



Incentive Payments for State and Local Institutions

The Social Security and SSI programs

Social Security provides disability, retirement, and survivors benefits to eligible individuals and their families based on the worker's earnings. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program that provides monthly payments to people who are 65 or older, or who are blind or have a disability and who have little or no income and resources. Social Security manages both programs.

In most cases, we cannot pay Social Security or SSI benefits to people who are in prison or other public institutions. Administrators of jails, prisons, and other correctional and certain mental health institutions can help Social Security by reporting information about confined or incarcerated people.

Authority for payment

Federal law permits incentive payments to state and local correctional and certain mental health institutions for providing information that:

- Results in the suspension of SSI payments to people whose confinement began in March 1997 or later.
- Results in the suspension of Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability insurance benefits to people whose confinement began in April 2000 or later.

Participation in incentive payment program

State and local correctional institutions, and certain mental health institutions, that want to participate in the incentive payment program must sign an agreement with the Commissioner of Social Security. Under the agreement, the institutions must provide the following applicable information every 15 days about all newly admitted inmates:

- Social Security number.
- Name.

- Date of birth.
- Date that confinement or incarceration began.
- Conviction date.
- Release date.
- Other identifying information about the inmate.

Institutions must also provide initial reports containing this information for their total inmate population. Participating institutions must forward the information to Social Security electronically.

Amount of incentive payments

For every SSI recipient that is suspended as a result of information provided, we will pay the institution:

- \$400 for information received within 15 days of the confinement.
- \$200 for information received after 15 days but within 90 days after confinement.

For every Social Security beneficiary that is suspended as a result of information provided, we will pay the institution:

- \$400 for information received within 30 days of the confinement.
- \$200 for information received after 30 days but within 90 days after confinement.

For Social Security beneficiaries, a conviction date is also required.

NOTE: *We will not pay an incentive payment for information received after 90 days of confinement. In some instances, a beneficiary may receive payments under both Social Security and SSI. If we suspend payments under only one program, we fund the incentive payment from that program's trust fund. If we suspend payments under both programs at the same time based on the same inmate report, we pay the facility only one incentive payment. We will fund 50% of the incentive payment from each program's trust fund.*

How the incentive payment process works

When we receive reports, we will:

1. Verify that required inmate data has been furnished by each participating correctional or mental health institution.
2. Confirm that Social Security number data matches information in our files.
3. Review payment records to find out if any inmates receive Social Security or SSI benefit payments.
4. Notify the inmate that we must suspend their Social Security or SSI payments.
5. Determine the incentive payment to each participating facility or institution.
6. Transmit monthly incentive payments via electronic funds transfer to the financial account specified by each participating institution or facility.
7. Send a monthly notice to each participating institution with:
 - The total number of Social Security beneficiaries and SSI recipients whose benefits were suspended because of your inmate report.
 - The total monthly incentive payments due to you.
 - The date we transferred the electronic funds to your financial account.

Questions about incentive payment process

If you have any questions about this incentive payment program, you can contact any Social Security office for the name and telephone number of our regional prisoner coordinator. The coordinator will assist you in enrolling in the program or answering any questions you may have.

Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to do business with us from anywhere, on any device, is to visit www.ssa.gov. There are several things you can do online: apply for benefits; get useful information; find publications; and get answers to frequently asked questions.

When you open a personal *my* Social Security account, you have more capabilities. You can review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, and get estimates of future benefits. You can also print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S, and request a replacement Social Security card (if you have no changes and your state participates).

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

A member of our staff can answer your call from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a high rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.



Securing today
and tomorrow

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