

Acronyms and Definitions for Benefits and Work Incentives

The following list has been provided to provide a quick and easy guide to the many acronyms and new terms used while working with benefit programs. Every agency has its own language making navigation of the system confusing. For example “After the TWP, the EPE begins so you get a check unless you’re at SGA”.

APA – Adult Public Assistance: The state administered disability benefit for needy aged, blind and disabled Alaskans.

BWE – Blind Work Expenses: An SSI only work incentive that allows persons who are blind to use expenses to reduce countable income.

CDR – Continuing Disability Review: The process by which Social Security reviews a person’s case to determine whether or not they still have a disability.

Concurrent Beneficiary: A person who receives BOTH SSDI and SSI benefits. Rules of both programs apply to this individual at the same time.

Countable income: The amount of money left once all exclusions and deductions have been taken; used to determine SSI/APA eligibility and payments.

DDS – Disability Determination Service: The state agency that determines whether or not an individual has a medical disability. (Separate from Social Security and Public Assistance)

Deeming – The process by which SSA and APA considers some of the income and resources of your parent, or spouse or sponsor to be your income and resources when applying for or receiving SSI or APA benefits.

DPA – Division of Public Assistance: The state agency that oversees the Adult Public Assistance (APA) program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, and applications for medical assistance.

Earned Income – Income earned by working.

EPE – Extended Period of Eligibility: The three year period after the Trial Work Period (TWP), during which an SSDI beneficiary can receive cash benefits when earned income drops below SGA and continued eligibility is assured.

EPMC – Extended Period of Medicare Coverage:

Concurrent with the first month of the EPE, Medicare continues for 39 months. Effective October 1, 2000, the EPMC extends an additional 4^{1/2} years beyond the original 39 months, for a total of 7 years and 9 months after the end of the TWP.

FBR – Federal Benefit Rate: The maximum base rate for SSI, supplied by the federal government to the states for distribution.

IRWE – Impairment Related Work Expenses: are special expenses that are made necessary by the person's disability and are needed in order to work.

PASS – Plan for Achieving Self Support: A program for SSI recipients which allows them to shelter and spend income and/or resources towards a vocational goal while tempering the impact on their unearned benefits.

SGA – Substantial Gainful Activity: This is the bench-mark (currently \$810 per month) which Social Security uses to determine whether a person is employable or not. Hence, if the person makes more than \$740 per month, he is engaging in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) and may not be eligible for benefits. SGA is used to determine initial eligibility for the SSDI, SSI and APA programs and to determine ongoing eligibility for SSDI and APA.

SEIE – Student Earned Income Exclusion: An SSI work incentive for disabled students under 22 that allows them to exclude more income than the usual income exclusions

SSA – Social Security Administration: The agency that manages all of the Social Security Benefits. Sometimes also used as a synonym for SSDI benefits.

SSDAC – Social Security for Disabled Adult Children: This is a form of SSDI in which benefits are paid to the disabled children (between the ages of 18 –22) of a worker who has paid into the system and who has become disabled, retired, or deceased.

SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance: The insurance program that provides benefits for individuals who have paid into the system (or their dependents) and who are disabled. Checks come on the 3rd of the month.

SSI – Supplemental Security Income: The welfare program that provides benefits for people with disabilities who are poor. Checks come on the 1st of the month.

TWWIA: The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999: Legislation passed under President Clinton to increase rehabilitation options and improve work incentives for people with disabilities to make returning to work more feasible.

TWP – Trial Work Period: The nonconsecutive nine-month period in which a person on SSDI first tries returning to work.

Unearned income: – income from non-work sources, including SSDI, in-kind support (for example, meals provided without cost), investments, bank interest, insurance settlements, etc.

Work Incentives Summary		
Program	SSI	SSDI
Prorated benefit amounts	Yes	No
Trial Work Period (TWP)	No	Yes
Extended Period of Eligibility	No	Yes
Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS)	Yes	No*
Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)	Yes	Yes
Subsidies	Yes (SGA only)	Yes
Continued eligibility for medical benefits	Yes	Yes