

Social Security

Official Social Security Website

Substantial Gainful Activity

Automatic Determinations

Determinations:
 SGA for blind
 SGA for non-blind disabled

Wage-indexed amounts

To be eligible for disability benefits, a person must be unable to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA). A person who is earning more than a certain monthly amount (net of impairment-related work expenses) is ordinarily considered to be engaging in SGA. The amount of monthly earnings considered as SGA depends on the nature of a person's disability. The Social Security Act specifies a higher SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals; Federal regulations specify a lower SGA amount for non-blind individuals. Both SGA amounts generally change with changes in the national average wage index.

Amounts for 2014

The monthly SGA amount for statutorily blind individuals for 2014 is \$1800. For non-blind individuals, the monthly SGA amount for 2014 is \$1070. SGA for the blind does *not* apply to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, while SGA for the non-blind disabled applies to Social Security and SSI benefits. See historical series of SGA amounts below.

Trial work period

After a person becomes eligible for disability benefits, the person may attempt to return to the work force. As an incentive, we provide a *trial work period* in which a beneficiary may have earnings and still collect benefits.

Monthly substantial gainful activity amounts by disability type

Year	Blind	Non-blind	Year	Blind	Non-blind	Year	Blind	Non-blind
1975	\$200	\$200	1990	\$780	\$500	2005	\$1,380	\$830
1976	230	230	1991	810	500	2006	1,450	860
1977	240	240	1992	850	500	2007	1,500	900
1978	334	260	1993	880	500	2008	1,570	940

Captured 3/6/2014