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Plan to Achieve Self-Support
(PASS)

Megan Hellam

Social Security Specialist, Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)

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Overview

- SSI/SSDI review
- What is a PASS?
- Strong PASS Candidates
- How does a PASS work?
- Occupational Goals
- Expenses
- Effects on Benefit Amount
- Components of PASS Application

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What's what?

SSI? SSDI?

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Title XVI Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Title II
- Medicaid (MediCal)

- Based on work history
- Payment based on average lifetime earnings covered by Social Security
- Paid from Disability Trust Fund
- Medicare

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What Is A PASS?

- A written plan that allows recipients of SSI to set aside income and/or resources for a specified period of time to be used to achieve a chosen occupational goal.
- SSI recipients are eligible
- PASS may allow SSI eligibility for SSDI beneficiaries
- A way that Social Security assists people with disabilities in their own efforts to join or re-enter the work force

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What Is A PASS?

- Funds set aside in a PASS are not counted as income when determining monthly SSI payment
- Funds set aside don't count toward SSI resource limits
- A PASS is intended to encourage SSI recipients to eventually become self-supporting

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Strong PASS Candidates

- Someone who
- Has income other than SSI

- Wants to be self-supporting
- Is enrolled in school or training program
- Is using other work incentives already
- Would otherwise have benefits reduced due to income
- Has ability or support(s) to manage a PASS

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How Does A PASS Work?

- PASS application
- Must be in writing
- State an occupational goal
- Outline all the necessary steps
- Have a reasonable time line
- Detail expenses that are necessary to achieve work goal
- Reviewed, approved, monitored by the PASS Specialist

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Occupational Goal

- An occupational goal must be expected to generate at least enough earnings to:
- Decrease reliance on benefits and increase self-sufficiency
- Must be “Viable”
- Must be “Feasible”

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Occupational Goal

- Must be the earliest point in the career path that would generate sufficient income to cover:
- Living expenses
- All non-reimbursable medical costs
- All work-related expenses, including PASS expenses

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Expenses

- PASS expenses:
- Extra costs incurred in pursuing occupational goal
- Must be necessary to achieve goal
- Must have a reasonable cost
- All receipts must be kept
- PASS funds must be kept in separate account

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Expenses – Some Examples

- Training
- Assistive technology
- Equipment and tools
- Supported employment services, job coaches
- Attendant or childcare services

- Transportation expenses
- Professional attire
- Vehicle

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- Effects on Benefit Amounts
- How to calculate the effects of a PASS plan on benefits

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Basic SSI Calculations

- Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)
- \$674 for individual, \$1011 for couple
- California State Supplement Program (SSP)
- \$156.40 for individual, 396.20 for couple
- Total CA SSI amount
- \$830.40 for individual, \$1,407.20 for couple
- \$885.40 for blind individual
- Rates effective July 2011

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Basic SSI Calculations

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Calculations Example #1

SSI/SSDI, no PASS

- Jane is a concurrent beneficiary. She is not currently working but would like to become a Dental Assistant.
- Her SSDI check is \$300 per month

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Calculations Example #1

SSI/SSDI, no PASS

- \$300 SSDI (Unearned Income)
- -20 General Income Exclusion
- =\$280 Countable Income

- \$830.40 SSI Amount
- -280 Countable Income
- =\$550.40 Adjusted SSI Amount

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Calculations Example #1

SSI/SSDI, no PASS

- Available Income
- \$300 SSDI
- +550.40 Adjusted SSI Payment
- =\$850.40 Total Spendable Monthly Income
- With no money contributed toward a PASS plan

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Calculations Example #2

SSI/SSDI with a PASS

- Jane would like to attend a Dental Assistant program. She qualifies for Financial Aid but still needs funds to purchase scrubs and other equipment.
- She would like to write a PASS plan to find out if she can set aside some of her SSDI (\$280) to cover those costs.

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Calculations Example #2

SSI/SSDI with a PASS

- \$300 SSDI (Unearned Income)
- -20 General Income Exclusion
- =\$280 Countable Income
- - \$280 PASS Contribution
- = 0 Adjusted Countable Income
- \$830.40 SSI Amount
- -0 Adjusted Countable Income
- =\$830.40 Adjusted SSI Amount

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Calculations Example #2

SSI/SSDI with a PASS

- Available Income
- \$300 SSDI

- +830.40 Adjusted SSI Payment
- -280 PASS Contribution
- =\$850.40 Total Spendable Monthly Income
- Compared to \$850.40 without a PASS plan and with no money contributed toward her career

