

Oklahoma Health Care Authority

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) values your feedback and input. It is very important that you provide your comments regarding the proposed rule change by the comment due date. Comments can be submitted on the OHCA's [Proposed Changes Blog](#).

OHCA COMMENT DUE DATE: January 17, 2018

The proposed policy is an Emergency Rule. The proposed policy was presented at the November 7, 2017 Tribal Consultation. This proposal is scheduled to be presented to the Medical Advisory Committee on January 18, 2018 and the OHCA Board of Directors on February 8, 2018.

Reference: APA WF 17-15

SUMMARY:

Student Earned Income Exclusion for Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) Applicants – The proposed ABD eligibility policy revisions remove specific amounts of a student's earned income that can be excluded because SSA revises the amounts on an annual basis. The revised policy refers to Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) Appendix C-1.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority Act, Section 5007(F)(1) and (3) of Title 63 of Oklahoma Statutes; Section 5003 through 5016 of Title 63 of Oklahoma Statutes; The Oklahoma Health Care Authority Board

RULE IMPACT STATEMENT:

STATE OF OKLAHOMA OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

TO: Tywanda Cox
Federal and State Policy

FROM: Harvey Reynolds
Federal and State Authorities

SUBJECT: Rule Impact Statement
APA WF # 17-15

A. Brief description of the purpose of the rule:

The proposed Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) countable income policy revisions remove specific amounts for the income disregard of a student's earned income and instead refers to OKDHS Appendix C-1. These amounts are used by the Dept. of Human Services when determining countable income and eligibility for the ABD category. The Student Earned Income Exclusion is revised yearly by the Social Security Administration. The proposed revisions also clarify the definition of student status. The proposed revisions will help ensure that an unintended barrier is not created for the access of SoonerCare.

- B. A description of the classes of persons who most likely will be affected by the proposed rule, including classes that will bear the cost of the proposed rule, and any information on cost impacts received by the agency from any private or public entities:

ABD applicants will be affected by the proposed rule changes as revisions are necessary to ensure that ABD eligibility workers are determining countable income with the Student Earned Income Exclusion amounts for the current year.

- C. A description of the classes of persons who will benefit from the proposed rule:

ABD applicants will benefit from the proposed rule changes as the Student Earned Income Exclusion maximum amounts are increased yearly by SSA.

- D. A description of the probable economic impact of the proposed rule upon the affected classes of persons or political subdivisions, including a listing of all fee changes and, whenever possible, a separate justification for each fee change:

There is no probable economic impact and there are no fee changes associated with the rule change for any classes of persons or any political subdivision.

- E. The probable costs and benefits to the agency and to any other agency of the implementation and enforcement of the proposed rule, the source of revenue to be used for implementation and enforcement of the proposed rule, and any anticipated affect on state revenues, including a projected net loss or gain in such revenues if it can be projected by the agency:

Agency staff has determined that the proposed rule change is budget neutral.

- F. A determination of whether implementation of the proposed rule will have an economic impact on any political subdivisions or require their cooperation in implementing or enforcing the rule:

The proposed rule will not have an economic impact on any political subdivision or require their cooperation in implementing or enforcing the rule.

- G. A determination of whether implementation of the proposed rule will have an adverse effect on small business as provided by the Oklahoma Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Act:

The agency does not anticipate that the proposed rule will have an adverse effect on small businesses.

- H. An explanation of the measures the agency has taken to minimize compliance costs and a determination of whether there are less costly or non-regulatory methods or less intrusive methods for achieving the purpose of the proposed rule:

The agency has taken measures to determine that there are no other legal methods to achieve the purpose of the proposed rule. Measures included a formal public comment period and tribal consultation.

- I. A determination of the effect of the proposed rule on the public health, safety and environment and, if the proposed rule is designed to reduce significant risks to the public health, safety and environment, an explanation of the nature of the risk and to what extent the proposed rule will reduce the risk:

The proposed rule should not have any effect on the public health, safety or environment. The proposed rule is not designed to reduce significant risks to the public health, safety or environment.

- J. A determination of any detrimental effect on the public health, safety and environment if the proposed rule is not implemented:

The agency does not anticipate any detrimental effect on the public health, safety or environment if the proposed rule is not implemented.

