How earnings affect SSI payments—Examples

- First $20 of income (earned or unearned) is excluded
- First $65 of earned income is excluded
- SSA only counts ½ of remaining earned income

  Example: You earn $850 a month in wages and have no other income
  - $850-$20-$65 = $765
  - $765/2 = $382.50
  - SSA will deduct $382.50 from your SSI check, so you will end up with an SSI check of $327.50
  - Your total monthly income will be $1,177.50!

Remember, after the first $20 income exclusion, unearned income is counted dollar for dollar!

Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWEs)

- Out-of-pocket costs for items needed to work are deducted from earnings before the earnings are halved

  Example: You earn $850 a month in wages and have $200 in Impairment-Related Work Expenses
  - $850-$20-$65 = $765
  - $765 - $200 for an IRWE = $565/2 = $282.50
  - SSA will deduct $282.50 from your SSI check, so you will end up with an SSI check of $427.50
  - Your total monthly income will be $1,277.50!

- Can be one-time expenses or repeating expenses
- Must be correlated with SSA diagnosis or for a medical condition being treated by a physician.
  - Medication, assistive devices, service animal costs

Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)

If you are receiving SSI benefits, are under age 22, and regularly attending school, SSA will not count up to $1,730 of earned income (wages) per month while attending school and working, up to the maximum yearly exclusion of $7,180 (2015)

SSA’s definition of “regularly attending school” is:

- You take one or more courses of study and attend classes:
  - In a college or university for at least 8 hours a week; or
  - In grades 7 – 12 for at least 12 hours a week; or
  - In a training course to prepare for employment for at least 12 hours a week (15 hours a week if the course involves shop practice), or
  - For less time indicated above for reasons beyond the student’s control, such as illness.

Note: if you are home schooled because of a disability, you may be considered “regularly attending school” by:

- Studying a course or courses given by a school (grades 7 – 12), college, university or government agency; or
- Having a home visitor or tutor who directs the study.

Medicaid Implications

- If your earnings are so high that your SSI check stops you can still receive Medicaid if you
  - Remain disabled
  - Have assets under $2000 ($3000/couple)
  - Need Medicaid
  - Have annual earnings below the State Threshold—$29,269 (2013)

*An individualized threshold amount may be available if your medical or caregiving costs are high.