

# WHAT ARE BLIND WORK EXPENSES and HOW DO I KNOW IF THEY APPLY TO ME?

## 2018 FACTSHEET

Blind Work Expenses (BWE) are the costs that blind individuals incur in order to work.

Individuals are eligible to receive blind work expense deductions if they receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) because they are blind, and they earn income.

Unlike Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE), Blind Work Expenses do not need to be related to your blindness in order to receive the work expense deduction. (*For more information on Impairment Related Work Expenses, see the IRWE Factsheet*).

### What are some examples of BWEs?

Service animal expenses, work-related transportation, social security or income taxes, visual aids, professional association or union fees, work training, Braille translations, and attendant care services all are examples of potential Blind Work Expenses. **NOTE: some of these deductible expenses are not related to blindness, and do not have to be in order to receive the benefit (e.g., union dues).**

When the Social Security Administration (SSA) calculates your monthly SSI payment, they will halve your remaining earned income (after general and earned income exclusions are applied) **before** subtracting your blind work expenses. This will result in a higher SSI payment for you than when Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) are deducted to calculate an SSI payment. (Income Related Work Expenses are subtracted **before your income is halved** for purposes of calculating your SSI payment)

As with all other SSA benefits, it is critically important that you track your Blind Work Expenses and report them to the SSA each month.

If you have any questions regarding Blind Work Expenses, please contact the Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center (NDALC) WIPA coordinator at 877-890-5082.

*This document is funded through a Social Security Administration cooperative agreement and was developed and printed at U.S. taxpayer expense. Although Social Security reviewed this document for accuracy, it does not constitute an official Social Security communication.*