



Understanding Social Security Retirement, Spouse, & Survivors Benefits and Medicare Enrollment Options in 2021



Securing today and tomorrow

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Beware of Social Security Phone Scams



Securing today and tomorrow

Telephone scammers are pretending to be government employees. They may threaten you and may demand immediate payment to avoid arrest or other legal action. Do not be fooled!

If you receive a suspicious call:

1. **HANG UP!**
2. **DO NOT GIVE THEM MONEY OR PERSONAL INFORMATION!**
3. **REPORT THE SCAM AT [OIG.SSA.GOV](https://oig.ssa.gov)**



What to look out for



The caller says there is a **problem** with your Social Security number or account.



Scammers **pretend** they're from Social Security or another government agency. Caller ID or documents sent by email may look official but **they are not**.



Any call asking you to pay a fine or debt with retail gift cards, cash, wire transfers, or pre-paid debit cards.



Callers threaten you with arrest or other legal action.

Be Alert

Social Security may call you in some situations but will **never**:

- » Threaten you
- » Suspend your Social Security Number
- » Demand immediate payment from you
- » Require payment by cash, gift card, pre-paid debit card, or wire transfer

Be Active

Protect yourself and your friends and family!

- » If you receive a questionable call, just hang up and report the call at oig.ssa.gov
- » Learn more at oig.ssa.gov/scam
- » Share this information with others





my Social Security – Registration

Step 1: Visit [socialsecurity.gov](https://www.socialsecurity.gov) and select **my Social Security**

Step 2: Select “Create An Account”

Step 3: Verify your Identity

Step 4: Choose a Username and Password

With a **my Social Security Account** :

- Check your application status online;
- Get your benefit verification letter;
- Change your address and phone number;
- Start or change your direct deposit;
- Request a replacement Social Security card;
- Get your SSA-1099 and much more!



Who Cannot Sign Up for *my Social Security* via Internet?

You will have challenges creating a **my Social Security** account online if the following apply:

- Credit Freeze
- Multiple Address Changes
- Name does not match SSA Records
- Unable to answer security/identity questions
- Suspended due to incorrect answers to questions



How You Qualify for Benefits

- You need to work to earn Social Security “credits”
- Each \$1,470 in earnings gives you one credit
- You can earn a maximum of 4 credits per year



Example: To earn 4 credits in 2021, you must earn at least **\$5,880**. Earning 40 credits (10 years of work) throughout your working life will qualify you for a retirement benefit.



How Social Security Determines Your Benefit

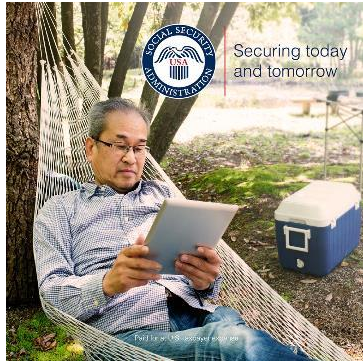
Social Security benefits are based on your lifetime earnings

- **Step 1** –We adjust or “index” your actual earnings to account for changes in average wages over time
- **Step 2** –We find your average indexed monthly earnings using the 35 years in which you earned the most (do not need to be consecutive and do not need to be most recent)
- **Step 3** –We apply a formula to your “average indexed monthly earnings” and arrive at your basic benefit or primary insurance amount





Your Age at the Time You Elect Retirement Benefits Affects the Amount



If You're a Worker and Start Retirement Benefits

- At age 62, you get a permanent lower monthly payment
- At your full retirement age, you get your full benefit
- After your full retirement age, you get an even higher monthly payment for delaying

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Full Retirement Age www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/ageincrease.html

Year of Birth	Full Retirement Age	% at age 62	% at age 70
1943-1954	66	75.0%	132.00%
1955	66 + 2 months	74.2%	130.67%
1956	66 + 4 months	73.3%	129.33%
1957	66 + 6 months	72.5%	128.00%
1958	66 + 8 months	71.7%	126.67%
1959	66 + 10 months	70.8%	125.33%
1960 or later	67	70.0%	124.00%

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Retirement Estimator

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/estimator.html






Securing today
and tomorrow

- Convenient, secure, and quick financial planning tool
- Immediate and accurate benefit estimates
- Lets you create “What if” scenarios based on different ages and earnings

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Retirement Estimator Results Example

Your Retirement Benefit Estimate

The age that you start your benefits determines how much you receive each month.

