

Incentive Payments For State And Local Institutions



The Social Security and SSI programs

The Social Security program provides disability, retirement and survivors benefits to qualified 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. The Social Security Administration (SSA) manages both programs.

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

Authority for incentive payments

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

- Results in the suspension of SSI payments to people whose confinement began in March 1997 or later; or
- 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 information every month about all newly admitted inmates:

- Social Security number;
- Name;
- Date of birth;
- Date that confinement or incarceration began; and
- Other identifying information about the inmate.

In addition to monthly reports of new admissions, institutions must 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 Social Security or SSI recipient that is suspended as a result of information provided by the participating institution, we will pay the institution:

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

NOTE: We will not pay an incentive payment for information received after 90 days of confinement.

(over)

How incentive payment process works

When reports are received, 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 are receiving Social Security or SSI benefit payments;
4. Notify the inmate that Social Security or SSI payments must be suspended;
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; and
7. Send a monthly notice to each participating institution informing it of:
 - The total number of Social Security or SSI recipients whose benefits were suspended as a result of information the institution provided;
 - The total monthly incentive payment; and
 - The date the electronic funds transfer was transmitted to its financial account.

Questions about incentive payment process

If you have any questions about this incentive payment program, you should contact any Social Security office for the name and address 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

For more information, visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov or call toll-free **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer specific questions and provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.