K. The date the rule impact statement was prepared and if modified, the date modified:

Prepared date: August 30, 2017

RULE TEXT

TITLE 317. OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY CHAPTER 35. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN-ELIGIBILITY

SUBCHAPTER 5. ELIGIBILITY AND COUNTABLE INCOME

PART 5. COUNTABLE INCOME AND RESOURCES

317:35-5-42. Determination of countable income for individuals categorically related to aged, blind and disabled

(a) **General.** The term income is defined as that gross gain or gross recurrent benefit which is derived from labor, business, property, retirement and other benefits, and many other forms which can be counted on as currently available for use on a regular basis. When an individual's income is reduced due to recoupment of an overpayment or garnishment, the gross amount before the recoupment or garnishment is counted as income. Verification of the member's countable income or resources held in bank accounts or at other financial institutions can be established through an AVSAsset Verification System (AVS).

(1) If it appears the applicant or SoonerCare member is eligible for any type of income (excluding SSI) or resources, he/she must be notified in writing by the Agency of his/her potential eligibility. The notice must contain the information that failure to file for and take all appropriate steps to obtain such benefit within 30 days from the date of the notice will result in a determination of ineligibility.

(2) If a husband and wife are living in their own home, the couple's total income and/or resource is divided equally between the two cases. If they both enter a nursing facility, their income and resources are considered separately.

(3) If only one spouse in a couple is eligible and the couple ceases to live together, only the income and resources of the ineligible spouse that are actually contributed to the eligible spouse beginning with the month after the month which they ceased to live together are considered.

(4) In calculating monthly income, cents are included in the computation until the monthly amount of each individual's

source of income has been established. When the monthly amount of each income source has been established, cents are rounded to the nearest dollar (1 - 49 cents is rounded down, and 50 - 99 cents is rounded up). For example, an individual's weekly earnings of \$99.90 are multiplied by 4.3 and the cents rounded to the nearest dollar ($\$99.90 \times 4.3 = \429.57 rounds to \$430). See rounding procedures in OAC 340:65-3-4 when using BENDEX to verify OASDI benefits.

(b) **Income disregards.** In determining need, the following are not considered as income:

(1) The value of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) received;

(2) Any payment received under Title II of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970;

(3) Educational grants (excluding work study), scholarships, etc., that are contingent upon the student regularly attending school. The student's classification (graduate or undergraduate) is not a factor;

(4) Loans (regardless of use) if a bona fide debt or obligation to pay can be established. Criteria to establish a loan as bona fide includes:

(A) An acknowledgment of obligation to repay or evidence that the loan was from an individual or financial institution in the loan business. If the loan agreement is not written, an OKDHS Form 08AD103E, Loan Verification, should be completed by the borrower attesting that the loan is bona fide and signed by the lender verifying the date and amount of loan. When copies of written agreements or OKDHS Form 08AD103E are not available, detailed case documentation must include information that the loan is bona fide and how the debt amount and date of receipt was verified.

(B) If the loan was from a person(s) not in the loan business, the borrower's acknowledgment of obligation to repay (with or without interest) and the lender's verification of the loan are required to indicate that the loan is bona fide.

(C) Proceeds of a loan secured by an exempt asset are not an asset;

(5) One-third of child support payments received on behalf of the disabled minor child;

(6) Indian payments (including judgment funds or funds held in trust) distributed by the Secretary of the Interior (BIA) or distributed by the tribe subject to approval by the Secretary of the Interior. Also, any interest or investment income accrued on such funds while held in trust or any purchases made with judgment funds, trust funds, interest or investment income accrued on such funds. Any income from mineral leases, from tribal business investments, etc. However, any interest

or income derived from the principal or produced by purchases made with funds after distribution is considered as any other income;

(7) Special allowance for school expenses made available upon petition (in writing) for funds held in trust for the student;

(8) Title III benefits from State and Community Programs on Aging;

(9) Payment for supportive services or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses made to individual volunteers serving as foster grandparents, senior health aides, or senior companions, and to persons serving in the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Active Corps of Executives (ACE);

(10) Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (VISTA), unless the gross amount of VISTA payments equals or exceeds the state or federal minimum wage, whichever is greater;

