

Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth

To Coordinate... To Enhance... To Serve... Through Communication...

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Please Forward or Print Monday Bulletin

E-mail your contributions or ideas for "Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth" to Cynthia Wright: wrightc1@michigan.gov or call 517/241-3957. Views expressed in Monday Bulletin articles are not necessarily the views of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth nor Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

A Social Security Work Incentive/ Employment Support Student Earned Income Exclusion

By Karen Larsen

There are almost one million youth under the age of 18 nationwide receiving SSI benefits from Social Security. As we all know, these young adults are looking forward to a life of independence and fulfillment. But do they and their parents know that they do not have to forfeit all of their SSI benefits when they work and that **free Medicaid can continue until earnings are well over \$26,000 per year**? Social Security has tools called work incentives, that are designed to support individuals with disabilities as they transition from school work to paid work. A very powerful, often misunderstood and under utilized work incentive is the **Student Earned Income Exclusion (S.E.I.E.)** for individuals who receive SSI. Let's see how this can help our students.

Meet Joella, an 18 year old student who wants to work, but she is afraid that she will lose her SSI and her Medicaid if she does. She has her eye on a job at the mall, where she could work full time in the summer earning \$1,600 per month, and then reduce her hours once school begins in the fall. This job has the potential of becoming more than a student job in the future, and of course the setting is perfect for Joella. Let's apply the Student Earned Income Exclusion (S.E.I.E.) and see how it would work for Joella.

Overview of SEIE

What does the S.E.I.E. do?

It allows SSI recipients under age 22 and regularly attending school to exclude earnings from being counted against SSI payments.

What does regularly attending school mean?

Taking one or more courses of study and attending class:

8 hrs/wk in college; 12 hrs/wk in grades 7-12; 12 hrs/wk in job training - even less time if beyond student's control due to their disability. And, this could also include **home school**.

How much of the students earnings can be excluded?

For 2007, limits on earnings excluded under this provision are:

➤ \$1,510/month up to \$6,100/year

For 2008, limits on earnings excluded under this provision are:

➤ \$1,550/month up to \$6,240/year

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Student Earned Income Exclusion

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Sound good?

Let's use Joella's information and see what happens. For this example we are using 2007 amounts:

1. Below are wages that Joella, a student receiving SSI, earned each month.

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug
					\$1600	\$1600	\$1600
Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec				
\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800				

2. Below are amounts that can be excluded each month subject to the monthly and yearly limits. Remember the 2007 monthly limit is \$1510 and the year's limit is \$6100.

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
					\$1510
July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
\$1510	\$1510	\$800	\$770	\$0	\$0

3. Below are monthly wage amounts still counted (non-excludable amounts). Notice in October we reach the yearly excludable amount, so in November and December all earnings are counted under the student provision.

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
					\$90
July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
\$90	\$90	\$0	\$30	\$800	\$800

4. Now we apply the SSI Earned Income Exclusion to the remaining countable earnings that will be applied to any monthly earnings still remaining. (Formula: gross earnings minus \$85 and minus one half of the remainder)

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
					\$2.5
July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
\$2.5	\$2.5	\$0	\$0	\$357.50	\$357.50

Don't forget to take this next step when looking at the effect of these provisions:

In June, for example:

- Joella has \$1600.00 in gross earned income
- Joella's SSI check will be reduced by only \$2.50 that month
- Her SSI check will be \$620.50 ($\$623.00 - \$2.50 = \620.50)
- Her total income for June is:
 - \$1600.00 gross wages
 - \$ 620.50 SSI check
 - \$2,220.50 total gross income in June**

As you see, Joella took advantage of the employment support and her free Medicaid continues until her earnings are over 25,326/year (MI for 2007). Remember, there are other work exclusion provisions, e.g., Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) deductions, Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS), that can apply.

Note: It is important to view all of the employment supports as a total package to fully appreciate the level of support offered to help individuals achieve their goal of greater economic independence.

Is Joella in a Federal work study program?

Wages will **not** be countable as income for SSI if:

- Work is under Title IV of the Federal Higher Education Act. Must present verification.
- State Work Study programs will usually count as wages.

THIS EXCLUSION ONLY APPLIES TO SSI. ALL WAGES ARE COUNTABLE FOR SSDI.

In addition, any gift she uses in paying tuition or educational fees is excluded from her SSI income determination. Also excluded from their countable resources for 9 months after they receive it are grants, scholarships, fellowships, or gifts to be used for tuition or educational fees.

Additional references:

The Red Book--Employment Support:

- <http://www.ssa.gov/redbook/eng/employment-supports-help.htm>
- www.ssa.gov/work/Youth/youth.html
- www.yourtickettowork.com/youth_
- www.passonline.org
- www.disabilityinfo.gov

Karen Larsen is an Area Work Incentive Coordinator (AWIC) for the Social Security Administration. Karen services the Capital Area, Northern, Lower and West Michigan. You can contact her at karen.larsen@ssa.gov.

