

Supplemental Security Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Payments for Children with Disabilities

SSI makes monthly payments to people with low income and limited resources who are blind, disabled, or over age 65. Your child under age 18 may qualify if he or she meets the Social Security Administration's definition of disability for children **and** if your family income and resources fall within the eligibility limits.

Who is Eligible?

Anyone can file for Supplemental Security Income. The application will first be evaluated based on non-medical factors, such as income and assets. If there is potential for payment, then a medical decision will be made to determine if the impairment meets the disability requirements for SSI. An applicant must be shown to be eligible based on both medical and non-medical factors to receive payment.

Income and Resource Eligibility

For the purpose of making a determination for SSI, the Social Security Administration (SSA) considers some of the income and resources from all members living in the household. This process of determining how much of income and resources SSA will count toward calculating eligibility is called "deeming." The SSA typically does not count income from VA benefits pension and TANF or resources, such as the house being lived in and one vehicle.

There are many rules and exceptions that can be applied to both income and resources when making the determination, and the SSA encourages everyone to file an application when in doubt.

If your child is not eligible for SSI because your family's income and assets are too high, s/he may become eligible when s/he turns 18. Social Security no longer includes the income and resources of other household members to make an eligibility decision when the applicant is age 18 or older.

Families should re-evaluate potential eligibility as circumstances change.

Disability Eligibility

The basic definition for disability is that the individual has a condition that is expected to last at least 12 months, or that is expected to end in death. Social Security also looks at the ability of an adult to perform work. The rules for a child are different. The SSA looks to see if the child's impairment causes functional limitations. This means that any disability can be considered.

Apply by calling
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Appointments can
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Generally, it takes approximately 90 to 120 days for the agency to decide if a child is disabled. However, an individual may qualify for compassionate allowance SSI payments in the meantime. Under this program, SSI payments are made right away and for up to six months, while the agency decides if the child meets the criteria for receiving payments.

Following are some of the qualifying conditions for the compassionate allowance program:

- HIV infection
- Total blindness
- Total deafness
- Cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Muscular dystrophy
- Severe mental retardation (child age 7 or older)
- Birth weight below two pounds, 10 ounces

A complete list of qualifying medical conditions for compassionate allowance is available here: <http://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/conditions.htm>

How to Apply:

Call 1-800-772-1213 to make a phone or in person appointment at a [local Social Security office](#) to apply. You may also visit an office to apply without making an appointment, but you may have to wait to speak to a representative. Please have the Social Security numbers of the members of your household handy when you call.

Programs and systems change often. It is important to ensure that you are using the most current information. This fact sheet was updated March 2022. Please check <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html> for the most recent edition.

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