(11) The value of supplemental food assistance received under the Child Nutrition Act or the special food service program for children under the ~~national~~ National School Lunch Act;

(12) Any portion of payments made under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to an Alaska Native which are exempt from taxation under the Settlement Act;

(13) Reimbursements from an employer for out-of-pocket expenditures and allowances for travel or training to the extent the funds are used for expenses directly related to such travel or training and uniform allowance if the uniform is uniquely identified with company names or logo;

(14) Assistance or services from the Vocational Rehabilitation program such as transportation expenses to a rehabilitation center, extra clothing, lunches, grooming needed for a training program and any other such complementary payments;

(15) Experimental Housing Allowance Program (EHAP) payments made under Annual Contributions Contracts entered into prior to January 1, 1975, under Section 23 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, as amended;

(16) Payments made by a public or private non-profit child care agency for a child placed in foster care or subsidized adoption;

(17) Governmental rental or housing subsidies by governmental agencies, e.g., HUD (received in-kind or in cash) for rent, mortgage payments, or utilities;

(18) LIHEAP payments for energy assistance and payments for emergency situations under Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children;

(19) Payments made from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in the In Re Agent Orange product liability litigation, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.);

(20) Payments made from the Radiation Exposure Compensation

Trust Fund as compensation for injuries or deaths resulting from the exposure to radiation from nuclear testing and uranium mining;

(21) Federal major disaster and emergency assistance provided under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, and comparable disaster assistance provided by States, local governments, and disaster assistance organizations;

(22) Income of a sponsor to the sponsored eligible alien;

(23) Income that is set aside under an approved Plan for Achieving Self-Support for Blind or Disabled People (PASS). The Social Security Administration approves the plan, the amount of income excluded and the period of time approved. A plan can be approved for an initial period of 18 months. The plan may be extended for an additional 18 months if needed, and an additional 12 months (total 48 months) when the objective involves a lengthy educational or training program;

(24) Payments made to individuals because of their status as victims of Nazi persecution (PL 103-286);

(25) Payments received under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. These payments are to be made to individuals of Japanese ancestry who were detained in internment camps during World War II;

(26) Payments received as a result of participation in a class action lawsuit entitled "Factor VIII or IX Concentrate Blood Products Litigation". These payments are made to hemophilia patients who are infected with HIV. However, if the payments are placed in an interest-bearing account, or some other investment medium that produces income, the income generated by the account may be countable as income to the individual;

(27) Payments made to certain Vietnam veterans' children with spina bifida (PL 104-204);

(28) Payments made to certain Korea service veterans' children with spina bifida (PL 108-183);

(29) Payments made to the children of women Vietnam veterans who suffer from certain birth defects (PL 106-419);

(30) Additional payments of regular unemployment compensation in the amount of \$25 per week ending June 30, 2010, and any amount of emergency unemployment compensation paid through May 31, 2010, as authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009;

(31) Wages paid by the Census Bureau for temporary employment related to Census activities;

(32) Income tax refunds;

(33) Home energy assistance;

(34) Food or shelter based on need provided by nonprofit agencies;

(35) Money someone else spends to pay your expenses for items other than food or shelter (e.g., someone pays for your telephone or medical bills);

~~(36) Earnings up to \$1,750 per month to a maximum of \$7,060 per year (effective January 2014) for a student under age 22~~
Earned income for working students younger than 22 years of age when they regularly attend a school, college, university or a course of vocational or technical training. Refer to Appendix C-1, Schedule VIII.E; Maximum Income, Resource and Payment Standards for the maximum monthly and yearly exclusion amounts;

(37) The cost of impairment-related work expenses for items or services that a disabled person needs in order to work; and

(38) The first \$2,000 of compensation received per calendar year for participating in certain clinical trials~~7~~.

(c) **Determination of income.** The member is responsible for reporting information regarding all sources of available income. This information is verified and used by the worker in determining eligibility.

(1) Gross income is listed for purposes of determining eligibility. It may be derived from many sources, and some items may be automatically disregarded by the computer when so provided by state or federal law.