We created estimates for you at three common retirement ages using your earnings information. You can also add your own custom estimates by changing your stop work age and future earnings.

If you start your benefits:	And you earn an average of:	Your benefit will be about:
At age 65	\$45,000 a year <small>(from now until age 65)</small>	\$1,434 a month
At full retirement (age 67)	\$40,000 a year <small>(from now until full retirement)</small>	\$1,525 a month
At age 70	\$40,000 a year <small>(from now until age 70)</small>	\$1,891 a month
At age 62	\$40,000 a year <small>(from now until age 62)</small>	\$1,040 a month

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More Information

- [? Retirement Planner](#)
- [? When to Start Receiving Retirement Benefits](#)
- [? How We Estimated Your Benefits](#)

[? Apply for Benefits Now](#)

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You Can Work and Receive Benefits

If You Are	You Can Make Up To	If You Make More, Some Benefits Will Be Withheld
Under FRA* in 2021	\$18,960/yr. (\$1,580/mo.)	\$1 for every \$2
Turning FRA in 2021	\$50,520/yr. (\$4,210/mo.)	\$1 for every \$3
Month You Attain Full Retirement Age & Continuing	No Limit	No Limit

*FRA = Full Retirement Age

Note: If some of your retirement benefits are withheld because of your earnings, your benefits will be increased starting at your full retirement age to take into account those months in which benefits were withheld.

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Earnings Test Calculator

www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/RTeffect.html

Retirement Earnings Test Calculator

Automatic Determinations

Complete the form to see the effect of the Retirement Earnings Test on retirement benefits.

Please note that the retirement earnings test always uses the [normal \(full\) retirement age](#) applicable to retired workers.

[Exempt amounts](#) under the Retirement Earnings Test

Enter your **date of birth**: Month Day Year

Your **estimated earnings**: \$

If you reach your [normal \(or full\) retirement age](#) this year, enter only those earnings made prior to the month you reach this age. The retirement earnings test does not apply once you reach normal retirement age.

Your **estimated monthly benefit**: \$ (before application of the retirement test)

Is the current year the first year you are receiving benefits?

Yes No

Note: [special rules](#) apply in the first year you retire.

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www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10063.pdf

2021



Special Payments After Retirement

Bonuses, Vacation Pay, Commissions, Sick Pay, Insurance Commissions, Carryover Crops, and Other Special Payments

What are “special payments”?

After you retire, you may receive payments for work you did before you started getting Social Security benefits. Usually, those payments will not affect your Social Security benefit if they are for work done before you retired. This fact sheet describes some of the more common types of special payments, helps you to decide if you received any, and tells you what steps to take if you did.

What qualifies as a special payment?

If you worked for wages, income received after retirement counts as a special payment if the last task you did to earn the payment was completed before you stopped working. Some special payments to employees include bonuses, accumulated vacation or sick pay, severance pay, back pay, standby pay, sales commissions, and retirement payments. Another example of a special payment is deferred compensation reported on a W-2 form for one year, but earned in a previous year.

How do earnings limits affect benefits?

If a person who gets Social Security retirement benefits is younger than their full retirement age, there are limits to how much they can earn from work before it affects their benefits. Your full retirement age varies based on the year you were born. You can visit www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/ageincrease.html to find your full retirement age. We reduce benefits, if earnings exceed certain limits.

- If you are younger than your full retirement age, we deduct \$1 in benefits for each \$2 you earn above the earnings limit. In 2021, the limit is \$18,960.
- In the year you reach your full retirement age, we reduce your benefits \$1 for every \$3 you earn above the earnings limit. In 2021, the limit is \$50,520.
- Starting with the month you reach full retirement age, you can get your full benefits no matter how much money you earn.

