



The Connect to Work Center
The Premier Resource Center for Benefits

Connecticut Department of Social Services Benefit for People with Disabilities

STATE SUPPLEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

What Will Happen To My State Supplement When I Go To Work?

The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) offers qualified individuals cash benefits to supplement Social Security SSI and SSDI benefits. Under this program, called State Supplement, there are incentives to help people to go back to work. You may be able to continue receiving some State Supplement benefits (depending on your income), as long as you continue to have a disability. Your total income cannot exceed \$1,737/month (2005 limit for single individual).

In order to figure what your benefits will be while working, you will need to know how DSS figures both your "**needs**" and "**resources**". The amount of State Supplement is figured by subtracting your resources (in other words, both your unearned and earned income) from your needs.

NEEDS

DSS figures your needs based on the following:

1. Rent

DSS figures your actual rent, up to the following limits:

\$400 (if you live alone)

\$200 (if you share shelter costs)

2. Personal Needs Allowance

Maximum of \$164.10

Maximum of \$165.10 for a married couple

RESOURCES

Asset Limit

To be eligible for State Supplement, there are limits on how much you can have in assets such as bank accounts, cash, etc. Your residence does not count. Your car usually does not count as long as it is used to transport a person with a disability to work or medical appointments. The limits are:

\$1,600 (single individual)

\$2,400 (couple)

Income

Income is figured differently, depending on whether it is earned or unearned, as described below.

Unearned Income

Your unearned income (such as SSI, SSDI, VA benefits) is counted, with certain amounts disregarded, depending on your living situation. These disregards are as follows:

If you live alone in the community or with relatives:	\$183.00
If you share your home with non-relatives:	\$250.90
If you live in a licensed boarding arrangement:	\$ 90.70

Earned Income

The Department of Social Services will disregard a portion of your earned income. They will also take into account any Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE's) or Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) expenses, if approved by Social Security.

Page 3 has a worksheet for figuring your State Supplement benefits if you are working. Due to the difficulty of understanding this formula, it is highly recommended that you work with a benefits specialist or your eligibility worker at the Department of Social Services.

WHAT MAY AFFECT EARNED INCOME?

Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

It often costs more for a person with a disability to work than for other people. Many of these expenses are a result of the disability. Medication you need in order to be able to work, wheelchairs, a large screen computer to help you see, are all items that may be necessary to permit you to work. When **you pay for these types of items yourself**, the Department of Special Services excludes the cost of them in counting your income to figure the amount of your payment. Use the worksheet shown on page 3 to see how this affects your State Supplement.

What Expenses Can be Deducted for IRWE's?

Some examples of items that can be deducted under this rule (if you pay for them yourself) are:

- Costs of medicine and doctor visits
- Pacemakers, braces, and artificial limbs
- Attendant care services needed to prepare for work, perform at work, or to get to and from work
- Modifications to your home or car or van
- Some transportation costs
- Job coaching

Plan For Achieving Self Support (Pass) from Social Security

If you are presently receiving monthly SSI and/or SSDI benefits ***from Social Security*** and have an idea that will bring you closer to independence, SSI may be able to help you. First, you have to develop your idea into what Social Security calls a "Plan for Achieving Self-Support" or PASS. A PASS can help you pay for such things as a training program, job coaching or assistance with starting a business.

Who May Have A Plan

Any person who receives SSI because of a disability or blindness may have a plan. You must have earnings and/or other unearned income, such as SSDI or Veterans Benefits for PASS savings (you cannot use welfare benefits). If you receive SSDI but not SSI because your income or assets are too high, you may be able to become eligible for SSI by using a PASS. If Social Security approves your plan, the income or resources that are set aside will not count in figuring your eligibility for SSI payments. The PASS dollar amount is subtracted from your countable income. This means you will get a higher SSI check. This amount can also be subtracted from your countable income for ***State Supplement from the Department of Social Services***.

How A Plan Affects your State Supplement and SSI Payments

Since income that is set aside under a plan does not count in figuring your eligibility for SSI payments, a plan can reduce the amount of Applied Earned Income and increase your State Supplement and SSI payments (refer to the worksheet on page 3). If you have a PASS plan, make sure you tell your DSS eligibility worker so they can calculate this benefit correctly.

A plan can also have other benefits. Ask your Benefits Specialist from the Connect to Work Center for a Supplemental Security Income pamphlet for more information.

For more information about the ways work affects State Supplement, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicare, Medicaid and other benefits and services, contact a Benefits Specialist in your area. To find the Benefits Specialist closest to you call:

**THE CONNECT TO WORK CENTER
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services/Department of Social Services
(800) 773-4636**

The Department of Social Services' programs are available to all applicants and recipients without regard to race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, learning disabilities, national origin ancestry or language barriers. The Department has a TDD/TTY line for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired and have a TDD/TTY: 1-800-842-4524. Auxiliary aids are also available for blind or visually impaired persons.

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