(2) If a member is determined to be categorically needy and is also an SSI recipient, any change in countable income (see OAC 317:35-5-42(d)(3) to determine countable income) will not affect receipt of SoonerCare and amount of State Supplemental Payment (SSP) as long as the amount does not cause SSI ineligibility. Income which will be considered by SSI in the retrospective cycle is documented in the case with computer update at the time that SSI makes the change (in order not to penalize the member twice). If the SSI change is not timely, the worker updates the computer using the appropriate date as if it had been timely. If the receipt of the income causes SSI ineligibility, the income is considered immediately with proper action taken to reduce or close the SoonerCare benefit and SSP case. Any SSI overpayment caused by SSA not making timely changes will result in recovery by SSI in the future. When the worker becomes aware of income changes which will affect SSI eligibility or payment amount, the information is to be shared with the SSA office.

(3) Some of the more common income sources to be considered in determining eligibility are as follows:

(A) **Retirement and disability benefits.** These include but are not limited to OASDI, VA, Railroad Retirement, SSI, and unemployment benefits. Federal and State benefits are considered for the month they are intended when determining eligibility.

(i) Verifying and documenting the receipt of the benefit and the current benefit amount are achieved by:

(I) seeing the member's award letter or warrant;

(II) obtaining a signed statement from the individual

who cashed the warrant; or

(III) by using BENDEX and SDX.

(ii) Determination of OASDI benefits to be considered (disregarding COLA's) for former State Supplemental recipients who are reapplying for medical benefits under the Pickle Amendment must be computed according to OKDHS Form 08AX011E.

(iii) The Veterans Administration allows their recipients the opportunity to request a reimbursement for medical expenses not covered by SoonerCare. If a recipient is eligible for the readjustment payment, it is paid in a lump sum for the entire past year. This reimbursement is disregarded as income and a resource in the month it is received; however, any amount retained in the month following receipt is considered a resource.

(iv) Government financial assistance in the form of VA Aid and Attendance or Champus payments is considered as follows:

(I) **Nursing facility care.** VA Aid and Attendance or Champus payment whether paid directly to the member or to the facility, are considered as third party resources and do not affect the income eligibility or the vendor payment of the member.

(II) **Own home care.** The actual amount of VA Aid and Attendance payment paid for an attendant in the home is disregarded as income. In all instances, the amount of VA Aid and Attendance is shown on the computer form.

(v) Veterans or their surviving spouse who receive a VA pension may have their pension reduced to \$90 by the VA if the veteran does not have dependents, is SoonerCare eligible, and is residing in a nursing facility that is approved under SoonerCare. Section 8003 of Public Law 101-508 allows these veterans' pensions to be reduced to \$90 per month. None of the \$90 may be used in computing any vendor payment or spenddown. In these instances, the nursing home resident is entitled to the \$90 reduced VA pension as well as the regular nursing facility maintenance standard. Any vendor payment or spenddown will be computed by using other income minus the monthly nursing facility maintenance standard minus any applicable medical deduction(s). Veterans or their surviving spouse who meet these conditions will have their VA benefits reduced the month following the month of admission to a SoonerCare approved nursing facility.

(B) **SSI benefits.** SSI benefits may be continued up to three months for a recipient who enters a public medical or psychiatric institution, a SoonerCare approved hospital, extended care facility, intermediate care facility for the

mentally retarded or nursing facility. To be eligible for the continuation of benefits, the SSI recipient must have a physician's certification that the institutionalization is not expected to exceed three months and there must be a need to maintain and provide expenses for the home. These continued payments are intended for the use of the recipient and do not affect the vendor payment.

(C) Lump sum payments.

(i) Any income received in a lump sum (with the exception of SSI lump sum) covering a period of more than one month, whether received on a recurring or nonrecurring basis, is considered as income in the month it is received. Any amount from any lump sum source, including SSI (with the exception of dedicated bank accounts for disabled/blind children under age 18), retained on the first day of the next month is considered as a resource. Such lump sum payments may include, but are not limited to, accumulation of wages, retroactive OASDI, VA benefits, Workers' Compensation, bonus lease payments and annual rentals from land and/or minerals.

(ii) Lump sum payments used to establish dedicated bank accounts by representative payees in order to receive and maintain retroactive SSI benefits for disabled/blind children under age 18 are excluded as income. The interest income generated from dedicated bank accounts is also excluded. The dedicated bank account consisting of the retroactive SSI lump sum payment and accumulated interest is excluded as a resource in both the month received and any subsequent months.

