



Answers, Choices, Possibilities

SSDI WORK INCENTIVES PLAN

Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)

Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) can be used to reduce the amount of earnings that Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) counts each month. Usually, you are not eligible for your SSDI benefits if you earn more than the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level (\$940 or \$1,570 if blind in 2008). With an approved IRWE, Social Security does not count earnings you use to pay for certain expenses. Reducing your countable earned income can sometimes allow your SSDI benefits to continue even though you are earning more than the SGA. **IRWE are only used after the Trial Work Period and only if your gross earnings are more than SGA.**

In order for the Social Security Administration (SSA) to approve an IRWE, the expense must be:

1. Related to a serious medical condition
2. Needed in order for you to work
3. Paid for out of your own pocket
4. Not reimbursable by any other source

Examples of IRWE include: adaptive equipment, vehicle modifications, personal care attendant costs, service animal costs, out-of-pocket medical expenses, and some transportation expenses.

IRWE example

Joe is earning \$1,000 per month on his job. He pays \$50 per month for medications that are necessary to treat his condition, and he pays \$100 per month for special transportation to get to and from work. For SSDI purposes, each of the above expenses meets the definition of IRWE. Joe's total IRWE are \$150 per month and Joe has these IRWE approved by the Social Security Administration.

Social Security then looks at Joe's earnings as follows:

Joe's gross earned income:	\$1,000
<i>minus</i> Joe's approved IRWE:	<u>- \$150</u>
Joe's countable earned income:	\$850

With IRWE:

Joe's countable earnings of \$850 are less than \$940 (SGA), so he remains eligible for his SSDI payment.

Without IRWE:

Joe's gross earnings of \$1,000 are more than \$940 (SGA), so he is not eligible for his SSDI payment.

You report paying \$ 20 for medication copays per month. You also use special transportation, Metro Mobility, to get back and forth to work. Rides on Metro Mobility cost \$9 round trip and you report working 15 days per month (\$9 x 15 rides = +\$135).

You have approximately \$155 per month in potential impairment related work expenses.

This is a potential IRWE and could reduce the amount of earnings that SSDI counts if you are earning more than SGA (\$940 or \$1,570 if blind in 2008)

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Work Incentive Plan
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

To use this IRWE, I suggest you do the following:

1. Contact your doctor and ask him/her to complete the enclosed form that documents your need to use this item or service so you can work.
2. Keep the receipts for your potential IRWE to document those expenses.
3. Call your SSDI claims representative at your local Social Security Administration (SSA) office to request the IRWE be applied to your benefits.
4. Send the letter from your doctor, your receipts for IRWE, and your paystubs to SSA.
5. Call your SSA worker approximately two weeks after mailing the items listed above to ask if the IRWE have been approved. Be sure you have approval before you begin using IRWE. If you need assistance, please call me at 651-632-5113 (metro) or 1-800-976-6728.
6. Ask your SSA worker how often you should send your paystubs and receipts for approved IRWE.
7. I will call you in 30 days to see if you have any other questions.
8. Keep all of your paystubs and receipts for IRWE in a safe place. Follow through with reporting on the time schedule requested by your SSA worker.

Local Social Security Contact:

SSA worker: Mr. Murdock
Claims Representative

Phone: 123-456-7890

Address: 5500 Smith Street
St. Paul, MN 67890

For more information regarding how work will affect your government benefits call the MN Work Incentives Connection at 651-632-5113 TwinCities Metro or 1-800-976-6728 statewide toll free.

This information was prepared for you by the MN Work Incentives Connection.

This information is based on our recent discussion with you as well as the Connection's knowledge of Social Security work incentive rules. While it appears that you are eligible to use this work incentive, the Connection cannot guarantee this. You must get all work incentives approved by your local Social Security office. Contact your Social Security worker listed above for approval to use this work incentive. If you have any questions about this, please contact the MN Work Incentives Connection.