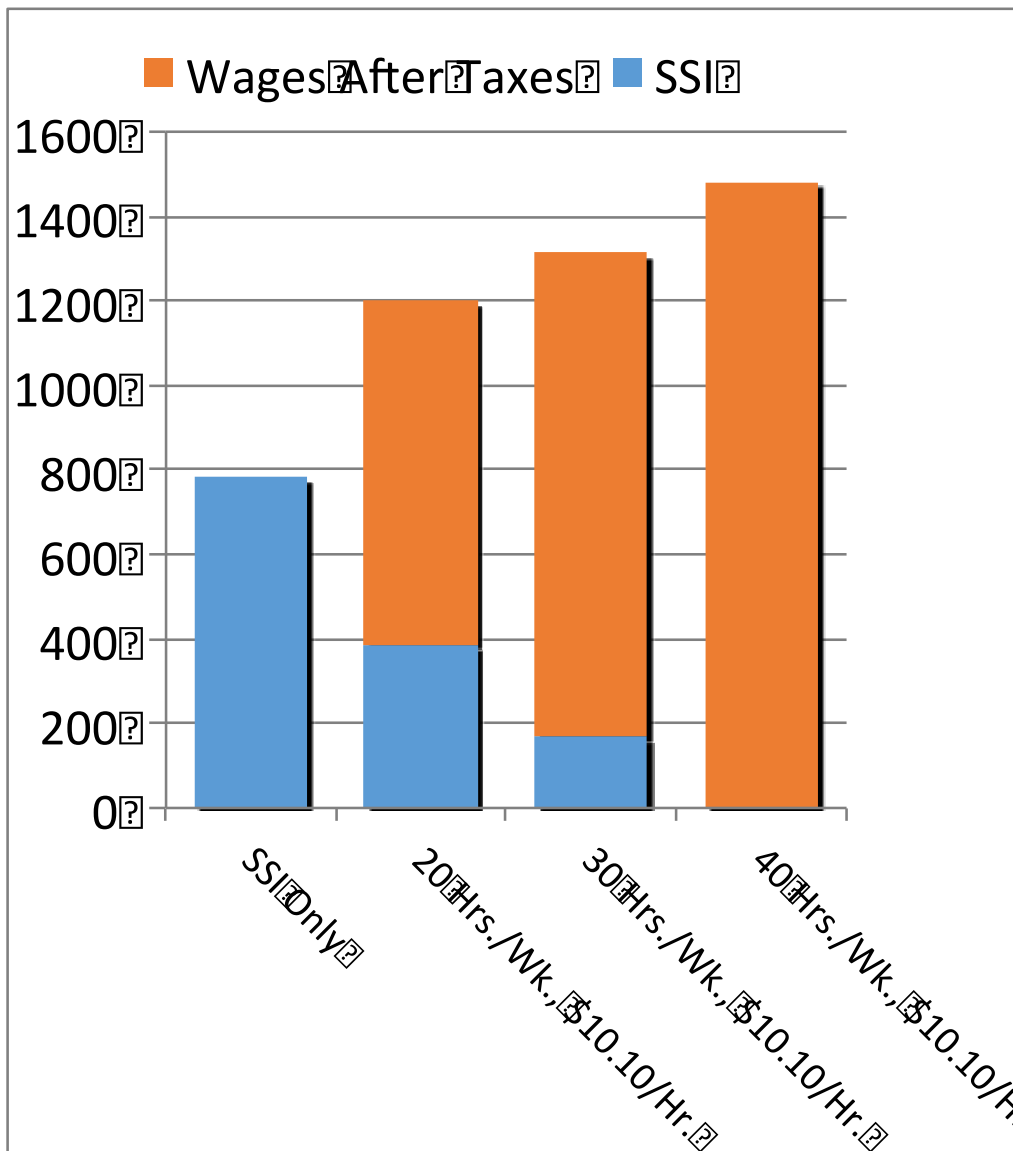
First Net: Earn Money and Keep Both SSI and Medical Assistance

Example:

- Marshawn started out getting only SSI (\$783/month).
- He started working 20 hours a week and earning \$10.10/hour.
- Next, he worked 30 hours a week and still earned \$10.10/hour.
- Finally, he worked 40 hours a week and still earned \$10.10/hour.