(iii) A life insurance death benefit received by an individual while living is considered as income in the month received and as a resource in the following months to the extent it is available.

(iv) Changing a resource from one form to another, such as converting personal property to cash, is not considered a lump sum payment.

(D) Income from capital resources and rental property.

Income from capital resources can be derived from rental of a house, rental from land (cash or crop rent), leasing of minerals, life estate, homestead rights or interest.

(i) If royalty income is received monthly but in irregular amounts, an average based on the previous six months' royalty income is computed and used to determine income eligibility. When the difference between the gross and net income represents a production or severance tax (e.g., most oil royalties are reduced by this tax), the OHCA only uses the net figure when determining income eligibility. The production or severance tax is the cost of producing the income,

and, therefore, is deducted from the gross income. Exception: At any time that the county becomes aware of and can establish a trend showing a dramatic increase or decrease in royalty income, the previous two months' royalty income is averaged to compute countable monthly income.

(ii) Rental income may be treated as earned income when the individual participates in the management of a trade or business or invests his/her own labor in producing the income. The individual's federal income tax return will verify whether or not the income is from self-employment. Otherwise, income received from rental property is treated as unearned income.

(iii) When rental property is handled by a leasing agent who collects the rent and deducts a management fee, only the rent actually received by the member is considered as income.

(E) **Earned income/self-employment.** The term "earned income" includes income in cash earned by an individual through the receipt of wages, salary, commission, or profit from activities in which he/she is engaged as a self-employed individual or as an employee. See subparagraph (G) of this paragraph for earnings received in fluctuating amounts. "Earned Income" is also defined to include in-kind benefits received by an employee from an employer in lieu of wages or in conjunction with wages. Such benefits received in-kind are considered as earned income only when the employee/employer relationship has been established. The cash value of the in-kind benefits must be verified by the employer. Income from self-employment also includes in-kind benefits for a work activity or service for which the self-employed person ordinarily receives payment in his/her business enterprise. An exchange of labor or services, e.g., barter, is considered as an in-kind benefit. Medical insurance secured through the employer, whether purchased or as a benefit, is not considered in-kind but is recorded on the case computer input document for coordination with SoonerCare benefits.

(i) Work study received by an individual who is attending school is considered as earned income with appropriate earned income disregards applied.

(ii) Money from the sale of whole blood or blood plasma is considered as self-employment income subject to necessary business expenses and appropriate earned income disregards.

(iii) Self-employment income is determined as follows:
(I) Generally, the federal or state income tax form for the most recent year is used for calculating the self-employment income to project income on a monthly basis for the certification period. The gross income

amount, as well as the allowable deductions, are the same as can be claimed under the Internal Revenue code for tax purposes.

(II) Self-employment income which represents a household's annual support is prorated over a 12-month period, even if the income is received in a short period of time. For example, self-employment income received by crop farmers is averaged over a 12-month period if the income represents the farmer's annual support.

(III) If the household's self-employment enterprise has been in existence for less than a year, the income from that self-employment enterprise is averaged over the period of time the business has been in operation to establish the monthly income amount.

(IV) If a tax return is not available because one has not been filed due to recent establishment of the self-employment enterprise, a profit and loss statement must be seen to establish the monthly income amount.

(V) The purchase price and/or payment(s) on the principal of loans for capital assets, equipment, machinery, and other durable goods is not considered as a cost of producing self-employed income. Also not considered are net losses from previous periods, depreciation of capital assets, equipment, machinery, and other durable goods; and federal, state and local income taxes, FICA, money set aside for retirement purposes, and other work related personal expenses, such as meals and necessary transportation (these expenses are accounted for by the work related expense deduction given in OAC 340:10-3-33(1)).

(iv) Countable self-employment income is determined by deducting allowable business expenses to determine the adjusted gross income. The earned income deductions are then applied to establish countable earned income.

(F) Infrequent or irregular income.

(i) Income is considered to be infrequent if the individual receives it only once during a calendar quarter from a single source and the individual did not receive that type of income in the month preceding or following the month the income was received.

(ii) Income is considered to be irregular if the individual cannot reasonably expect to receive it.