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Other Benefits on the Retiree’s Record

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/applying7.html

Your Child

- Not married-under 18 (under 19 if still in high school)
- Not married and disabled before age 22

Your Spouse

- Age 62 or older
- At any age, if caring for a child under age 16 or disabled





Spouse's Benefit Computation

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/applying7.html#h2

50% - Spousal benefits

You could be entitled up to half of your spouse's benefit.

- Benefit is 50% of worker's unreduced benefit
- Permanent Reduction for early retirement
- If spouse's own benefit is less than 50% of the worker's, the benefits are combined
- Does not reduce payment to worker



Divorced Spouse's Benefits

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/applying7.html#h4

- Marriage lasted at least 10 years
- Be unmarried at the time of filing
- Ex-spouse 62 or older
- Divorced at least two years and you and your ex-spouse are at least 62, you can get benefits even if ex-spouse is not receiving benefits
- Ex-spouse's benefit amount has no effect on the amount the worker or the worker's current spouse can receive





Deemed Filing Rules

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/claiming.html

For those born BEFORE January 2, 1954

At your full retirement age, you can choose to receive only spouse's benefits and delay receiving your retirement benefit until a later date.

For those born on January 2, 1954 or LATER

You do not have the option of filing for just spouse's benefits. If you file for spouse's benefits, you must also file for retirement benefits.

Basically, you file for one benefit and you will be effectively filing for all retirement or spousal benefits.



File and Suspend

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/suspend.html

Effective April 30, 2016
If you suspend your benefits, everyone else collecting on your record is suspended as well with the exception of divorced spouses. Also, if you do suspend your benefits, we will only permit reinstatement beginning with the month after the month of the request.

- If you have reached full retirement age, but are not yet age 70, you can ask to suspend your retirement benefit payments.
- If you suspend your benefits, they will start automatically the month you reach age 70.



Survivor Benefits

www.ssa.gov/benefits/survivors

Widow or Widower:

- Full benefits at full retirement age
- Reduced benefits at age 60
If disabled as early as age 50
- At any age if caring for child under 16 or disabled
- Remarriage after age 60 (50 if disabled) is protected
- Divorced widows/widowers may qualify

Your Child if:

- Not married under age 18 (under 19 if still in high school)
- Not married and disabled before age 22



Survivor Benefit Computation

www.ssa.gov/benefits/survivors

100% - Survivor benefit

You could be entitled up to 100% of your deceased spouse's (divorced spouse's) benefit

- You will be entitled up to 100% of a deceased spouse's (divorced spouse's) benefit or your own, *whichever benefit is higher*
- At full retirement age, **100%** of deceased worker's benefit
- At age 60, **71.5%** of deceased worker's benefit (remember there is a permanent reduction for starting benefits early)
- Option to reduced benefits on one record and switch to other record later



Social Security Disability

www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability

Who Can Get Disability Benefits?

Worker

- Must have paid into Social Security five out of last 10 years
- For younger workers, under age 31 less work is required

Spouse

- At age 62
- At any age if caring for child under 16 or disabled
- Divorced spouses may qualify

Child

- Not married under age 18 (under 19 if still in high school)
- Not married and disabled before age 22

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Social Security Benefits and Taxation

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/taxes.html

If you file a **“joint return”** and your combined income ** is:

- Between \$32,000 and \$44,000, you have to pay income tax on up to 50% of your benefits.
- More than \$44,000, up to 85% of your benefits may be taxable.

If you file as an **“individual”** and your combined income ** is:

- Between \$25,000 and \$34,000, you have to pay income tax on up to 50% of your benefits.
- More than \$34,000, up to 85% of your benefits may be taxable.

** Combined income is:

Your adjusted gross income
 + Nontaxable interest
 + ½ of your Social Security
 = Your “Combined Income”

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2021 Retirement Benefit Formula

If your average monthly earnings are = **\$6,300**

Then your full monthly benefit would be = **\$2,543**

	90% of First.....	\$996 = \$896
	32% of Earnings over \$996 through \$6,002..... (\$6,002-\$996=\$5,006)	\$5,006 = \$1,602
	15% of Earnings over \$6,002..... (\$6,300-\$6,002=\$298)	\$298 = \$45
		\$6,300 = \$2,543