The other two Michigan AWICs are:

- O'Brien Robertson: services Metro Detroit & Thumb - contact at obrien.robertson@ssa.gov
- Joani Werner: services the Upper Peninsula- contact at joani.werner@ssa.gov

All three can deliver an in-service for your staff and/or parent groups. With a little support, these provisions are easy to use and provide great outcomes.

CCL Provides Funding for Local Leadership Development

Each year, CCL issues a request for proposals to support local organizations promoting leadership development in their communities. We received an overwhelming amount of proposals and have decided to provide partial funding to 10 programs. Congratulations to the following organizations:

- **Faith Gospel Tabernacle (Bad Axe):** Inclusion of people with disabilities in the planning of the Family Fun Festival. The event promotes true community inclusion and an opportunity to develop leadership skills for all who participate.
- **Huron Intermediate School District:** Implementation of the We Lead! curriculum in a classroom setting. All participants will have a cognitive disability and are from ages 18 to 26.
- **Superior Alliance for Independent Living (SAIL):** Support of the Upper Peninsula Youth Leadership Forum, modeled after the Michigan Youth Leadership Forum. High school juniors and seniors will attend this 3-day event where they get hands-on practice with leadership.
- **The Arc Shiawassee County:** Use of parts of the We Lead! curriculum in their 8-week Summer Camp Program for teens and adults with developmental disabilities.
- **CC of Hope Network of West Michigan (Adrian):** Implement the We Lead! Curriculum with both students and adults with disabilities. In addition to the 3-week program, participants will meet on a monthly basis for a year to maintain the skills they learn through We Lead!.
- **Hope Network/Monroe Co:** Implement the We Lead! Curriculum with adults from a local developmental disabilities drop-in center and students from the transition program at the local Intermediate School District.
- **Baraga Co. RICC/Copper County CMH:** Support of the Life in Focus training through UCP Michigan. This program will consist of 8-10 individuals with disabilities using photography to tell their advocacy stories.
- **Fisher Clubhouse and Matrix Theater (Detroit):** Support for building leadership skills in an anti-stigma campaign. Participants from Southwest Solutions Fisher Club will learn story telling, visioning, and tangible leadership skills that will be used to educate the neighborhood and public.
- **Mid Michigan Industries (Mt. Pleasant):** Establishment of a leadership program for 15 people with disabilities ranging in age from 18 to 70. Participants will participate in training sessions for 12 weeks and learn skills essential to increasing their influence in their communities.
- **Oakwood Healthcare Systems (Lincoln Park):** Leadership workshops for teens with disabilities attending the Oakwood Program for Exceptional Families. The youth will learn about themselves as people with disabilities, about leadership in action, and about being agents for social and political change.

The next request for proposals will be issued at the end of 2008. If you would like more information about receiving funding from CCL, please call 1-866-532-2669 or e-mail leadership@prosynergy.org

The We Lead! Curriculum

We Lead! is a curriculum that creates a framework for inclusive leadership development among youth. Its values are openness to all youth communities (including both people with disabilities and people without), and the critical nature of collaborative skills in building 21st century leaders. Events that use this curriculum can create epiphany experiences for young people, showing them the life possibilities of service and leadership in concert with others. This curriculum offers information about disability history, pride and leadership skills. Participants practice this knowledge as they work together to identify, organize, and deliver a community service project. It was first implemented in Kent County in 2005, and since then several organizations throughout the state have replicated We Lead! or adapted it to fit the needs of a specific community.

The most important part of the curriculum is the facilitators' role. At the beginning, facilitators are running the show, doing the organizing, making decisions, etc. However, throughout the program the responsibilities are transferred to the participants and by the end of the program, the participants are doing the majority of the work. This is what makes the curriculum so effective.

Get Your Copy Today!

The curriculum is available on our web site or on CD free of charge. Printed copies are available for a cost of \$10. To request a copy, please call 1-866-532-2669 or e-mail leadership@prosynergy.org.

Social Security Funds Rehabilitation Services

By John Porter, Site Manager, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth-Rehabilitation Services

Students who receive SSI or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits can leverage vocational rehabilitation services by virtue of their eligibility for SSA benefits. In fact, students who receive SSI/SSDI are automatically “presumed to be eligible” for vocational rehabilitation services.

The agency determining eligibility and providing those services can be an “employment network” authorized by SSA to provide those services, but students usually choose Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). If a student applies for MRS services, the student’s eligibility for these services must be determined within 60 days. An assessment of what services are needed will be performed and services will be initiated in accordance with an Individualized Plan for Employment that the student, the student’s parents and the rehabilitation counselor assisting the student all agree to.

