

Employer Subsidies

Fact Sheet 2024

What does Social Security consider when working and receiving SSDI?

When a Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiary works and completes their Trial Work Period (TWP), Social Security will compare their gross monthly earnings (before taxes) and work pattern, referred to as Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA), to a monthly threshold. In 2024, the threshold amount is \$1,550 or \$2,590 if statutorily blind. The SGA threshold usually changes annually. Generally, if gross monthly earnings are at or above SGA, the SSDI beneficiary will not be entitled to their SSDI cash benefits. However, if gross monthly earnings are below SGA, the beneficiary will be entitled to their SSDI cash benefits.

What is an Employer Subsidy?

An Employer Subsidy is an SSDI work incentive that Social Security can use when determining if an SSDI beneficiary is performing SGA. It is a reasonable accommodation that employers willingly pay for and provide to the beneficiary. It usually costs more than the actual value of the services rendered by the beneficiary. It is *not* provided to other employees in the same position or paid for by a third party.

How can an Employer Subsidy help?

Social Security deducts the value of the subsidy from the gross monthly earnings to determine the countable income. If this deduction reduces countable income below SGA, then the SSDI beneficiary will be entitled to their cash benefits.

When can an Employer Subsidy be used?

An Employer Subsidy can only be used after the TWP has ended and gross monthly earnings are at or above the SGA threshold.

Who can qualify for an Employer Subsidy?

An SSDI beneficiary who receives accommodations at work (e.g., extra supervision, special assistance,

additional breaks, a modified work routine or tasks) would likely qualify for an Employer Subsidy.

How is an Employer Subsidy approved?

To obtain approval, the SSDI beneficiary and their employer must complete the [Employee Work Activity Questionnaire](#) (Form SSA-3033). This helps Social Security determine the nature and value of the Employer Subsidy.

How is the value of an Employer Subsidy determined?

The dollar value of an Employer Subsidy is based on a percentage of the beneficiary's actual work productivity. Social Security deducts the value of the subsidy from the beneficiary's gross monthly earnings to determine the countable income. If this deduction reduces countable income below the SGA threshold, then the SSDI beneficiary will be entitled to their cash benefits.

Employer Subsidy Scenario: Mike works as a delivery driver. All drivers are expected to lift 50 lbs. Mike injured his back and can only lift 10 lbs. To accommodate Mike's disability, his employer gave him a modified work routine, reducing his normal duties to 70%. Yet, Mike is still paid his full salary. That means his employer is subsidizing 30% of his earnings. Social Security sees that Mike is only performing 70% of the driver duties, therefore, only counts 70% of his earnings when determining his countable income. This brings Mike's countable income below the SGA threshold. Mike is now entitled to his SSDI cash benefits.

For more information about
Work Without Limits Benefits Counseling
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or visit workwithoutlimits.org