Incentive Payments for State and Local Institutions

The Social Security and SSI programs
Social Security 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. Social Security manages both programs.

In most cases, Social Security or SSI benefits cannot be paid to people who are in prison or other public institutions. Administrators of jails, prisons and other correctional and certain mental health institutions can help Social Security 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 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;
• Conviction date;
• Release dates, and
• Other identifying information about the inmate.

Institutions must also 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, 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.

Sending Inmate Reports to Social Security
In addition to monthly reports of new inmate admissions, institutions must provide us an initial report with their total inmate population. Participating institutions must forward the information to Social Security electronically.

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 with:
   — The total number of Social Security beneficiaries and SSI recipients whose benefits we suspended because of your inmate report;
   — The total monthly incentive payments due you; and
   — The date we transferred the electronic funds to your financial account.

Help Us Stop Fraud and Waste in Government Programs

Our law changed in December 2013. It now expands our authority to share prisoner information with the Department of Treasury for the purposes of tax administration, debt collection, and identifying, preventing and recovering improper payments under federally funded programs. You can help us stop fraud and waste in other government programs by sending us the following additional inmate information with your monthly inmate report for re-disclosure to Treasury’s Do Not Pay Portal:

- Work release dates,
- Projected release dates,
- Taxpayer identification numbers,
- Prison assigned inmate numbers, and
- Inmate’s last known addresses.

Questions about incentive payment process

If you have any questions about this incentive payment program, you can 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

The most convenient way to contact us anytime, anywhere is to visit www.socialsecurity.gov. There, you can: apply for benefits; open a my Social Security account, which you can use to review your Social Security Statement, verify your earnings, print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, and get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S; obtain valuable information; find publications; get answers to frequently asked questions; and much more.

If you don’t have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 or at our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778, if you’re deaf or hard of hearing.

If you need to speak to a person, we can answer your calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a higher than usual rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.