



## Phase 1 & Phase 2 Milestones

### ➤ Benefits Status

Benefits must be in current pay status. If the beneficiary is receiving both Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, at least one of the benefits must be in current pay status without entering the Outcome period. The Outcome period is entered when benefits for any given month are suspended due to work earnings.

### ➤ Attainment/Claim Month

The claim months to meet Phase 1 Milestone 2 - 4 do not necessarily have to be consecutive months. However, 3, 6 or 9 months within the timeframe specified for each of these Phase 1 Milestones is necessary.

### ➤ Earnings

For beneficiaries receiving SSDI benefits, the amount of earnings **must be earned within the month**. The **pay period ending date** is used to determine the Trial Work Level (TWL) amount for Phase 1 Milestones or Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) amount (Non-Blind/SGA Blind) for Phase 2 Milestones.

For beneficiaries receiving SSI benefits, the amount of earnings **must be paid in the month**. The **pay date** is used to determine TWL for Phase 1 Milestones or SGA (Non-Blind/SGA Blind) for Phase 2 Milestones. For beneficiaries receiving both SSDI and SSI, the earnings need to coincide with the record being used. If the SSDI record meets the criteria for payment, earnings will be based on the amount earned in the month. If the SSI record meets the criteria for the payment, earnings will be based on the amount paid in the month. If both SSDI and SSI records meet the criteria for payment, the decision of which earnings to use will be based on whichever earnings meet the criteria of being at or above TWL or SGA (Non-Blind/Blind). If the beneficiary is receiving some type of monthly pension or benefits from other entities, those monies will not be considered as earnings (i.e., military pension, state benefits, unemployment, etc.).

### ➤ 18-Month Look-Back Rule: Prior Earnings Rule

Due to updates on benefits status and/or earnings verified in SSA database, the availability of Phase 1 Milestones may change. **For example**, Social Security may receive notification of earnings at TWL or SGA for months prior to Ticket assignment date after Phase 1 Milestone payments have been issued. If this occurs, overpayments would be assessed.

### ➤ Successful State Vocational Rehabilitation (SVR) Agency Closure

If a State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency successfully closes a case within 18 months prior to the Ticket assignment date, Phase 1 Milestones are not available.

| Phase 1 Milestone 1   | Phase 1 Milestone 2   | Phase 1 Milestone 3  | Phase 1 Milestone 4  | Phase 2 Milestones   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Current pay status without entering the Outcome period  | Current pay status without entering the Outcome period  | Current pay status without entering the Outcome period   | Current pay status without entering the Outcome period   | Current pay status without entering the Outcome period   |
| The first month after the Ticket assignment month or any other month thereafter                                     | 3 months within a 6-month period  | 6 months within a 12-month period  | 9 months within an 18-month period   | Any month after all available Phase 1 Milestones have been processed through to completion ( <i>paid or denied</i> ) |
| At or above TWL   | 3 months must have gross earnings at or above TWL   | 6 months must have gross earnings at or above TWL  | 9 months must have gross earnings at or above TWL  | Each month must have gross earnings at or above SGA/Blind SGA  |
| If the month prior to the Ticket assignment month has earnings at or above TWL, Phase 1 Milestone 1 cannot be paid. | If there are 3 months with earnings at or above TWL within 6 months prior to the Ticket assignment month, Phase 1 Milestone 2 cannot be paid. | If there are 6 months with earnings at or above TWL within 12 months prior to the Ticket assignment month, Phase 1 Milestone 3 cannot be paid. | If there are 9 months with earnings at or above TWL within 18 months prior to the Ticket assignment month, Phase 1 Milestone 4 cannot be paid. |  |
| Proof of Relationship Required  | Proof of Relationship Required  | Proof of Relationship Required   |  |  |



➤ **State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (SVR) Involvement**

Some beneficiaries may receive services from the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (SVR) prior to assigning their Ticket to an Employment Network (EN); therefore, SVR agency closure codes determine the availability of the Phase 1 Milestones. If the Ticket was In Use under the Cost Reimbursement (CR) payment method with a SVR agency then assigned to an EN and the SVR agency received a CR payment or closed the case successfully within the 18 months prior to the Ticket assignment date (i.e., beneficiary working when the case was closed) on January 1, 2002, or later, no Phase 1 Milestones are available to the EN. In some cases, the beneficiary goes back to the SVR agency for services after they assign their Ticket to an EN. If this is the case, the assignment date to the SVR agency will determine the last payable month for the EN. If the Ticket is assigned to a VREN (SVR acting as an EN) and is the same SVR agency that received a CR payment, no Ticket to Work (TTW) EN payments are available to that VREN. If the Ticket is assigned to a VREN that is the same SVR agency, but no CR payment was paid and the case was closed unsuccessfully or successfully outside the 18 months prior to the Ticket assignment date, TTW EN payments are available if all other criteria are met.