(iii) OHCA excludes the following amount of infrequent or irregular income:

(I) the first \$30 per calendar quarter of earned income; and

(II) the first \$60 per calendar quarter of unearned

income.

(iv) Infrequent or irregular income, whether earned or unearned, that exceeds these amounts is considered countable income in the month it is received.

(G) **Monthly income received in fluctuating amounts.** Income which is received monthly but in irregular amounts is averaged using two months' income, if possible, to determine income eligibility. Less than two months' income may be used when circumstances (e.g., new employment, unpaid sick leave, etc.) would indicate that previous income amounts would not be appropriate to use in determining future income amounts. Income received more often than monthly is converted to monthly amounts as follows:

(i) **Daily.** Income received on a daily basis is converted to a weekly amount then multiplied by 4.3.

(ii) **Weekly.** Income received weekly is multiplied by 4.3.

(iii) **Twice a month.** Income received twice a month is multiplied by 2.

(iv) **Biweekly.** Income received every two weeks is multiplied by 2.15.

(H) **Non-negotiable notes and mortgages.** Installment payments received on a note, mortgage, etc., are considered as monthly income.

(I) **Income from the Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA).** Unearned income received by an adult, such as a needs based payment, cash assistance, compensation in lieu of wages, allowances, etc., from a program funded by JTPA is considered as any other unearned income. JTPA earned income received as wages is considered as any other earned income.

(J) **Other income.** Any other monies or payments which are available for current living expenses must be considered.

(d) **Computation of income.**

(1) **Earned income or unearned income.** The general income exclusion of \$20 per month is allowed for earned or unearned income, unless the unearned income is SSP, on the combined income of the eligible individual and eligible or ineligible spouse. See paragraph (5) of this subsection if there are ineligible minor children. After the \$20 exclusion, deduct \$65 and one-half of the remaining combined earned income. The total gross amount of unearned income of the eligible individual and eligible or ineligible spouse is considered.

(2) **Countable income.** The countable income is the sum of the earned income and the total gross unearned income after exclusions.

(3) **Deeming computation for disabled or blind minor**

child(ren). An automated calculation is available for computing the income amount to be deemed from parent(s) and the spouse of the parent to eligible disabled or blind minor child(ren) by use of transaction CID. The ineligible minor child in the computation regarding allocation for ineligible child(ren) is defined as: a dependent child under age 18.

(A) An intellectually disabled child living in the home who is ineligible for SSP due to the deeming process may be approved for SoonerCare under the Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS) Program as outlined in OAC 317:35-9- 5.

(B) For TEFRA, the income of child's parent(s) is not deemed to him/her.

(4) **Premature infants.** Premature infants (i.e., 37 weeks or less) whose birth weight is less than 1200 grams (approximately 2 pounds 10 ounces) will be considered disabled by SSA even if no other medical impairment(s) exist. In this event, the parents' income is not deemed to the child until the month following the month in which the child leaves the hospital and begins living with his/her parents.

(5) **Procedures for deducting ineligible minor child allocation.** When an eligible individual has an ineligible spouse and ineligible minor children (not receiving TANF), the computation is as follows:

(A) Each ineligible child's allocation (OKDHS Form 08AX001E, Schedule VII. C.) minus each child's gross countable income is deducted from the ineligible spouse's income. Deeming of income is not done from child to parent.

(B) The deduction in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph is prior to deduction of the general income exclusion and work expense.

(C) After computations in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of this paragraph, the remaining amount is the ineligible spouse's countable income considered available to the eligible spouse.

(6) **Special exclusions for blind individuals.** Any blind individual who is employed may deduct the general income exclusion and the work exclusion from the gross amount of earned income. After the application of these exclusions, one-half of the remaining income is excluded. The actual work expense is then deducted from the remaining half to arrive at the amount of countable income. If this blind individual has a spouse who is also eligible due to blindness and both are working, the amount of ordinary and necessary expenses attributable to the earning of income for each of the blind individuals may be deducted. Expenses are deductible as paid but may not exceed the amount of earned income. To be deductible, an expense need not relate directly to the blindness of the individual, it need only be an ordinary and

necessary work expense of the blind individual. Such expenses fall into three broad categories:

- (A) transportation to and from work;
- (B) job performance; and
- (C) job improvement.

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