

Blind Work Expense

Quick Look: Blind Work Expense (BWE) is a work incentive for income-earning individuals receiving SSI who have a primary diagnosis of blindness. To qualify for a BWE you must be younger than 65, or age 65 or older, and receive SSI payments due to blindness before age 65.

When the Social Security Administration (SSA) decides your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility and payment amount, it will not count any reasonable work-related expenses that you pay to maintain your employment. These expenses do not have to be related to your blindness.

How It Works

Some examples of Blind Work Expenses may include:

- Guide dog expenses
- Transportation to and from work
- Dues or fees (such as licenses, union dues, etc.)
- Vehicle modifications
- Work-related training
- Federal, state, and local income taxes, and Social Security taxes
- Visual and sensory aids
- Translation of materials into Braille
- Medical equipment or supplies that help you work.
- Attendant care services
- Meals consumed during work hours.
- Therapy

When SSA calculates your new SSI payment, it will apply income exclusions, including a \$20 general income exclusion and a \$65 earned income exclusion. After applying these exclusions, SSA will count half of your remaining earned income when calculating your payment. If your disability on record with SSA is blindness, it will also exclude any expenses that meet the criteria for Blind Work Expenses when calculating your SSI payment. You must track and report these expenses to SSA when you report your monthly earnings.

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A Community Work Incentives Coordinator or an Indiana Benefits Information Network (BIN) liaison can help you identify and calculate the Blind Work Expenses that are applicable to your situation.

Source: www.ssa.gov. Reviewed by the Center on Community Living and Careers.

**For more information, contact the
Indiana Benefits Information Network
812-855-6508 | www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc**

**Indiana's Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program
North/Central: 855-641-8382 | Southern: 502-548-4492**