

Supplemental Security Income

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King County

Department of Community and Human Services
Developmental Disabilities Division



Social Security Administration



SSA

- The Social Security Administration, or **SSA**, is a federal agency.
- The headquarters, located in Baltimore, Maryland, provides support for over 60,000 employees.
- Most people access to SSA through local field offices, the web at www.ssa.gov , and the SSA phone service: 1-800-772-1213.



SSA

- The Social Security Administration administers two benefit programs for people with disabilities:
 - Supplemental Security Income (**SSI**);
 - SSI is also known as Title XVI
 - Social Security Disability Insurance (**SSDI**);
 - SSDI is also known as Title II
 - One component of SSDI includes Social Security Disabled Adult Child (**SSDAC**);

SSI (Title XVI)

- SSI is funded through the general revenues of the Federal Treasury.
- To receive SSI, you do not need to have a history of employment or payroll contributions.
- SSI is a need-based benefit intended for those who are aged, blind or disabled who have little or no income and resources.



SSDI and SSDAC (Title II)

- FICA taxes > Social Security
- Work History / Credits > “Insured Status”
- Disabled + “Insured Status” = **SSDI** (Social Security Disability Insurance)
- Disabled + Adult + Disability started prior to age 22 + Parent with Insured Status + Parent dies, retires, or becomes disabled = **SSDAC** (Social Security Disabled Adult Child)

SSI vs. SSDI

SSI rules focus on how much money a person has.



SSDI/DAC rules focus on a person's ability to work.



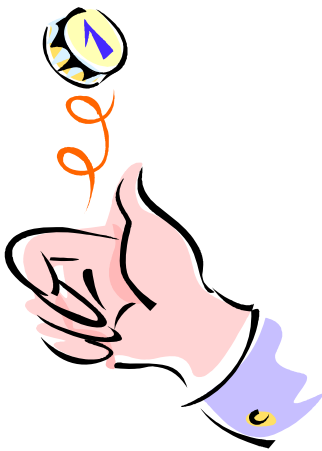


Eligibility - Disability Determination

- As an adult, to be eligible for SSDI or SSI, a person must first meet some basic disability requirements:
 - The person must have a disability that is expected to last at least 12 months;
 - At the time of application, the applicant must either not be working, or earning under Substantial Gainful Activity (**SGA**) which is \$1,000 gross / month in 2010).

Disability Determination

- The Division of Disability Determination Services, or DDDS, is the State agency in WA that make the disability decisions for Social Security.
- In making a disability determination, DDS workers will request medical records, work history information, and, when necessary, pay for specific medical exams.





Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR)

- SSA must periodically review the disability status of all beneficiaries and recipients.
- Most people who are clients of WA DDD receive a CDR every 3 to 7 years, though certain circumstances can trigger a new CDR.

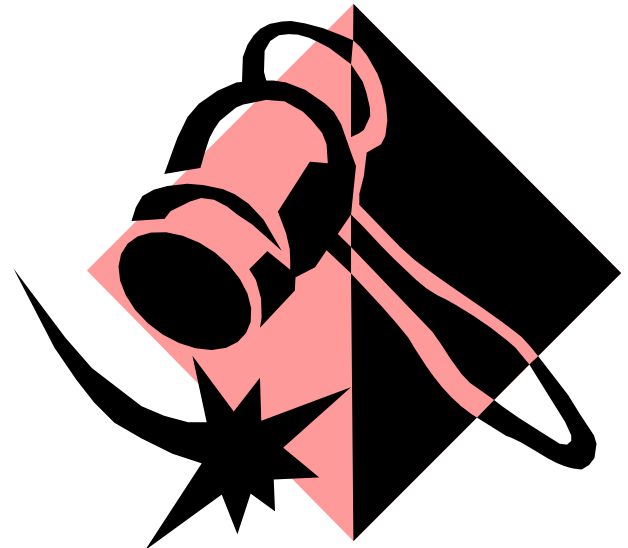


SSI Redeterminations

- In addition to the disability reviews, if a person receives SSI, SSA will conduct non-medical redeterminations to update income, resource, and living arrangement information.
- These SSI redeterminations will occur every 12 months.