The costs of services that are necessary to help a student become suitably employed are reimbursed to MRS or to the employment network by SSA. On average, SSA reimburses MRS in excess of \$3,000,000 each year for assisting individuals who receive Social Security benefits. The exact amount that MRS receives is based on MRS’ success in helping beneficiaries’ earnings reach at least “substantial gainful activity” levels.

MRS is a bureau of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth. Contact information can be found in the government section of the phone book and at www.michigan.gov/mrs.

Michigan Rehabilitation Conference Call for Proposals Deadline May 9, 2008

The Michigan Rehabilitation Conference is seeking proposals for presentations.

Conference Theme: **The Knowledge Economy:
Where do we fit?**

For more information go to the conference web site at:
<http://michiganrehabilitationconference.org/>

Reference Points on SSA

SS Work Incentives Training

“It Doesn’t Take a Rocket Scientist to Understand and Use Social Security Work Incentives: A Manual for Social Security Work Incentives Training”

This training manual from the Rural Institute at the University of Montana, provides a basic overview of Work Incentives and their parent programs. Work Incentives covered include Trial Work Period and Extended Period Eligibility, as well as the Blind Work Incentives and Plans for Achieving Self Support. The training can be found at : <http://www.hcbs.org/moreInfo.php/nb/doc/2099>

From: Monday Morning in Washington, DC

Social Security Advisory Board: “A Disability System for the 21st Century”

In its October 2003 report, *“The Social Security Definition of Disability”*, the Social Security Advisory Board observed that, “The original Social Security disability programs were designed to serve those who had no realistic expectation of a return to the workforce because of a combination of severity of disability and attainment of near-retirement age.” That report raised the question of whether or not the Social Security definition of disability facilitates an appropriate approach to supporting and enabling persons with disabilities. After 3 years of intensive study of this question, the Board has issued a follow-up report outlining its vision of a disability system for the 21st century that is in alignment with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The Board’s report is available now in a preliminary electronic version at: <http://www.ssab.gov/Disability-System-for-the-21st-century.htm>

SSA Extends Youth Transition Demo

In the March 13 Federal Register, the Social Security Administration (SSA) published notice that it intends to extend and alter the Youth Transition Demonstration (YTD). The YTD began in 2003 with seven sites in six states. The project intended to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of altering Supplemental Security Income Rules (SSI) and providing employment services to youth who were receiving SSA benefits or were at risk of receiving benefits. SSA published notice that three of the original seven sites will be extended and that three additional sites will be included in the study until 2012. The notice is available online at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20081800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-5036.pdf>.

From: Working for Tomorrow, a publication of CWD

C. David Anderson Award Mary Eileen Goss

By Lynn Boza

In honor of C. David Anderson, the Michigan Transition Services Association issues an annual award to an MTSA member who exemplifies outstanding support and promotion of transition services through leadership, advocacy, and/or innovation. This year's winner of the award is Mary Eileen Goss. Among her many notable accomplishments: Excellent partner with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Transition Services Project Facilitator, and key lead person in the Bay-Arenac-Midland-Saginaw MiConnections site. Congratulations to Mary Eileen!



Save the Dates Events & Training

June

Michigan Integrated Technology Supports (MITS)

Summer Institute

June 17-20, 2008

Hagerty Center, Traverse City, MI

See: <http://www.cenmi.org/mits/NewsView.asp?id=821>

October

Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan

October 26-28, 2008

East Lansing, MI

<http://www.ldaofmichigan.org/calendar.htm>

November

Michigan Rehabilitation Conference

November 5-7, 2008

Grand Traverse Resort

Acme, MI

<http://michiganrehabilitationconference.org/>

<http://www.maro.org/>

2008 SSA Red Book & Blue Book Available

The **2008 Red Book** is now available both online and in print. You can order a bound copy by mailing your request to the address at the end of this article, reference Red Book, SSA Pub. No. 64-030, ICN number 436900. For the online version: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/eng/main.htm>

The Red Book, and some other publications, are available in alternative media. You can get these materials in Braille, audiocassette tape, disk, or enlarged print form. A list of the publications available in alternate formats can be found at: www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/alt-pubs.html

The URL below will take you to an online version of the **Blue Book: Disability Evaluation Under Social Security**. This book is prepared to provide physicians and other health professionals with an understanding of the disability programs administered by the Social Security Administration. Vocational professionals, transition coordinators and teachers have great interest in this information as well. The Blue Book explains how each program works, and the kinds of information a professional can furnish to help ensure sound and prompt decisions on disability claims. Adult and Childhood Listings of Impairments are included in this publication as well. These listings are just part of how we decide if someone is disabled. We also consider past work experience, severity of medical conditions, age, education, and work skills. <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/index.htm>

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