First Net: Earn Money and Keep Both SSI and Medical Assistance

Example:



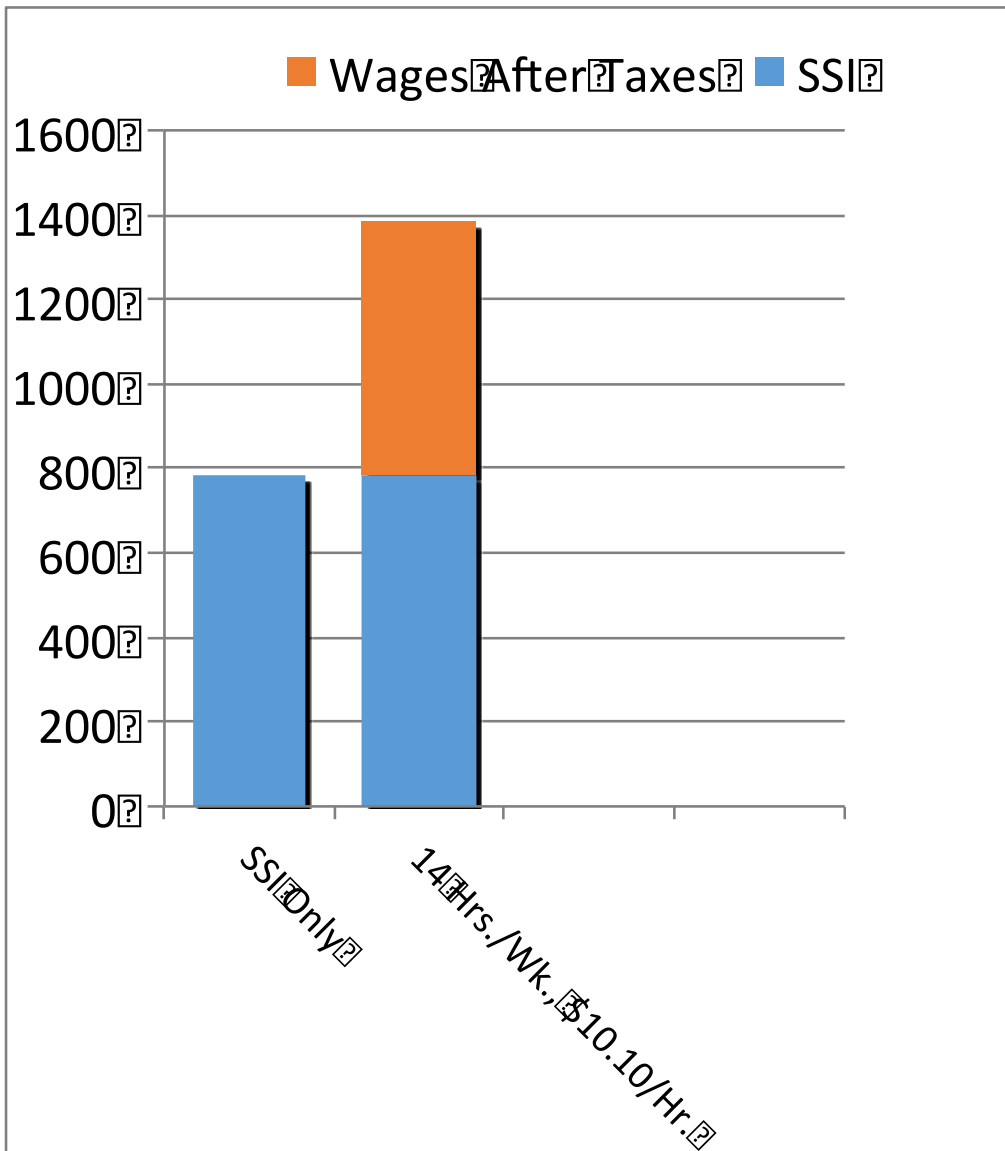


Second Net: Keep More SSI with Work Incentives

- If you get SSI and go to work, you may be able to keep higher SSI payments if you:
 - Are a student under age 22 (Student Earned Income Exclusion),
 - Student Earned Income Exclusion lets an eligible student earn up to \$7,670/year in wages and NOT HAVE SSI REDUCED

Second Net: Keep More SSI with Work Incentives

- **Student Earned Income Exclusion Example:**





Second Net: Keep More SSI with Work Incentives

- If you get SSI and go to work, but you're not a student under age 22, you may be able to keep higher SSI payments if you:
 - Pay for disability-related expenses needed for work (Impairment Related Work Expenses),
 - Are blind and pay for **any** work-related expenses (Blind Work Expenses),



Second Net: Keep More SSI with Work Incentives

- If you get SSI and go to work, but you are not a student under age 22, you may be able to keep higher SSI payments if you:
 - Have an agreement with Social Security to pay for expenses to reach a work goal with money that would otherwise reduce your SSI check (Plan for Achieving Self Support)



Third Net: Keep Medicaid When You Lose SSI Checks Due to Work

- If you earn enough to reduce your SSI checks to \$0, you may usually still keep Medical Assistance (Medicaid). A rule called “1619-B” lets you keep Medicaid and stay on the SSI benefit rolls.
- If your earnings later drop, or you stop working, you can get SSI checks back simply by calling Social Security. You don’t need to reapply.