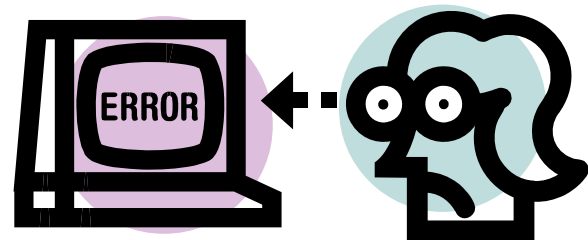
Appeals

- People have the right to appeal an initial determination made by SSA, a denial of benefits, a reduction of benefits, termination of benefits, and overpayments.



Managing SSA

- SSA is a tremendously large, bureaucratic organization.
- It would be generally impossible for any organization this large to operate without making mistakes, or to always respond in a timely manner.





Managing SSA

- In cases of dispute, the burden of proof always falls on the individual! Therefore, individuals receiving SSA benefits should:
 - Keep all paperwork SSA!
 - Never throw anything away!
 - If he/she talks to someone from SSA over the phone or in person, he/she should record the person's name, the person's location, the date and time, and what was discussed.

Questions?



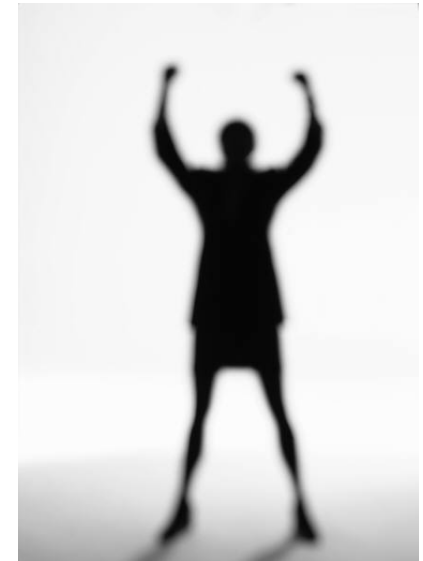
SSI – The Application

When should a person apply?

- If a person is under the age of 18, the parents' income and resources will be considered.



- If a person is over the age of 18, only the individual's income and resources are considered.



How does one apply for SSI?

- Internet: www.ssa.gov
 - Only a partial SSI application can be completed.
- Call 1-800-772-1213
 - Schedule face-to-face meeting; or
 - Schedule phone intake appointment



What information should I include with my application?

- Birth Certificate (original or certified copy)
- SSN
- Bank Statements (two months)
- Documentation of any income (wage stubs for last two full months; tax returns; child support payment documentation; etc)
- Rent / Mortgage payment information*
- Resource information (stocks, bonds, burial funds, etc.)
- Special Needs Trust documentation, if applicable
- Guardianship documentation, if applicable
- Spouse's wage information if working

What information should I include with my application?

- Any documentation regarding the disability;
- Names, addresses, and records of schools attended. Include names of teachers and counselors.
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, dates of treatment, and records from
 - all physicians;
 - all therapists;
 - all clinics and hospitals.
- Statements by relatives, friends, and other people who know the applicant and the obstacles he/she faces due to the disability
 - **Third Party Function Report**

When should I apply?

- If a person intends to apply at age 18, he /she can apply as early as the 1st day of the month when he /she turns age 18.



How long will it take?

- The waiting period for eligibility determination is approximately 120 days.



Appeals



- If denied eligibility, you have the right to appeal.
- A detailed description of the Appeals process is included.

SSI – The Basics



What is SSI?

- SSI is Supplemental Security Income.
- SSI is also known as Title XVI.
- People qualify for SSI if:
 - They are aged, blind, or disabled; AND
 - They have little work history; AND
 - They have little **resources** and **income**.

People receiving SSI also receive **Medicaid**.



How Much Is It?

- SSI is based on what's called the Federal Benefit Rate (**FBR**).
- For 2010, the FBR is **\$674**.
- Other states have additional State Supplemental Payments; WA does not.

SSI – What It Covers

- The FBR, \$674, is considered the minimum amount that a person needs in order to live on a monthly basis.



SSI and Living Arrangement

- A person is expected to use his/her SSI to pay food and shelter costs.



- If a person is receiving support and not paying a fair share of living expenses, then SSA can reduce that person's SSI amount.



Medical

SSI and Medicaid

- SSI recipients also receive Medicaid*, the green and white coupon mailed monthly.



*In 32 States, including WA.

Medicaid



Washington

- Unlike SSI, Medicaid is a state administered program. Each state sets its own guidelines subject to federal rules and guidelines.
- There are a few different types of Medicaid in WA.
- When a person receives Medicaid with SSI, it is referred to as **CNP**, or Categorically Needy Program Medicaid.

