



# Understanding Supplemental Security Income SSI Resources

## WHAT ARE RESOURCES?

Resources are things you own such as:

- cash;
- bank accounts, stocks, U.S. savings bonds;
- land;
- life insurance;
- personal property;
- vehicles;
- anything else you own which could be changed to cash and used for food or shelter; and
- deemed resources.

## WHAT ARE DEEMED RESOURCES?

Sometimes we “deem” a portion of the resources of a spouse, parent, parent’s spouse, sponsor of an alien or sponsor’s spouse as belonging to the person who files for SSI. We call this process the deeming of resources. If a child under age 18 lives with one parent, \$2,000 of the parent's total countable resources does not count. If the child lives with 2 parents, \$3,000 does not count. We count amounts over the parents’ limits as part of the child's \$2,000 resource limit.

## WHY ARE RESOURCES IMPORTANT IN THE SSI PROGRAM?

The value of your resources is one of the factors that determine whether you are eligible for SSI benefits. However, not all resources count for SSI. If the value of your resources that we count is over the allowable limit at the beginning of the month, you cannot receive SSI for that month. If you decide to sell the excess resources for what they are worth, you may receive SSI beginning the month after you sell the excess resources. You may even be able to receive benefits while you try to sell the excess resources in certain situations.

## WHAT IS THE RESOURCE LIMIT?

The limit for countable resources is \$2,000 for an individual and \$3,000 for a couple.

## WHAT RESOURCES DO NOT COUNT FOR SSI?

For SSI, we do not count:

- the home you live in and the land it is on;
- household goods and personal effects (e.g., your wedding and engagement rings) ;
- burial spaces for you or your immediate family;
- burial funds for you and your spouse, each valued at \$1,500 or less (See the SSI Spotlight on Burial Funds);
- life insurance policies with a combined face value of \$1,500 or less;

- one vehicle, regardless of value, if it is used for transportation for you or a member of your household;
- retroactive SSI or Social Security benefits for up to nine months after you receive them (including payments received in installments);
- grants, scholarships, fellowships, or gifts set aside to pay educational expenses for 9 months after receipt.

## **WHAT ARE INSTALLMENTS?**

When an individual is eligible for past–due SSI benefits, Social Security must first reimburse the State if you received any monetary Interim Assistance, while you were waiting for your SSI decision. If the remaining past–due benefits are large, we must pay them in installments. The installment payments are made in no more than three payments, at six month intervals.

There is an exception that allows the amount of the first and second payment to be increased because of certain debts. There are also two exceptions that would permit payment of all unpaid benefits due an individual to be paid in one lump–sum:

1. if you have a medical condition that is expected to result in your death within 12 months; or
2. you become ineligible for SSI benefits and are likely to remain ineligible for 12 months.

## **WHAT OTHER RESOURCES DO NOT COUNT FOR SSI?**

- property essential to self–support (See the SSI Spotlight on Property You Need for Self–Support);
- resources that a blind or disabled person needs for an approved plan for achieving self–support (PASS) (See the SSI Spotlight on Plans to Achieve Self–Support );
- money saved in an Individual Development Account (IDA) (See the SSI Spotlight on Individual Development Accounts);
- support and maintenance assistance and home energy assistance that we do not count as income;
- cash received for medical or social services that we do not count as income is not a resource for one month; EXCEPTION: Cash reimbursements of expenses already paid for by the person are evaluated under the regular income and resources rules.
- State or local relocation assistance payments are not counted for nine months;
- crime victim's assistance is not counted for nine months;
- earned income tax credit payments are not counted for nine months;
- grants, scholarships, fellowships or gifts used for tuition and educational expenses are not counted for nine months after the month of receipt, effective June 1, 2004;
- dedicated accounts for disabled or blind children;
- disaster relief assistance which we do not count as income;
- cash received for the purpose of replacing an excluded resource (for example, a house) that is lost, damaged, or stolen is not counter for 9 months;
- All Federal tax refunds and advanced tax credits received on or after January 1, 2010 are not counted for 12 months;

- The first \$2,000 of compensation received per calendar year for participating in certain clinical trials and
- Some trusts (See the SSI Spotlight on Trusts).

### **WHAT IF I WANT TO SELL A RESOURCE?**

If you are trying to sell real property or other resources that put you over the resource limit, you may be able to get SSI while you are trying to sell them. When you sell the resource, you must pay back the SSI benefits you received for the period in which you were trying to sell the property or other resource. We call these "conditional benefits ". You must sign a "conditional benefits agreement" form and we must accept that agreement before conditional payments can begin. You can get the form from your local Social Security office.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF I GIVE AWAY OR SELL A RESOURCE?**

If you, your spouse, or a co-owner give away a resource or sell it for less than it is worth, you may be ineligible for SSI benefits for up to 36 months. How long you are ineligible for SSI benefits depends on the value of the resource you transferred.

THIS INFORMATION IS GENERAL. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE.