



## Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Stimulus Payments

### **What is the stimulus payment I am receiving?**

The government is giving people a stimulus payment of up to \$1,200. They will get \$500 more if they have a child they support. They can spend it any way they want.

For SSDI beneficiaries, the stimulus payment will not count as income or resources against SSDI benefit payments.

For SSI beneficiaries, the stimulus payment will not count as income in the month received. However, these stimulus payments **MUST** be spent or put into a protected savings plan, like an ABLÉ savings account, within 12 months. Otherwise, it will count towards the \$2,000 resource or asset limit for an individual and could reduce your benefits.

If you are already getting monthly Social Security benefits you will get the stimulus payment the same way. Many people have already received payments.

Beware of scams! The IRS will not call or email you. Protect your money by not sharing your personal information on the phone or over email.

### **Do I have to use the stimulus payment the same way that I use my SSI money?**

No. The stimulus payment is NOT a payment from Social Security. Your stimulus payment can be used any way you choose. You could use your payment as soon as you receive it. You could spend it within 12 months. You could save it in an ABLÉ account to give you more time to spend it.

### **Why should I put some of this payment into an ABLÉ account?**

Some people don't need to use the stimulus payment for things right now. For them, this is a chance to start saving for things not covered by benefits. You can save for whatever you need to be independent and participate in your community. That includes assistive technology, education, adaptive vehicles and transportation, personal support services, and more. Starting an ABLÉ account is the first step to saving for a rainy day or saving up for what you want.

### **Will ABLÉ account savings disqualify me from the benefits I need?**

No. ABLÉ accounts are different from other savings accounts. Funds in your ABLÉ account are not counted toward your \$2,000 asset limit. You will not lose your benefits or lose eligibility for federal benefits (like SSI, SSDI, Medicaid and HUD) by owning an ABLÉ account. Remember, you must spend the extra payment in the next 12 months, so opening an ABLÉ account gives you more time to spend it.

### **Can others help me decide how to spend the money or set up an ABLE account?**

Yes. However, it is **your** decision how to spend the stimulus payment. Making financial decisions is hard for many people. People you trust can help you decide what to do with your money. This includes family, caregivers and others. They might also be able to help you start an ABLE account.

### **What should my family, rep payees, service providers and other supporters do to help me decide what do to with the stimulus payment?**

People who help you with your money need to be sure they do not put their needs or wishes ahead of yours. That includes when they help you with decisions about the stimulus payment. They should talk with you about your options, your needs and your wishes. They should use *supported financial decision-making practices*. This may help when talking about the stimulus payments and the 12-month spending timeline. Some people may choose to save some of the money for later. An ABLE account is a way to save and still protect your benefits. A good place to start is to contact the Oregon ABLE Savings Plan.

### **Are there any other COVID-19 payments that I should know about?**

If you were working and lost your job, you may be able to receive unemployment benefits. The federal government is giving people who receive unemployment an extra \$600 a week (ending July 25, 2020) because of COVID-19.

Unemployment benefits have no effect on SSDI. Unemployment benefits are counted as unearned income for SSI. You must tell Social Security if you are receiving unemployment. This could affect your SSI benefits.

You can save the unemployment benefits that you receive in an ABLE account so that they will not count as an asset in the future. These benefits will still count as income when you receive them.

### **Where can I get more information about my payment?**

IRS “Economic Impact Payments” (May 2020) at <https://bit.ly/2YMoWB2>

### **Where can I find more information about supported financial decision making?**

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. “Your Money, Your Goals: Focus on People with Disabilities” at <https://bit.ly/2WHaDez>

### **Where can I find other COVID-19 Resources?**

Disability Rights Oregon at <https://droregon.org/covid-19-general-resources/>

Social Security Agency at <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>

### **Where can I find more information about the Oregon ABLE Savings Plan?**

[www.oregonABLEsavings.com](http://www.oregonABLEsavings.com) or call 844.999.2253 or TTY 844.888.2253