Medicaid

- Medicaid is not the same as Medicare.





Medicaid – Generally What It Covers

- CNP Medicaid pays for mandatory health services such as:
 - Physician services,
 - Inpatient and outpatient hospital care;
 - Nursing home care;
 - Some Dental Care
 - Medicaid Personal Care;
 - Physical, occupational, and speech therapies; and
 - Prescriptions.*

*If a person receives both Medicare and Medicaid, prescription costs will be covered under the Medicare Drug Plan.



Resources

What are the Resource Restrictions?

- To be eligible for SSI, a person must have less than \$2,000 in resources (\$3,000 if applicants are a couple and recipients of SSI).
- Exclusions to this restriction include:
 - Personal home;
 - A car;
 - Money sheltered in a PASS;
 - Money and equity in a self-owned business;
 - Burial funds, up to a certain amount;
 - Retroactive SSA payments for a certain period;
 - Money sheltered in a **Special Needs Trust**.



Over-resources Example

Jessica receives SSI. Her grandmother passes away, leaving her an inheritance of \$10,000.

What will happen to her SSI?



Example Continued

- If Jessica does nothing, she will lose her SSI and Medicaid because she is over the \$2,000 resource limit.
- Jessica can spend down her \$10,000;
- Or, Jessica can shelter the money in a Special Needs Trust.

Special Needs Trust

- A special needs trust preserves assets that would otherwise disqualify someone from SSI and Medicaid.



Special Needs Trust

- One available trust is the Developmental Disabilities Life Opportunity Trust.



Questions?





SSI and Earned Income



What are the Income Restrictions?

- Income is often referred to as being either “Earned” or “Unearned”.
- Earned Income is **gross income** that a person gets paid from a job.
- Unearned Income is money that the person didn’t earn:
 - SSDI;
 - Gifts;
 - Child Support;
 - Etc.



Income Restrictions, cont.

- Both Earned and Unearned Income can impact:
 - a person's eligibility for SSI; and
 - the size of the person's SSI check.
- *Earned and Unearned Income affect SSI differently.

Earned Income and SSI

- If a person is working, SSA will adjust a person's SSI amount based on his / her gross monthly wages.





Earnings and SSI - Reporting

- When the person first begins working, he/she must notify SSA.
- The person will then be required to send in copies of wage stubs to the local SSA office every month.
- Social Security will mail envelopes in which the wage stubs can be sent.



Earnings and SSI - Reporting

- Social Security takes wage information and reduces SSI accordingly.
- This process takes two months.
The SSI amount in December is based on wages earned in October.



Calculations

Calculation Example

Nikki receives \$674 SSI. She begins working and gets paid \$885 gross per month.

What will be the new amount of her SSI?



Calculations Example

\$885 gross wages

- \$ 65 exclusion

- \$ 20 exclusion

\$800

$\$800 / 2 = \400 Countable Income

$\$674 \text{ FBR}^* - \$400 = \$274 \text{ SSI.}$

Calculations Example

If Nikki is paid \$885 gross/ month, she will receive a \$274 SSI check, for a total of \$1,159.



SSI Calculations – Determine the SSI Amount for Each Person

1. Petunia receives \$674 SSI and now earns **\$1,085** gross per month.
2. Mr. Chablis receives \$674 SSI and now earns **\$70** gross per month.
3. Georgia receives \$674 SSI and now begins earning **\$1,885** gross per month.

SSI Calculations – Determine the SSI Amount for Each Person

1. Petunia: **\$174 SSI**; \$174 SSI + \$1,085 wages = \$1,259.
2. Mr. Chablis: **\$674 SSI**; \$674 SSI + \$70 wages = \$744.
3. Georgia: **\$0 SSI**; \$0 SSI + \$1,885 wages = \$1,885.

Georgia

- By earning \$1,885 gross per month, Georgia will receive \$0 SSI check.
- Does this mean Georgia now becomes ineligible for SSI and Medicaid?



No!



1619b Status

- 1619b occurs when SSI is reduced to \$0 due to wages.
- 1619b allows a person to stay linked to SSI and keep Medicaid.

In 2010, a person can earn up to \$28,470 gross in the year and maintain 1619b status.