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JANE, SSI/SSDI, NO PASS

- \$300 SSDI
- -20 Gen Income Excl
- =280 Countable Unearned Income
- \$830.40 SSI Amount
- -\$280 Countable Unearned Income
- \$550.40 Adjusted SSI Payment
- \$300 SSDI
- +\$550.40 Adjusted SSI Payment
- \$850.40 TOTAL USABLE MONTHLY INCOME

Jane, SSI/SSDI, PASS

- \$300 Earned Gross Income
- -\$20 General Income Excl
- =\$280 Countable Unearned Income
- \$280 PASS Contribution

- \$0 Adjusted Countable Income
- \$830.40 SSI Amount
- -0 Adjustable Income
- \$830.40 Adjusted SSI Payment

- \$300 SSDI

- +830.40 Adjusted SSI Amount

- -\$280 PASS Contribution

- \$850.40 TOTAL USABLE MONTHLY INCOME

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Calculations Example #3

SSI and earnings with a PASS

- John is an SSI recipient.
- He is currently working part-time and wants to move up in the company that he works for
- He needs to take a few classes in order to get the certification he needs to meet the requirements for other positions

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Calculations Example #3

SSI and earnings with a PASS

- He can write a PASS plan to set aside some of his earned income to pay for tuition

and books. He currently earns \$289 per month

- Let's say John would like to put \$102 of his earned income toward his PASS plan every month

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Calculations Example #3

SSI and earnings with a PASS

- \$289 Earned Gross Income
- -20 General Income Exclusion
- -65 Earned Income Exclusion
- 204
- 204/2 Divide remaining by 2
- =\$102 Countable Earned Income
- -102 Contributed to PASS
- =\$0 Adjusted Countable Income

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Calculations Example #3

SSI and earnings with a PASS

- \$830.40 SSI Amount
- -0 Adjusted Countable Income
- =\$830.40 Adjusted SSI Payment
- Available Income
- \$830.40 Adjusted SSI Payment
- +289 Earned Gross Income
- -102 Contributed Toward PASS

- \$1,017.40 Total Spendable Monthly Income
- Compared to \$1,017.40 without a PASS plan

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John, SSI, Earnings, NO PASS

- \$289 Earned Gross Income
- -\$20 General Income Excl
- -\$65 Earned Income Excl
- \$204/2
- =-\$102 Countable Earned Income
- \$830.40 SSI Amount
- =-\$102 Countable Earned Income
- \$728.40 Adjustable SSI Income
- \$289 Earned Gross Income
- +\$728.40 Adjusted SSI payment
- \$1,017.40 TOTAL USABLE MONTHLY INCOME

John, SSI, Earnings PASS

- \$289 Earned Gross Income
- -20 General Income Excl
- \$204/2

- =103 Countable Earned Income
 - -\$102 PASS Contribution
 - \$0 Adjustable Countable Income
-
- \$830.40 SSI Amount
 - -0 Adjustable Countable Income
 - \$830.40 Adjusted SSI Payment
-
- \$289 Adjusted Gross Income
 - +\$830.40 Adjusted SSI Amount
 - -\$102 PASS Contribution
 - \$1,017.40 TOTAL USABLE MONTHLY INCOME

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Benefits of a PASS Plan

- Often notice no difference in available income with or without a PASS (depending on amount set aside)
- Ownership of items purchased
- Personal investment in employment goals
- Ability to supplement services from other agencies; cover costs that other agencies cannot
- Offers alternative or supplement to traditional VR services
- Allows for self-directed employment plan
- Viable option for self-employment goals

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PASS Specialists' Role

- Make decisions on PASS cases
- Monitor PASS and conduct Final Accountings
- Obtain necessary information
- Discuss modifications and amendments
- Coordinate with other service provider(s) when a mutual consumer is involved

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PASS Specialists' Role

- “The legislative history shows that Congress expressed a ‘desire to provide every opportunity and encouragement to the blind and disabled to return to gainful employment.’ Congress intended that the PASS provision ‘be liberally construed if necessary to accomplish these objectives’” SI 008070.001.A
- Don't Deny – Modify

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Writing a PASS

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Writing a PASS

- Part I – Your Work Goal
- Part II – Medical/Vocational/Educational Background
- Part III – Your Plan

- Part IV – Expenses
- Part V – Funding for Work Goal
- Part VI - Contacts
- Part VII - Remarks
- Part VIII – Agreements

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Resources

- PASS Cadres:
<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/passcadre.htm#sanfranciscoregion>
- PASS Application: <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-545.html>
- General SSI/SSDI info and calculators: www.db101.org
- Tool kits, Webinars and other Resources: www.talentknowsnolimits.info
- Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Projects:
<http://ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html>
- DOR Contact: ttwinfo@dor.ca.gov

