

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) OVERVIEW

WHAT IS SSI?

SSI stands for Supplemental Security Income. Social Security administers this program. We pay monthly benefits to people with limited income and resources who are blind, age 65 or older, or have a qualifying disability. Children with disabilities or who are blind may also get SSI.

HOW IS SSI DIFFERENT FROM SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS?

Many people who are eligible for SSI may also be entitled to Social Security benefits. In fact, the application for SSI is also an application for Social Security benefits. However, SSI and Social Security are different in many ways.

- Social Security benefits may be paid to you and certain members of your family if you are "insured" meaning you worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes. Unlike Social Security benefits, SSI benefits are not based on your prior work or a family member's prior work.
- SSI is financed by general funds of the U.S. Treasury--personal income taxes, corporate and other taxes. Social Security taxes collected under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) or the Self-Employment Contributions Act (SECA) do **not** fund the SSI program.
- In most States, SSI recipients can also get medical assistance (Medicaid) to pay for hospital stays, doctor bills, prescription drugs, and other health costs.
- Many States also provide a supplemental payment to certain SSI recipients.
- SSI recipients may also be eligible for food assistance. In some States, an application for SSI also serves as an application for food assistance.
- SSI benefits are paid on the first of the month.
- To get SSI, you must be disabled, blind, or at least 65 years old and have "limited" income and resources.
- In addition, to get SSI, you must also:
 - be either a U.S. citizen or national, or a noncitizen in one of the certain alien classifications granted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS);
 - reside in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the Northern Mariana Islands; and
 - not be absent from the U.S. for a full calendar month or 30 or more consecutive days.

HOW IS SSI LIKE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS?

- Both programs pay monthly benefits.
- The medical standards for disability are generally the same in both programs for individuals age 18 or older. For children from birth to the attainment of age 18 there is a separate definition of disability under SSI. The medical standard is based on the severity of your disability; financial need is not considered at this step in the eligibility process.
- SSA administers both programs.