

Social Security Disability

Area(s) Served:

Nationwide

<http://www.ssa.gov/disability>

Phone: 1-800-772-1213

Phone Extension: N/A

Contracted Provider: Not Applicable

Description:

Disability under Social Security is based on your inability to work. You will be considered disabled if you cannot do work you did before and Social Security decides that you cannot adjust to other work because of your medical condition(s). Your disability also must last, or be expected to last, for at least a year or to result eventually in death. This is a strict definition of disability.

The program assumes that working families have access to other resources to provide support during periods of short-term disabilities, including workers' compensation, insurance, savings and investments. You should apply at any Social Security office as soon as you become disabled.

You may file by phone, mail or by visiting the nearest office. Note that, while you may receive benefits dating back to the date you became disabled, they are limited to one year before the date you filed for benefits.

The Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs are the largest of several Federal programs that provide assistance to people with disabilities. While these two programs are different in many ways, both are administered by the Social Security Administration and only individuals who have a disability and meet medical criteria may qualify for benefits under either program.

1. [Social Security Disability Insurance](http://www.ssa.gov/dibplan/index.htm) (<http://www.ssa.gov/dibplan/index.htm>) pays benefits to you and certain members of your family if you are "insured," meaning that you worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes.
2. [Supplemental Security Income](http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/) (<http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/>) pays benefits based on financial need.

When you apply for either program, SSA will collect medical and other information from you and make a decision about whether or not you meet [Social Security's definition of disability](http://www.ssa.gov/dibplan/dqualify4.htm) (<http://www.ssa.gov/dibplan/dqualify4.htm>).

Use the [Benefits Eligibility Screening Tool](http://www.ssa.gov/best) (<http://www.ssa.gov/best>) to find out which programs may be able to pay you benefits.

If your application has recently been denied, the [Internet Appeal](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/appeal) (<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/appeal>) is a starting point to request a review of our decision about your eligibility for disability benefits.