

Trial Work Period (TWP)

Fact Sheet 2021

What is TWP?

The TWP is the first work incentive available to all SSDI beneficiaries who return to work for the first time after entitlement. The TWP is a phase where beneficiaries can try out work and make an unlimited amount of money for at least 9 months, without having to worry about losing their monthly cash benefit. In other words, a beneficiary can earn thousands of dollars or more in a month, and still receive their full SSDI cash payment.

How does the TWP work?

A TWP will begin the first time Social Security determines you are performing 'services.' This consists of you either grossing at or above the TWP monthly threshold, \$940 in 2021, or if you are self-employed and work over 80 hours in a single month. A TWP is considered complete when you have used 9 accumulative TWP months within a 5-year window, while satisfying either of the aforementioned conditions. **Other TWP annual figures available in proceeding chart.*

What are considered 'services'?

When determining if work activity is considered "services" for TWP purposes, Social Security is only concerned with services that are paid for work performed. Therefore, sick time nor vacation time count as earnings.

Work activity performed without pay, as part of a therapeutic program, training, or self-care, would not be considered services. Some work that results in payments, such as work done through the VA CWT program, also may not represent 'services'. Determinations of what does and does not count as "services" are ultimately made by Social Security.

How long does a TWP typically last?

The duration of a TWP can vary from person to person, as TWP usage relates to their earnings; some never start the TWP, some never finish, others finish after 9 months, and others take anywhere from 9 months to 5 years.

What occurs when a TWP ends?

When the end of your TWP is approaching, Social Security may perform a work activity review of your case. To facilitate this, they will send you a Work Activity Report (*Form SSA-821*) to capture any significant work activity changes. To review this form, visit: www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-821.pdf.

During the month following your final TWP month, you will automatically enter into the second SSDI work incentive phase known as the Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE). This phase lasts for 36 consecutive months regardless if there are any changes to your work status.

What should you do during your TWP?

You should track the hours and earnings you work every day so you know where you stand with respect to the TWP monthly threshold. Dedicating a calendar to record daily earnings is an effective tracking mechanism. Further, report your gross monthly earnings by the 10th of every month.

Annual TWP Monthly Thresholds (2013 – 2021)	
Year	TWP
2013	\$750
2014	\$770
2015	\$780
2016	\$810
2017	\$840
2018	\$850
2019	\$880
2020	\$910
2021	\$940

TWP is a work incentive which helps SSDI beneficiaries continue to receive cash benefits and health insurance, once work begins. SSDI beneficiaries are entitled to only one TWP per SSDI claim.

For more information about Work Without Limits Benefits Counseling contact

1-877-YES-WORK (1-877-937-9675) or visit <http://www.workwithoutlimits.org/benefits-counseling/>