1619b Status & Individualized Threshold

If a person has high support costs covered by Medicaid, he / she may be able to request a **Individualized Threshold** beyond the State 1619b threshold.





SSI and Unearned Income



Unearned Income

- Unearned Income is any income that is not earned:
 - SSDI / **SSDAC**
 - Child Support
 - Gifts
 - Inheritances
 - Interest
 - Etc.



Unearned Income

- Unlike wages, unearned income is weighed much more heavily by SSA.
- Whereas wages are looked at as roughly \$1 for every \$2 earned, unearned income is looked at, after a \$20 exclusion, dollar for dollar.
- When calculating SSI, SSA will look at unearned income first, and earned income second.

Example

- Clover, who is not working, receives both SSDI and SSI. Her SSDI is \$440 / month. How large will her SSI check be?



Example

\$440 SSDI

- \$ 20 Exclusion

\$420 This is Clover's Countable Income.

\$674 FBR

- \$420 Countable Income

\$254 SSI

If Clover receives \$440 SSDI, she will also receive \$254 SSI, for a total of \$694.

Unearned Income



If Unearned Income, after the \$20 exclusion, is larger than the person's full SSI check, the person will lose SSI and possibly Medicaid for that month.

Questions?



Quiz

1. Mr. Globe doesn't know what type of benefits he gets, but he knows the amount is \$760. Does Mr. O get SSI?

- No
- Yes



Quiz

1. Mr. Globe doesn't know what type of benefits he gets, but he knows the amount is \$760. Does Mr. O get SSI?

No

Yes



Quiz

1. Captain Champagne receives \$674 SSI. What else should he receive?

- Medicaid
- Medicare
- SSDI



Quiz

1. Captain Champagne receives \$674 SSI. What else should he receive?



Medicaid



Medicare



SSDI



Quiz

2. Jesse receives SSI and Medicaid and has recently started a job. His wages will be about \$1,685 per month. What will happen to his benefits?
- Jesse will lose his SSI and Medicaid.
 - Jesse will lose his SSI cash benefit but will remain eligible for SSI and Medicaid.

Quiz

2. Jesse receives SSI and Medicaid and has recently started a job. His wages will be about \$1,685 per month. What will happen to his benefits?
- Jesse will lose his SSI and Medicaid.
 - Jesse will lose his SSI cash benefit but will remain eligible for SSI and Medicaid.

Quiz

4. Boris, an 18 year old who has never worked, receives only \$449 SSI / month and Medicaid. He's never been notified that he has an overpayment. Why is Boris' SSI less than his friend's SSI, which is \$674 per month?
- Boris gets less SSI because he doesn't have a work history.
 - Boris probably isn't paying his fair share for room and board.
 - Boris is confused and actually receives SSDI.



Great
Job!

Quiz

4. Boris, an 18 year old who has never worked, receives only \$449 SSI / month and Medicaid. He's never been notified that he has an overpayment. Why is Boris' SSI less than his friend's SSI, which is \$674 per month?
- Boris gets less SSI because he doesn't have a work history.
 - Boris probably isn't paying his fair share for room and board.
 - Boris is confused and actually receives SSDI.

Quiz

5. Jackie, age 30, receives \$674 SSI per month. She begins working, earning \$1,085 per month. Her monthly SSI will be reduced to what amount?
- \$0
 - \$174
 - \$94.50
 - \$674

Quiz

5. Jackie, age 30, receives \$674 SSI per month. She begins working, earning \$1,085 per month. Her monthly SSI will be reduced to what amount?

- \$0
- \$174
- \$94.50
- \$674



Questions?



Work Incentive: Student Earned Income Exclusion





Student Earned Income Exclusion

SSI recipients eligible for the Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE):

- Regularly attending school; and
- Under the age of 22; and
- Working.

Under the SEIE, a person can earn up to \$1,640 / month, up to a total of \$6,600 in 2010, and **SSI will not be reduced.**



Student Earned Income Exclusion

- The Transition Program typically qualifies.
- The first time that student's wage stubs are mailed to SSA, the following should be included:
 - School documents showing student status (IEP);
 - SSA's policy regarding the SEIE (enclosed);
 - A brief note explaining the individual is a student and that the exclusion should apply.
- The student must still report income to SSA on a monthly basis.

Work Incentive: Impairment Related Work Expense





IRWE

- IRWE is an acronym for Impairment-Related Work Expense.
- If a disabled person pays out-of-pocket for items and services that are:
 - related to his/her disability, and
 - necessary for employment,... those expenses may qualify as Impairment-Related Work Expenses.

