

Work Incentives Specialist Advocacy (WISA)

Social Security disability benefits include:

- **SSI** (Supplemental Security Income)
- **SSDI** (Social Security Disability Insurance)
- **CDB** (Child Disability Benefits), formerly DAC (Disabled Adult Child)

WISAs provide services to Social Security disability beneficiaries as authorized by the following agencies:

- **DARS** - Department for Aging & Rehabilitative Services – vocational services
- **DBVI** – Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired – vocational services
- **DBHDS** – Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services – Medicaid Waiver
- **SSA** – Social Security Administration – Ticket to Work Program

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

SSDI provides cash and medical benefits to individuals with disabilities who are “insured” by workers’ contributions to the Social Security Trust Fund. These contributions are based on a beneficiary’s earnings (or those of their spouse or parents) as required by the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), which withholds amounts from their pay check each month. Resources do not affect eligibility. Title II of the Social Security Act authorizes SSDI benefits. The cash benefit is typically received on the 3rd of the month or later. The medical insurance associated with SSDI is Medicare.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI is designed to help people who are elderly, have disabilities, have little to no income or resources, and it provides cash on a monthly basis to meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. The Federal Government funds SSI from general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes), so eligibility is “needs based” and resources affect eligibility. Title 16 of the Social Security Act authorizes SSI benefits. The cash benefit is usually received on the 1st of the month, and the medical insurance associated with SSI is Medicaid.

The WISA explains the following to both SSDI and SSI beneficiaries:

- Calculating earnings
- Effects of earned income on benefits
- Reporting earnings
- Expedited reinstatement

Reporting Wages to SSA

Beneficiaries agree when applying for disability benefits that they will update their local SSA office by the 10th of the month regarding any changes, including earnings, in the previous month. Beneficiaries should plan accordingly. Failure to do this regularly and completely may result in a serious overpayment of cash benefits, which SSA will want the beneficiary to repay.

What are WISA Services?

- WISA meets individually with beneficiaries and family members/advocates to explain benefits and work incentives.
- A WorkWORLD benefits summary and analysis with the Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) is the starting place for all WISA services. It is used to explain all relevant benefits/work incentives so beneficiaries can make informed choices.
- WISAs serve as the primary initial contact for the Ticket to Work program.
- WISAs help beneficiaries gather and organize information, and as authorized assist beneficiaries in applying to the appropriate agency for work incentives, then follow up until those work incentives are approved and implemented.
- Beneficiary and referral sources are updated throughout the process.

WISA Services / Work Incentives	SSDI	SSI
WorkWORLD Benefits Analysis	✓	✓
BPQY – Benefits Planning Query	✓	✓
PASS Plan		✓
IRWE	✓	✓
1619(b) Medicaid		✓
SEIE		✓
Subsidy	✓	
Medicaid Works	✓	✓
Extended Medicare	✓	
Blind Work Expense		✓
Overpayment	✓	✓
Individual Development Account		✓
Section 301	✓	✓
ABLEnow	✓	✓
Financial Health Assessment	✓	✓
MAXimizing Earnings	✓	✓

For more information about WISA services please visit:
<https://www.thechoicegroup.com/wisa>

For a list of The Choice Group’s credentialed WISAs and the areas they serve, please visit:
<https://www.thechoicegroup.com/wisa-service-list>



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