Third Net: Keep Medicaid When You Lose SSI Checks Due to Work

- To qualify for 1619-B, you must:
 - Have earnings below \$40,869/year (in 2019), or below a higher limit if you have high medical or work-related expenses or get publicly-funded attendant care
 - Keep your resources (assets) below \$2,000 (or \$3,000 for a married couple)
 - Continue to need Medicaid (you can meet this requirement just by using Medicaid at least once a year)
 - Not have other reasons for losing SSI besides earnings



Fourth Net: Get SSI and Medicaid Back If Earnings Later Drop or Stop

- If you earn too much to qualify for 1619-B, but then your earnings drop below the 1619-B limit within 12 months, you can get SSI and/or Medicaid back simply by calling Social Security. You don't have to reapply.



Fifth Net: Expedited Reinstatement

- If your earnings are too high for 1619(b) for over a year, then your earnings drop or you stop working within 5 years, you can get cash benefits back a little quicker than reapplying.
- Expedited reinstatement also lets you get up to 6 months of SSI checks while you wait for a decision on your application. Even if your application is denied, you won't have to pay back these checks.



Fifth Net: Expedited Reinstatement

- To qualify for expedited reinstatement, you must:
 - Have received SSI checks based on your disability
 - Have lost these benefits and Medicaid due to work
 - Have stopped working (or decreased earnings below \$1,260/month) within five years of losing Medicaid
 - Meet Social Security's disability criteria due to the same disability you had before, or a related disability



Free Help to Use Work Incentives

- Contact the **Ticket to Work Helpline** at 1-866-968-7842. They can refer you to the Maryland Work Incentives Network.
- Apply for services from the **Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**. DORS can pay for benefits counseling.
- For the nearest DORS office, see <http://www.dors.state.md.us/DORS/AboutDORS/DORSLocations/default>



Wait a Minute! What About Social Security Disability?

- Social Security Disability checks are different from SSI. To qualify, you must:
 - Meet the same disability criteria as for SSI, and
 - Have worked and paid Social Security taxes long enough, or in some cases, have a parent or deceased spouse who paid Social Security taxes.



Social Security Disability

- There are 2 types of benefits that young adults may get from the Social Security Disability program.
- The first is called Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). You can get SSDI if you have worked and paid Social Security taxes for a long enough time to be “insured”, and you meet Social Security’s criteria for disability.



Social Security Disability

- The second benefit is called “Childhood Disability Benefit (CDB)” (formerly called “Disabled Adult Child”).
- To qualify, you must be age 18 or older, have been disabled before age 22, and have a parent who has paid Social Security taxes and is retired, disabled or deceased.



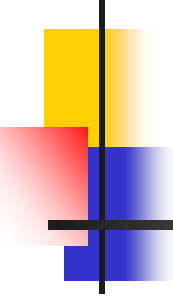
Applying for Social Security Disability

- Apply on line at <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/dib>



Social Security Disability & Medicare

- After you've been eligible for Social Security Disability for 2 years, you can get medical insurance called Medicare.



When Would Someone Switch from SSI to Social Security Disability?

- A person who gets SSI and works could pay Social Security taxes long enough to be “insured” and qualify for SSDI. Depending on the age s/he became disabled, the person may usually qualify for SSDI by working 1-1/2 – 5 years.
- An adult on SSI whose disability occurred before age 22 could qualify for CDB if his/her parent retired, became disabled or died.



What Happens If You Switch from SSI to Social Security Disability?

- If you switch to SSDI and your check is low enough, you may receive a partial SSI check in addition.
- If you switch to SSDI and your check is high enough, you will lose SSI and Medical Assistance. **But if you are working, you can keep Medical Assistance through the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program.**



What Happens If You Switch from SSI to Social Security Disability?

- If you switch to a Childhood Disability Benefit (CDB), and your benefit is low enough, you can still receive a partial SSI check.
- If you switch to CDB, you usually keep your Medical Assistance, even if you lose your SSI checks.



Are There Safety Nets If You Get Social Security Disability and Work?

- Yes. There are safety nets that let you:
 - Earn a certain amount of money and keep SSDI (and Medicare),
 - Get SSDI back quickly and easily if you lose it due to work and then lose your job, and
 - Keep Medicare for years (or permanently) if you lose SSDI due to work.



Are There Safety Nets If You Get Social Security Disability and Work?

- Yes. You can get more information from a benefits counselor.
- Contact the **Ticket to Work Helpline** at 1-866-968-7842. They can refer you to the Maryland Work Incentives Network, or



Are There Safety Nets If You Get Social Security Disability and Work?

- Apply for services from the **Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**. DORS can pay for benefits counseling.
- For the nearest DORS office, see <http://www.dors.state.md.us/DORS/AboutDORS/DORSLocations/default>



Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program

- The **Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program** lets you get Medical Assistance if you:
 - Have a disability that meets Social Security's criteria
 - Are 18 – 64 years old
 - Work for pay
 - Meet a very high income limit
 - Meet the asset limit (\$10,000 for an unmarried individual; \$15,000 for a married couple)



Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program

- Medical Assistance provides comprehensive health coverage if you have no other insurance.
- If you have Medicare, Medical Assistance can save you \$1,000 - \$12,000 a year on medical costs.
- If you have private insurance, Medical Assistance can supplement it.
- Monthly premiums for EID range from \$0 - \$55