IRWE Examples



- Supported Employment Services;
- Attendant Care Services if performed at work, or in the process of helping someone prepare for work or return from work;
- Certain transportation costs, including mileage for approved vehicles;
- Routine drugs and medical services;
- Work-related equipment.

IRWE and SSI

- Recipients of SSI may be reimbursed up to 50% of the IRWE amount on their SSI check.



IRWE and SSI

Olaf

- Olaf is working, receiving \$885 gross / month. He also receives SSI in the amount of \$274 for a grand total of \$1,122.
- Olaf needs a job coach to remain successful at his job.
- The job coach is negotiated to cost \$200 / month. Olaf will pay for this service himself.
- Olaf lets SSA know about the IRWE, and it is approved.

IRWE and SSI

Olaf

- SSA calculates his new SSI:

\$885 gross wages
- \$ 85 exclusion
\$800

↓
↓ without IRWE
↓

$\$800 / 2 = \400 Countable Income

\$674
- \$400
\$274 SSI

IRWE and SSI

Olaf

- SSA calculates his new SSI:

\$885 gross wages
- \$ 85 exclusion
\$800

\$800
- \$200 IRWE
\$600

\$600 / 2 = \$300 Countable Income

\$674
- \$300
\$374 SSI

IRWE and SSI

Olaf

- Without an IRWE, Olaf receives:
 - \$885 wages + \$274 SSI = **\$1,159** total income / mo
- With an IRWE, Olaf receives:
 - \$885 wages - \$200 job coaching + \$374 SSI = **\$1,059**.
- Olaf is paying \$200 out-of-pocket for his IRWE, but his total income is only reduced by \$100.



IRWE and SSI

June

- June is receiving \$485 gross / month in wages. She is 19 yrs old and a full-time student. Because of the Student Earned-Income Exclusion, her SSI is not being reduced.
- June is paying \$150 / month for therapies not covered by Medicaid. They are related to her disability, and they are necessary for work.
- Can June submit an IRWE and receive up to half of the \$150 back on her SSI?

IRWE and SSI

June

- No. SSA is unable to reimburse June any of the IRWE costs because she is already receiving the maximum SSI amount available.

Work Incentive: Plan to Achieve Self-Support





What is a PASS?

- Plan to Achieve Self Support.
- PASS is a great tool for people who are serious about employment and need support to be successful.
- PASS plans are as unique as the individuals who choose to utilize them.

What is a PASS?

PASS is a tool that helps people afford items and services they need to reach a specific work goal.





Who can use a PASS?

- Anyone who is receiving SSI or could be eligible to receive SSI;
AND
- Anyone who has resources or income other than SSI may utilize a PASS.
- PASS works for many people, but it doesn't work for everyone.

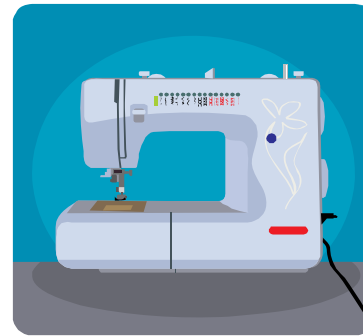
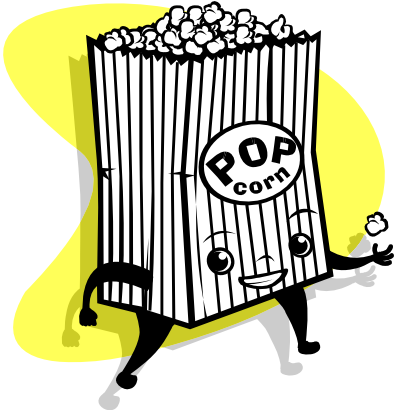
What can a person pay for with a PASS?

- Vocational Assessment
- Job coaching
- Transportation Costs
- Clothing
- Equipment (computers, modification at the work place, etc.)
- Home-support directly before and after work;
- Education
- Cost of someone's support with writing the PASS;
- Physical therapy / Counseling;
- Etc., Etc. Etc.



PASS to Leverage Employment Opportunities

- PASS can also be used to purchase items that make a person more marketable in the work place.



How does one create a PASS?