*Payments rounded to whole dollar amounts



Special Rules Affecting Non-Covered Pensions

www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/gpo-wep.html

When part of your pension is from work not covered by Social Security two laws may affect your Social Security benefit amount:

- **Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)** applies when you have at least 40 Social Security credits and you are eligible for Social Security benefits on your own work record
- **Government Pension Offset (GPO)** applies only to Social Security spouse or widow(er)'s benefits



How to apply for benefits

- You can apply for benefits three months before you want your payments to start.
- Benefits are paid the month after they are due.
(Go to <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10031.pdf> for a payment calendar)
- Apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov
It is the most convenient way to apply; or
- Call Social Security to schedule an appointment
1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778)

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Contacting Social Security

www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/contact

[Visit the website](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

www.socialsecurity.gov

[Contact a local office](#)

Offices are currently open to provide service by phone Monday - Friday from 9 AM to 4 PM except Federal holidays. Get the phone number of local offices at www.ssa.gov/locator.

[Call the toll-free number](#)

1-800-772-1213

Specific questions can be answered from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Information is provided by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

If deaf or hard of hearing, call Social Security's TTY number, 1-800-325-0778.

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Online Services



Retirement



Disability



Medicare Enrollment



my Social Security

Check out your *Social Security Statement*, change your address & manage your benefits online today.



Social Security Number

Your Social Security number remains your first and continuous link with Social Security.



Retirement Estimator





Calculate your benefits based on your actual Social Security earnings record.




FAQs

Get answers to frequently asked questions about Social Security.


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Medicare Eligibility



65 & older

-or-

24 months after entitlement to Social Security disability benefits

-or-

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis

-or-

Permanent kidney failure and receive maintenance dialysis or a kidney transplant

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Medicare Enrollment Periods

- Initial - at age 65
(3 months prior and after)
note: effective date is delayed if enrolled month of age 65 or later
- Special - still working/Employer Group Health Plan
(and after initial enrollment period)
- General – January~March
(premium increased & coverage begins in July)

Enrollment in any part of Medicare will effect Health Savings Accounts!!!



Medicare Enrollment Periods

When does my enrollment in Part B become effective?

If you accept the automatic enrollment in Medicare Part B, or if you enroll during the first three months of your **initial enrollment period**, your coverage will start with the month you're first eligible. If you enroll during the last four months, your coverage will start from one to three months after you enroll. The following chart shows when your Medicare Part B becomes effective:

If you enroll in this month of your initial enrollment period:	Then your Part B Medicare coverage starts:
One to three months before you reach age 65	The month you reach age 65
The month you reach age 65	One month after the month you reach age 65
One month after you reach age 65	Two months after the month of enrollment
Two or three months after you reach age 65	Three months after the month of enrollment



Medicare Enrollment Periods

Special enrollment period for people covered under an employer group health plan

If you're 65 or older and covered under a group health plan, either from your own or your spouse's **current employment**, you may have a "special enrollment period" in which to sign up for Medicare Part B. This means that you may delay enrolling in Medicare Part B without having to wait for a general enrollment period and paying the penalty for late enrollment. There are limits, so we strongly advise you to contact the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for more information.

The rules allow you to:

- Enroll in Medicare Part B any time while you have a group health plan based on current employment; or
- Enroll in Medicare Part B during the eight-month period that begins the month after the employment ends or the group health coverage ends, whichever happens first.

NOTE: You can't enroll using a special enrollment period if your employment or the employer-provided group health plan coverage ends during your initial enrollment period. 31



Medicare Enrollment Periods

General enrollment period for Part B

If you don't enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period, you have another chance each year to sign up during a "general enrollment period" from January 1 through March 31. Your coverage begins on July 1 of the year you enroll.

However, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B coverage. Your monthly premium will go up 10 percent for each 12-month period you were eligible for Part B, but didn't sign up for it.

If you have a Health Savings Account (HSA)

If you have an HSA when you sign up for Medicare, you can't contribute to your HSA once your Medicare coverage begins. If you contribute to your HSA after your Medicare coverage starts, you may have to pay a tax penalty. If you'd like to continue contributing to your HSA, you shouldn't apply for Medicare, Social Security, or Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) benefits.

