

# SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI): WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

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Updated 9/2007



## HOW TO APPLY FOR SSI

### STEP 1: How do you apply for SSI?

Call the Social Security Advisor at 1-800-772-1213. The person you talk to will give you a date and time for your application interview. Parents and guardians can apply for blind or disabled children under age 18.

### STEP 2: What should you do once you set up your interview?

SSI applications involve the completion of many forms and documentation. Two major forms to be completed are the Disability Report and the Vocational Report. Social Security will send you these forms. These forms are long and will take some time to complete, but the important thing to remember is *accuracy and details*. Take as much time as you need, and remember: assistance completing forms is available. Just ask!

### STEP 3: What should you take to the interview?

You should have the following things before you apply. **Even if you don't have all of the things listed, apply anyway.** If possible, please take:

- Your Social Security card or a record of your Social Security number;
- Your birth certificate or other proof of your age;
- Information about the home where you live, such as your mortgage or your lease and landlord's name;
- Payroll slips, bank books, insurance policies, burial fund records and other information about your income and the things you own;
- The names, addresses and telephone numbers of doctors, hospitals, and clinics that have seen you, if you are applying for disability benefits; and
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or eligible non-citizen status.

You also should take your checkbook or other papers that show your bank, credit union or financial institution account number. Your benefits can be deposited directly into your account.

#### Six Steps to Remember:

1. A phone call and preparation
2. Paperwork
3. Preparation for the interview
4. Interview with Social Security
5. More forms and documentation
6. Medical and non-medical evidence

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SSI & Transition  
Project

A partnership of  
The Department of  
Special Education at  
Illinois State University

-and-

Champaign County  
Health Care  
Consumers

#### **STEP 4: What should I expect during an interview?**

A claims representative will conduct the interview. You are allowed to bring someone to the interview with you. A practice session prior to the interview is a good suggestion.

An initial application will be completed during this meeting. There will be many forms to sign, including authorizations for release of medical records. During the interview you will be asked many questions regarding the ways your disability limits you. Being honest and thorough while answering these questions will greatly help your case.

#### **STEP 5: What happens after the interview?**

After the interview, the claims representative will mail the file to the Disability Determination Service in Springfield. The file will then be assigned to a Disability Evaluation Analyst (DEA) approximately 7-10 days after the interview. This is your new contact: the person who will review your paperwork and decide whether or not you are eligible for benefits.

Most applicants will receive a Daily Activities Questionnaire a few weeks after the initial interview. The form assesses the functional limitations and should be completed with an emphasis on limitations, not strengths.

#### **STEP 6: What about additional medical and non-medical evidence?**

Thorough medical documentation is critical for SSI applications. Without detailed and current medical documentation, a person cannot be found eligible for SSI. All existing medical records, a current evaluation, and third party reports are necessary. Other supporting documents, such as statements from your teachers describing how your disability limits you, are helpful as well.

#### **What should you do if you are denied?**

**APPEAL!** Many people who are initially turned down for SSI benefits end up receiving them once they appeal.

#### **Can anyone help me?**

CCHCC has volunteers who can answer many of your questions about SSI. In some cases, volunteer advocates will be able to help you all the way through the process.

Adapted from <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs>

## **SSI & Transition Project**

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