

HOW TO DO A SPEND DOWN FOR SSI, CAPI OR MEDI-CAL

WHAT IS A SPEND DOWN?

SSI, CAPI, and Medi-Cal all have limits on how much you can own in money or things that can easily be turned into money and still get benefits. These are called “resource limits.” If you are single, the resource limit is \$2,000. If you are married, the resource limit is \$3,000 for you and your spouse.

If you are over the resource limit, your SSI, Medi-Cal or CAPI may get suspended (temporarily stopped) until you “spend down” the money below the resource limit. SSI, CAPI, or Medi-Cal may ask you to prove you are below the “resource limit” before they can restart your benefits.

WHAT CAN I SPEND THE MONEY ON?

There are special rules for how you can spend your SSI, CAPI or Medi-Cal benefits money. You can only spend money on things for yourself. This means that you are not allowed to spend money on your children. You also are not allowed to give money away. When you buy things, you should keep receipts and records so you can prove that you do not have the money anymore.

Here is a list of some of the things that you **can** spend the money on:

- A vehicle (if you do not already own one), including car registration & car insurance
- Furniture, bedding, curtains, household items or appliances
- Paying rent or bills
- Home repairs
- Medical expenses that are not paid for by your insurance (such as eyeglasses, physical therapy, acupuncture, or dental expenses)
- Education expenses (including computer, software, books, etc.)
- Entertainment or recreation expenses (books, magazines, movie/concert tickets, sporting events, audio/video equipment)
- Travel (airline tickets, train/bus passes, food & shelter while temporarily away from home, etc.)
- Pay off debts such as credit card debt, or loans with documents that show proof of debt
- Pre-pay burial arrangements up to \$1,500
- Personal hygiene (haircuts, manicures, massages)
- Clothing, makeup, shoes, accessories
- Set aside up to \$2,000 in a savings, or checking account

It is important to save your receipts for these purchases as SSA will want to see how you have utilized a spend down.

HOW DO I GET BACK ON SSI, CAPI, OR MEDI-CAL?

If you are eligible for SSI, Medi-Cal, or CAPI benefits again within a year of them stopping, your benefits can be reinstated without doing a new application. Once you have “spent down” your resources below the limit, you should bring proof that you are within the resource limit to SSI, CAPI, or Medi-Cal and ask them to restart your benefits.

These programs will likely want to see your bank account statements to prove you no longer have more than \$2,000 (for a single individual), or \$3,000 (for a married couple). They will want to see your receipts to prove that you are not hiding the money and did not give it away.

WHAT ABOUT BACK PAY OR RETROACTIVE BENEFITS THAT I RECEIVE AFTER I AM APPROVED FOR BENEFITS?

You have nine months to spend down your back pay or retroactive payment in order to stay eligible for SSI, Medi-Cal or CAPI.

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