

Social Security

Social Security Handbook

1811. What types of income count under the earnings test?

The following types of earnings count for earnings test purposes:

- A. All wages for employment covered by Social Security (see [Chapter 13](#));
- B. All cash pay (even if not considered as “wages” under the cash-pay test explained in [§901](#) and [§1303](#)) for:
 - 1. Agricultural work;
 - 2. Domestic work in a private home; or
 - 3. Service not in the course of the employer's trade or business;
- C. All pay, cash and non-cash, for work as a homemaker or for a nonprofit organization whether or not the \$100 per year test is met (see [§931](#));
- D. Cash tips that equal or exceed \$20 a month (see [§1329](#));
- E. All pay for work not covered by Social Security, if the work is done in the U.S., including pay for:
 - 1. Family employment;
 - 2. Work by students, student nurses, interns, newspaper and magazine vendors;
 - 3. Work for Federal or State or foreign governments or instrumentalities; or
 - 4. Work covered by the Railroad Retirement Act;
- F. All net earnings from self-employment;
- G. All pay for incentive, suggestion, and outstanding work awards;
- H. All pay for occasional and regular bonuses;
- I. All pay from a "cafeteria" plan if the payments meet the definition of wages and the plan is not a "qualified benefit";
- J. All pay from a non-qualified deferred compensation plan/system;
- K. All pay by an employer for educational assistance;
- L. All pay from federally sponsored economic and human development programs only if payments are wages;
- M. All pay for non-work periods including idle time, standby, and subject to call related payments;
- N. All pay for prizes, awards and gratuities only if it is part of the salesperson's wage structure; and
- O. All pay from television, radio and motion picture residuals if the performer was an employee at the time of the original performance.