NOTE: Premium-free Part A coverage begins six months before the date you apply for Medicare (or Social Security/RRB benefits), but no earlier than the first month you were eligible for Medicare. To avoid a tax penalty, you should stop contributing to your HSA at least six months before you apply for Medicare.

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Medicare Enrollment Periods

If you have health care protection from other plans

If you have **TRICARE** (insurance for active-duty, military retirees, and their families), your health benefits can change or end when you become eligible for Medicare. This applies for any reason, regardless of age or place of residence. If you're retired from the military or are a military retiree's family member, you must enroll in Part A and Part B when first eligible to keep TRICARE coverage. You can find a military health benefits adviser at <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil>, or call the Defense Manpower Data Center, toll-free at **1-800-538-9552** before you decide whether to enroll in Medicare medical insurance (Part B).

If you have health care protection from the Indian Health Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, or a state medical assistance program, contact those offices to help you decide if it's to your advantage to have Medicare Part B.

IMPORTANT: *If you have VA coverage and don't enroll in Part B when you're first eligible, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B coverage. Also, you may have to wait to enroll, which will delay this coverage.*

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The Four Parts of Medicare

Part A - Hospital Insurance

- Covers most inpatient hospital expenses
- 2021 deductible \$1,484

Part B - Medical Insurance

- Covers 80% doctor bills & other outpatient medical expenses after 1st \$203 in approved charges
- 2021 standard monthly premium \$148.50

Part C – Medicare Advantage Plans

- Health plan options offered by Medicare-approved private insurance companies
- When you join a Medicare advantage plan, you can get the benefits and services covered under Part A, Part B, and in most plans, Part D

Part D –Prescription Drug Coverage

- Covers a major portion of your prescription drug costs
- Your out-of-pocket costs—monthly premiums, annual deductible and prescription co-payments—will vary by plan
- You enroll with a Medicare-approved prescription drug provider not Social Security

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Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount

www.medicare.gov/your-medicare-costs/part-b-costs

The standard monthly Medicare Part B premium for 2021 is \$148.50. If you're single and filed an individual tax return, or married and filed a joint tax return, the following chart applies to you:

For those who have higher income, the law requires an adjustment to their monthly Medicare Part B and Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage premiums. This affects less than 5 percent of people with Medicare.

If your yearly income in 2019 (for what you pay in 2021) was			You pay each month (in 2021)
File individual tax return	File joint tax return	File married & separate tax return	
\$88,000 or less	\$176,000 or less	\$88,000 or less	\$148.50
above \$88,000 up to \$111,000	above \$176,000 up to \$222,000	Not applicable	\$207.90
above \$111,000 up to \$138,000	above \$222,000 up to \$276,000	Not applicable	\$297.00
above \$138,000 up to \$165,000	above \$276,000 up to \$330,000	Not applicable	\$386.10
above \$165,000 and less than \$500,000	above \$330,000 and less than \$750,000	above \$88,000 and less than \$412,000	\$475.20
\$500,000 or above	\$750,000 and above	\$412,000 and above	\$504.90

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For More Information on Medicare

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS):

www.medicare.gov

1-800-633-4227

State Health Insurance assistance Program (SHIP):

www.medicare.in.gov

1-800-452-4800

www.socialsecurity.gov

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my Social Security

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Social Security Number

Your Social Security number remains your first and continuous link with Social Security.



Retirement Estimator

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FAQs

Get answers to frequently asked questions about Social Security.

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Q&A Session





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Update 2021

This update provides information about Social Security taxes, benefits, and costs for 2021. By law, some numbers change automatically each year to keep up with changes in price and wage levels.