## Outcome

➤ **Benefits**

Benefits **must be in a suspended status** due to work and earnings. If the beneficiary is receiving both Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), both benefits must be in a suspended status. At least one of the benefits must be in a suspended status due to work earnings.

➤ **Availability**

Months with earnings at or above Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) levels (Non-Blind or Blind) for the year of requested claim month.

## Additional Information for Milestones and Outcome

➤ **Submitting for Payments**

ENs must submit all payment requests via the Ticket Portal. Only Evidentiary payment requests are processed. ENs must submit a payment request for each claim month. When ENs requests payment and check the box in the Portal, "Proof of Earnings will be faxed in," a fax cover sheet with a bar code providing the Work Case number will generate automatically. This fax cover sheet is **for a one-time use only**. However, if additional information for the same payment request is required, ENs can make copies of the fax cover sheet and submit the additional information via the Ticket Portal. If the evidence of earnings or any other missing information is not received within 9 business days of payment request date, TPM will deny the payment request due to "Insufficient Documentation".

➤ **When to Submit a Payment Request**

Verify the Ticket is assigned to your EN. The first available month for payment is the month after the Ticket assignment date. If TPM receives the Individual Work Plan (IWP) more than 14 calendar days after the EN and beneficiary signed the Individual Work Plan (IWP), the first available month for payment will be determined according to the date TPM receives the IWP.

➤ **Phase 1 Milestones Requirements**

Phase1 Milestone 1 – 3 require **proof of relationship** and monthly contact. ENs must submit paystubs or a completed Proof of Relationship (PoR) form detailing a list of services provided with dates during the Phase 1 Milestone period with evidence of earnings.

➤ **Payment Processing Time**

TPM processes all payment requests within 30 calendar days of receipt. Requests are paid, denied, or placed in diary awaiting additional information from EN or per SSA instructions. Payment requests are processed in order received (first in, first out rule applies).

➤ **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Beneficiaries (Title 16)**

Phase 1 Milestone payments are available ONLY if the beneficiary is receiving a Federal Cash benefit. Beneficiary may be in current pay status based solely on receipt of a State SSI supplement, but no Federal Cash benefits. In this situation, EN is not eligible to receive Phase 1 Milestone payments even though the beneficiary is in current pay status. In such cases, Outcomes can be paid if all other payment criteria are met.

➤ **Payment Denial Decision**

Determination of a denial is based on the information available on Social Security's database at the time the claim is processed. The information is saved for each claim processed to support the decision made.

➤ **Diary Cases**

Payment requests placed in diary status, awaiting additional information, will remain in this status for 9 business days. On the 10th day, staff will process the claim through to completion (pay or deny). Any other diary reason may remain for 30 calendar days.

When a payment request is denied due to "NO RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTATION", EN can resubmit the payment request along with all supporting documentation including the information that was missing from the original request. Do not submit only what was missing (e.g., only pay stubs or Supplemental Earnings Statement, etc.)

➤ **Split Payment**

When a Ticket is assigned to more than one EN at different times, there is the possibility of a Split Payment case. Once the participant ENs receive the Possible Split Payment Notice, ENs have the opportunity to contact each other to try and reach an agreement on the split payment allocation. If ENs do not reach an agreement, they must complete the Form 1401: EN Split Payment Request Form and submit it to TPM. ENs must also submit a detail list of services provided to the beneficiary. The EN can submit the services on the EN Certification of Services (COS) Statement.

| Trial Work Level (TWL)  |       |       |         |         |         |
|---|-------|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2020  | 2021  | 2022  | 2023    | 2024    | 2025    |
| \$910   | \$940 | \$970 | \$1,050 | \$1,110 | \$1,160 |
| <i>TWL amount is the same for Non-Blind &amp; Blind Beneficiaries</i> |       |       |         |         |         |

| Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) |         |           |         |           |         |           |         |           |         |           |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| 2020                               |         | 2021      |         | 2022      |         | 2023      |         | 2024      |         | 2025      |         |
| Non-Blind                          | Blind   | Non-Blind | Blind   | Non-Blind | Blind   | Non-Blind | Blind   | Non-Blind | Blind   | Non-Blind | Blind   |
| \$1,260                            | \$2,110 | \$1,310   | \$2,190 | \$1,350   | \$2,260 | \$1,470   | \$2,460 | \$1,550   | \$2,590 | \$1,620   | \$2,700 |