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|  | Gavin Newsom,  Governor    State of California Health and Human Services Agency | |
| Date: | |  |
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Dear Parents,

Many young people and their families are afraid that if a student, receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), goes to work, it will cause the loss of cash and Medi-Cal benefits. The Social Security Administration (SSA) offers a work incentive called the Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE). SEIE allows SSI recipients who are students under age 22 and regularly attending school to earn up to $1,930 per month and still receive their full SSI check. If a student qualifies, SEIE allows them to earn a significant amount of income without losing their SSI cash benefits prematurely. Students can increase their income, keep their Medi-Cal, build work experience and achieve greater financial independence.

Under this program, there is a maximum yearly exclusion of $7,770. These are SSA’s amounts for 2021. If a student’s yearly earnings reach $7,770, part of their earnings may begin to reduce their SSI cash benefit.

To qualify for SEIE, the student must be “regularly attending school”, which means the student takes one or more courses of study and attends classes:

* In a college or a university for 8 hours a week; or,
* In grades 7-12 for at least 12 hours per week; or,
* In a training course to prepare for employment for 12 hours a week (15 hours per week if the course involves shop practice); or,
* For less time than indicated above for reasons beyond the student’s control, such as illness.

For students who are home schooled due to their disability, “regularly attending school” is defined as:

* Studying a course or courses given by their school (grades 7-12), college, university, or government agency, and having a home visitor or tutor who directs study.

A student can apply for SEIE by providing a letter on school letterhead to the local SSA office with the following:

* The name of the student
* The student’s Social Security number
* The amount of time that the student is in school, including dates that they started school and if they are attending summer school

The letters must be written by individuals such as counselors, transition teachers, case managers or a school official. A new letter must be submitted every calendar year.

SEIE can be used during semester and summer breaks as long as the student intends to resume the course of study when the break period ends.

When a student applies for the SEIE, the following information must be reported to the SSI Claims Representative:

* Notification that the student was regularly attending school in at least one month of the current calendar quarter or expected to attend school for at least one month in the next calendar quarter;
* The amount of the student’s earned income, even when they allege to have earned $65 or less per month.

Please feel free to email or call me if you have any questions about SEIE or any other work incentive.

Sincerely,