- A **PASS template** is filled out and submitted to SSA.
- **In this plan, the person identifies a work goal, the steps it is going to take to reach that goal, and all the costs involved with that process.**
- The PASS Cadre (Rachel Churchward) will review the PASS and make a decision on what items to approve.

Once approved, how does it work?

A person with an approved PASS plan sets a portion of his/her own income aside monthly in a separate bank account to pay for the items listed.

Social Security responds by reimbursing the person that set-aside amount on his/her SSI check.



SSI Example

Nigel receives \$885 gross / month wages and \$274 SSI for a total of \$1,159 / month.

Based on his wages, Nigel's SSI is being reduced by \$400.

Nigel wants to change jobs and earn more money. He writes a PASS to pay for the things he needs to reach this work goal. The PASS is approved.

SSI Example – The Sheltering Mechanism

Nigel will take \$400 of his hard-earned money and set it in a special account dedicated to the PASS.



In return, SSA will reimburse Nigel the \$400 on his SSI check.

w/o the PASS: \$885 wages + \$274 SSI =
\$1,159



w/ the PASS: \$885 wages - \$400 PASS +
\$674 SSI =

\$1,159 (+ \$400 PASS)

IRWE vs. PASS

IRWE

- Last indefinitely;
- SSI recipients can recoup 50% of costs;
- Only for impairment-related items.

PASS

- Time-limited;
- SSI recipients may recoup 100% of costs;
- Covers employment-related items.



King County PASS Management

King County can help people write and manage their PASS plans.

- Assist with writing the PASS;
- Use “virtual” accounts for PASS funds;
- KC DDD will help monitor the flow of funds;
- KC DDD will produce all documents for audits;
- KC DDD can assist with writing amendments.

Questions?





PASS Example

Lizette

Lizette's dream is to become a clown.



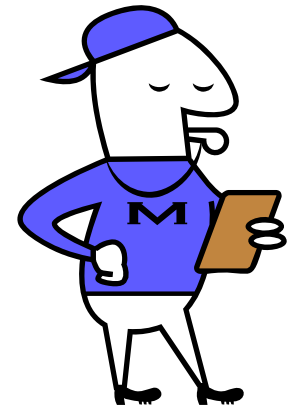
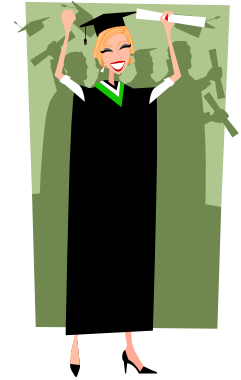
Example, cont.

Lizette has requested the following items in her PASS:

- Cost of tuition at Clown Community College (one year program)
- Job coaching
- 8 rubber chickens
- 1 pair bulbous red shoes, size 20
- Baby elephant
- 2005 Mercedes-Benz SL Roadster

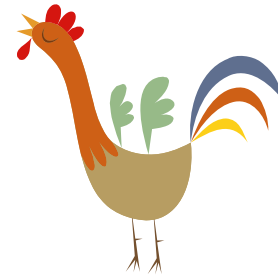
Example – What Will Be Approved?

- Cost of tuition at Clown Community College
 - This could be approved; however, Lizette would need to demonstrate that she has researched possible grants and none exist (or she doesn't qualify for any).
- Job coaching
 - This could be approved. Lizette would need to explain in detail how much job coaching she would need and why she needs this support.



Example – What Will Be Approved?

- 8 rubber chickens
 - No problem, as long as SSA knows it's a necessary item for a clown.
- Bulbous shoes
 - Again, no problem, as long as SSA understands that it is part of a work uniform.
- Baby Elephant
 - This one would be pretty tough to get through. Why does she need one? Can she afford to take care of it? SSA will want to know.

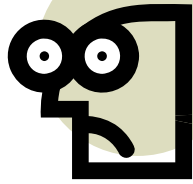


Example – What Will Be Approved?

- Mercedes-Benz
 - Not a chance.



Cars can be approved in a PASS if the cost is reasonable and the purpose is work-related.



Suspension

During the plan, Lizette becomes ill and needs to take a few months off.

Lizette requests that the plan be suspended.

Suspensions can last for up to one year.

After a couple of months, Lizette is well and reinstates her plan.

The PASS Ends

Once Lizette reaches a point of stability and realizes her work goal, her PASS ends.



Questions?





Thank You!

Please fill out the evaluation before you leave.



King County

**Department of Community and Human Services
Developmental Disabilities Division**