

Solutions, Strategies, Answers

Newsletter of the 18 Social Security Administration offices in
Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, and Philadelphia counties



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Overpayments and Our Processes

One of our favorite mottos here at SSA is **“to pay the right person the right amount at the right time.”** In line with this, our payment accuracy rates are high. Given the magnitude of the benefits we pay every year – currently \$1.4 trillion to more than 70 million people – and the complexity of the programs we administer, overpayments can happen.

We are required by law to adjust or recover debts when people receive benefits to which they were not entitled. We take seriously our responsibilities to our customers and taxpayers to safeguard the integrity of our benefit programs and to be good stewards of the trust funds.

Overpayments occur for many reasons, as when someone does not timely report their work or other changes that can affect benefits. Or when an individual chooses to continue receiving payments during an appeal. Each person’s situation is uniquely theirs, and we develop and handle overpayments on a case-by-case basis.

Of course, we understand that receiving an overpayment notice may be unsettling or unclear. Accordingly, we will work with people to help them navigate the process. We inform the individual about the fact and amount of the overpayment, their right to appeal, and the options to repay or request that they be granted a waiver of the debt.

When people appeal, they are stating that they disagree with the reason for the overpayment or other aspects as presented by SSA.

When people ask for a waiver, they are stating that they accept that the overpayment occurred, but that it was not their fault and that they cannot afford to repay. We examine every waiver request to determine if the person caused the debt and whether the person has the ability to repay. If we can’t waive the debt, there are flexible repayment options, sometimes for as low as \$10 monthly.

For more information about the overpayment process, please go to: [Overpayments \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov/overpayments)



Spiders, Heights, Thunder and ... the Medicare Part B Penalty?

They say the most common phobias include the fear of spiders (*arachnophobia*), the fear of heights (*acrophobia*), and the fear of thunder (*astraphobia*). But our experience tells us there is another big-time phobia ... the fear of being penalized for signing up “late” for Medicare Part B **even when still working and covered by employer health insurance!** So, we’re here to tell you **“Do Not Be Afraid ... Do Not Be Very Afraid!”** (Props to Geena Davis).

To be clear, people approaching age 65 who are not working (nor medically covered by a working spouse) do need to sign up for Medicare B during their Initial Enrollment Period. The seven-month IEP begins three months before your 65th birthday month and ends three months later. Enrolling during the IEP means there will not be any penalty increase in the monthly premium. Non-workers who miss their IEP must wait until the next General Enrollment Period (*January thru March*) to sign up; also, they could face a lifetime premium increase.

But ... if you are an active worker with employer health insurance who will keep working at 65 and beyond, you do not need to sign up during your IEP. If your employer has at least 20 employees, your employer plan would be the primary payer of medical bills; so having Medicare at the same time would mean paying for coverage that you might not use much at all. You are safe to delay filing for Part B until you stop actively working; then you have a Special Enrollment Period for the next eight months. Both you and your employer would submit some minimal paperwork to SSA, and you’re enrolled penalty-free. No fears!

[More Info: Special Enrollment Period \(SEP\) \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov/special-enrollment-period)



“Do You Think It Will Rain, Dear?”

Yes, a shameless way to draw you in to our Q&As, but these guys are pretty cool, don't you think? So, let's ride!

My disabled child receives SSI and he will turn 18 soon.

What do I need to know? We will review his eligibility based on the medical disability rules for adults. Check our blog post for more info: [5 Things to Know When Your Child with Disabilities Turns 18 | SSA](#)

I'm sure you've heard this one before, but as a millennial I ask if Social Security will be there when I retire? Hear the response from our Chief Actuary, Steve Goss, in this 13-minute audio episode of SSA Talks. [SSA Talks: Will Social Security Be There When I Retire? | SSA](#)

Can I go online to request a replacement Social Security card? Yes, as long as you are requesting a replacement card with no changes to your record. You will need to have an online My Social Security account.

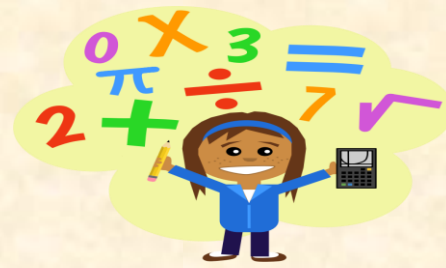
[Social Security number & card | SSA](#)



Happy Winter Solstice!



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How Do Earnings Affect SSI? Let's Do the Math!

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a needs-based program that provides a monthly cash benefit and Medicaid to qualified individuals. There are two categories of recipients: people age 65 and older, and disabled individuals who are younger than 65. Also, a person must have limited income and assets.

A question that often comes up is “How is my benefit affected if I get a job?” Well, since SSI is needs-based, any new income could reduce a person's benefit. When work is involved, we use a specific formula that determines how much the reduction will be. Here is an example.

Income change ... Joe's only income is the maximum SSI benefit of \$914 monthly. But then he then gets a job where he earns \$600 gross per month.

First step in the computation ... All SSI recipients who have other income of any type receive a monthly \$20 “general exclusion.” So, we take off \$20 from the income in counting how much to charge against the SSI full benefit.

Next, we look at earnings ... People who work have an additional monthly \$65 “work exclusion,” which is combined with the \$20 general exclusion to give a working person a total exclusion of \$85.

So, in Joe's case ... we subtract \$85 from his monthly gross earnings of \$600. That gives us a figure of \$515. Now it's the next step that really helps Joe's situation.

We divide the remainder in half ... We take the \$515 and divide by 2, and we get \$257.50. That is the figure we will count as Joe's earnings for the month.

The result? ... Remember, Joe was receiving \$914 in SSI before he got the job. We now subtract the countable \$257.50 from \$914, which leaves him with SSI of \$656.50.

Is Joe better off working? As we said, let's do the math!

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Not working | \$914 SSI |
| Working | \$656.50 SSI + \$600 earnings = \$1256.50 |

Granted, the \$600 is not his net, but taxes are a fact of life for all workers! Joe, go for it!

[Understanding SSI - SSI Income \(ssa.gov\)](#)