How It Helps You:

The Social Security Administration (SSA) will not count any earned income that you use for expenses to work when they decide your SSI eligibility and payment amount. These work-related expenses do not have to be related to your blindness, but they must be reasonable work-related expenses that you incur. The amount of these expenses must also be below the total countable income formula used by Social Security in determining your SSI payment each month.

How It Works:

Some examples of Blind Work expenses may include:

- Dog guide expenses,
- Transportation to and from work,
- Dues or fees (such as licenses, union dues, etc.),
- Vehicle modifications,
- Work-related training,
- Federal, state, and local income taxes, and Social Security taxes,
- Visual and Sensory aids,
- Translation of materials into Braille,
- Medical equipment or supplies that help you work,
- Attendant Care Services,
- Meals consumed during work hours,
- Therapy

When SSA calculates your new SSI payment, they will apply income exclusions, including a $20 General Income Exclusion and a $65 Earned Income Exclusion. After applying these exclusions, they will count half of your remaining earned income in calculating your SSI payment.

If your disability on record with SSA is blindness, they will also exclude any expenses that meet the criteria for Blind Work Expense in calculating your SSI payment. You must track and report these expenses to SSA when you report your earnings each month.

A Community Work Incentives Coordinator can help you identify and calculate the Blind Work Expenses that are applicable to your situation.