

Social Security Retirement and Work

A person can work while receiving Social Security Retirement (SSR) benefits. Earnings will only reduce the SSR benefits until the person reaches “full retirement age.”

Under Full Retirement Age

A wage earner can apply for early retirement at age 62. If a person on early retirement works, Social Security will deduct \$1 from the SSR benefit payments for every \$2 earned above a set annual limit. That limit in the year 2021 is \$18,960 in gross earnings.

If a person under full retirement age works and some retirement benefits are withheld because of earnings above the annual limit, full retirement age benefits will be increased to take into account the reduction of benefits due to work and earnings.

In the Year A Person Reaches Full Retirement Age

In the year a person reaches full retirement age, Social Security will deduct \$1 for every \$3 earned above a threshold limit – but only until the person reaches full retirement age. That threshold limit in the year 2021 is \$50,520.

After the Month A Person Reaches Full Retirement Age

Starting with the month a person reaches their full retirement age, he or she is eligible for SSR benefits with no limit on earnings.

Additional Benefits of Working While Receiving SSR

Each year the Social Security Administration reviews the records for all Social Security recipients who work. If a person’s latest year of earnings turns out to be one of his or her highest years, the benefit amount will be refigured, and the person will be paid any increase due. This is an automatic process and is usually completed by October of the following year.

NOTE: For applicants born before 1937, full retirement age is 65. For persons born after 1937, full retirement age varies. See the Social Security website at <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/retirechart.html> for a specific full retirement age or contact our toll-free hotline at 1-888-224-3272 for more information.

Note: This document is produced, printed, and disseminated at U.S taxpayer expense. One hundred percent of the funding for this document is through a Social Security cooperative agreement that funds our Western NY Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Project. Although Social Security reviewed this document for accuracy, it does not constitute an official Social Security communication.