Information for people who are working

Social Security and Medicare taxes		
Social Security taxes	2020	2021
Employee/employer (each)	6.2% on earnings up to \$137,700	6.2% on earnings up to \$142,800
Self-employed *Can be offset by income tax provisions	12.4%* on earnings up to \$137,700	12.4%* on earnings up to \$142,800
Medicare taxes	2020	2021
Employee/employer (each)	1.45% on all earnings	1.45% on all earnings
Self-employed *Can be offset by income tax provisions	2.9%* on all earnings	2.9%* on all earnings
High-income earners also pay an additional 0.9 percent in Medicare taxes on earnings above certain amounts. Check with the Internal Revenue Service for more details.		
Work credits		
When you work, you earn credits toward Social Security benefits. The number of credits you need to be eligible for Social Security benefits depends on your age and the type of benefit for which you are applying. You can earn a maximum of four credits each year. Most people need 40 credits to qualify for retirement benefits.		
	2020	2021
	\$1,410 earns one credit	\$1,470 earns one credit

Information for people who receive Social Security benefits

Earnings limits		
Under federal law, people who are receiving Social Security benefits, and who have not reached full retirement age, are entitled to receive all of their benefits as long as their earnings are under the limits indicated below. For people born in 1943 through 1954, the full retirement age is 66. The full retirement age increases gradually each year until it reaches age 67 for people born in 1960 or later.		
	2020	2021
At full retirement age or older	No limit on earnings	No limit on earnings
Under full retirement age	\$18,240 For every \$2 over the limit, \$1 is withheld from benefits.	\$18,960 For every \$2 over the limit, \$1 is withheld from benefits.
In the year you reach full retirement age	\$48,600 For every \$3 over the limit, \$1 is withheld from benefits until the month you reach full retirement age.	\$50,520 For every \$3 over the limit, \$1 is withheld from benefits until the month you reach full retirement age.
Disability beneficiaries' earnings limits: If you work while receiving disability benefits, you must tell us about your earnings no matter how little you earn. You may have unlimited earnings during a trial work period of up to nine months (not necessarily in a row) and still receive full benefits. Once you have completed your nine-month trial work period, we will determine if you are still entitled to disability benefits. You also may be eligible for other work incentives to help you make the transition back to work.		
	2020	2021
Substantial Gainful Activity (non-blind)	\$1,260 per month	\$1,310 per month
Substantial Gainful Activity (blind)	\$2,110 per month	\$2,190 per month
Trial work period month	\$910 per month	\$940 per month

Information for people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Monthly federal SSI payment (maximum)		
	2020	2021
Individual	\$783	\$794
Couple	\$1,175	\$1,191
Monthly income limits		
	2020	2021
Individual whose income is only from wages	\$1,651	\$1,673
Individual whose income is not from wages	\$803	\$814
Couple whose income is only from wages	\$2,435	\$2,467
Couple whose income is not from wages	\$1,195	\$1,211

NOTE: If you have income, your monthly benefit generally will be lower than the maximum federal SSI payment. Remember, you must report all of your income to us. Some states add money to the federal SSI payment. If you live in one of these states, you may qualify for a higher payment. Your income can be greater than the limits indicated and you still may qualify.

Information for people on Medicare

Most Medicare costs are increasing this year to keep up with the rise in health care costs.		
	2020	2021
Hospital Insurance (Part A)		
For first 60 days in a hospital, patient pays	\$1,408	\$1,484
For 61st through 90th days in a hospital, patient pays	\$352 per day	\$371 per day
Beyond 90 days in a hospital, patient pays (for up to 60 more days)	\$704 per day	\$742 per day
For first 20 days in a skilled nursing facility, patient pays	\$0	\$0
For 21st through 100th days in a skilled nursing facility, patient pays	\$176 per day	\$185.50 per day
Part A Premium Buy-In: The amount of the premium you pay to buy Medicare Part A depends on the number of Social Security credits you have earned. If you have:		
40 credits	\$0	\$0
30-39 credits	\$252 per month	\$259 per month
less than 30 credits	\$458 per month	\$471 per month
Medical Insurance (Part B)		
	2020	2021
Premium	\$144.60 per month	\$148.50 per month**
Deductible	\$198 per year	\$203 per year
	After the patient has paid the deductible, Part B pays for 80 percent of covered services.	

NOTE: If you get Medicare and your income is low, your state may pay your Medicare premiums and, in some cases, your deductibles and other out-of-pocket medical expenses. Contact your local medical assistance (Medicaid) agency, social services, or welfare office for more information.

**Standard monthly premium is \$148.50. Some people with higher incomes pay higher premiums.



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Social Security Administration
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Update 2021

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