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Disclaimer

The following guide and checklist are meant to be used as references only. If more information is needed, please contact the Social Security Administration (SSA).

*Due to changes made by The Social Security Administration to their website, the screenshots included in this guide may appear a bit differently from what you see online.

*Some of the language used in this guide comes straight from the Social Security Administration website.

Application Checklist (optional tool to use while applying for Social Security benefits)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Applying on-line	Application Start Date:	Application Completion Date:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-Entry Number (If application is completed online. This number will allow you to get back into an application that you haven't completed it in one sitting): <input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of any/all contacts you speak with at Social Security:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduled appointment date/time to complete applications with an SSA rep. (If by phone or in person—you must have a scheduled interview.)	Local SSA Office Address:	Local SSA Office Phone Number:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over the phone or in-person Interview (if applicable)	Date of Interview:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date Letter is received from Disability Determination Services (DDS):	Name of contact at DDS:	Phone number for contact at DDS: Main # is: 303-368-4100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional supporting documents submitted to DDS (if needed):		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Application Decision:	Date Received:	Monthly Amount Awarded: \$

When to Apply for Benefits

Prior to age 18:	Families can apply at any time, if they feel that the family will qualify financially.
18 and already getting SSI (through the family):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Families should receive a letter for an appointment for the Redetermination and a packet for the Medical Review. The packet includes a form to list medical sources, medications, and other information. It also will include a medical release form that must be signed by the beneficiary and not the parent, even if the applicant is still 17. ➤ This should come by the individual's 19th birthday.
For an individual turning 18:	<p>Apply* the first FULL month following their 18th birthday. Social Security does not consider someone 18 until they have been 18 for a full month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Example: DOB is April 20th– apply mid May ➤ Example: DOB is April 3rd– apply at the beginning of May <p>*Individuals who at some point received SSI while they were under the age of 18, will not be able to apply online. The application will need to be completed in person or over the phone with a representative from Social Security.</p>
18 years old and receiving survivor's benefits (a type of SSDI):	<p>Provide proof that the person is still in school to continue to receive the benefit until the age of 19. Have the school complete SSA form 1372 and submit this to your local SSA office: https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-1372.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Apply for SSI at age 18. ➤ At age 19– apply for Adult Disability Benefits.
For an individual turning 18 who is adopted and receiving an adoption subsidy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The adoption subsidy is considered non-work income for the individual who was adopted. ➤ Depending on the amount of the subsidy, the individual may need to wait until their adoption subsidy ends (usually at age 21) and then apply for Social Security benefits.

Before you Start

- **NOTE SOMEWHERE ON THE APPLICATION THAT THE PERSON IS PART OF A VULNERABLE POPULATION. If applying with someone from Social Security, be sure to tell them this.**

Below are three resources we recommend, if you'd like more information about SSI and SSDI.

- **The Social Security Administration:** <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/> and <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/>
- **Colorado Disability Benefits 101:** https://co.db101.org/co/programs/income_support/ssi2/program.htm
- **Watch this video!** http://www.socialsecurity.gov/hlp/video/iclaim_d01.htm

There is so much great information on the Colorado DB101 site. Check it out! <https://co.db101.org/>

Key Players in the Process

The Social Security Administration (SSA) contracts with **Disability Determination Services (DDS)** to review the disability portion of an application. Once SSA reviews your financial information, they will forward your application to DDS. A **Disability Examiner (DE)** at DDS will review your application and supporting documentation and if needed, send out requests to doctors, therapists, other medical professionals, etc. who are listed in the application, to

request additional supporting documents. You can help with this process by submitting documents directly to DDS. You can also ask the providers you listed in the application to be on the lookout for the request from DDS and encourage them to respond quickly with supporting documents. See Section 3 for more information about this.

The Social Security Administration's Definition of a Disability

Read more here-- <https://www.ssa.gov/redbook/eng/definedisability.htm>

To meet Social Security's definition of disability, you must not be able to engage in any substantial gainful activity (SGA) because of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment(s) that is either:

- Expected to result in death.
- Has lasted or is expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

Disability in Children

There is a separate definition of disability for children (under age 18) who are applying for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

Under title XVI, a child under age 18 will be considered disabled if they have a medically determinable physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments that causes marked and severe functional limitations, and that can be expected to cause death or that has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

What is a "Medically Determinable Impairment"?

A medically determinable physical or mental impairment is an impairment that results from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities that can be shown by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques. The medical evidence must establish that an individual has a physical or mental impairment; a statement about the individual's symptoms is not enough.



1.GET READY/PREPARE 2.APPLY 3.FOLLOW-UP 4.ACCOUNT SET UP

Step 1: GET READY!! Gather Information and Prepare to Apply

1. **Watch a short video provided online**, which gives a brief outline of the online application process. It is 2 minutes and 30 seconds and is only available in English.

Go to: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/hlp/video/iclaim_d01.htm

2. **Review Social Security's detailed checklist** of what you might need for the disability application process.

<https://www.ssa.gov/hlp/radr/10/ovw001-checklist.pdf>

3. Gather information

- General Information about the applicant
- Medical Conditions/ Intellectual and Developmental Disability information
- Paid Work/Job History
- Start collecting supporting documentation

Document Collection

Social Security applicants must provide medical evidence to support a claim of having a disability. **DDS will contact** all medical professionals, therapists, etc. that are listed on the application to ask for supporting documents/medical records. We suggest you contact each of them to ask that they submit the requested documentation back to DDS as soon as they receive the request. They will be given a short deadline.

You are encouraged to collect documentation that you submit directly to DDS. See section 3 for more information.

Below is a list of some common supporting documents that can be included with a Social Security application. This is not an exhaustive list. **You DO NOT have to have all these documents collected prior to starting the application process.**

- IQ testing report (if over the age of 16, include testing done after the age of 16)
- Adaptive Skills and/or functional testing reports
- Most current Triennial Individualized Education Plan (IEP) report with testing (if applicant is still in school or recently graduated)
- Doctor/Therapist/Psychologist/Psychiatrist letters and/or written opinions describing how the applicant's disability **affects their ability to work** (if over the age of 18)
- Laboratory testing and results (if related to your disability that affects the applicant's ability to work)
- Medical Reports
- Statements/letters from teachers about functional limitations (if applicant is still in school, or recently in school)
- A copy of a Professional Medical Information Page (PMIP) and 100.2 assessment (if in waiver services)
- Functional Report (this will be sent to the applicant by DDS to complete, if it is needed)



Keep all of your information organized in a folder or notebook. Utilize the application checklist from the first page, that accompanies the guide, and keep a copy of everything!

Tips and Tricks

- **NOTE SOMEWHERE ON THE APPLICATION THAT THE PERSON IS PART OF A VULNERABLE POPULATION. If applying with someone from Social Security, be sure to tell them this.**
- If the applicant is over 18 and unable to apply without support, it is suggested that the following occur:
 - They should physically be in the room when the parent/mentor/provider applies on their behalf.
 - Click the following choice online: "I am applying for myself".
- **Question regarding applying for SSI-- Do you intend to file for or want to file for SSI?-- CHECK YES**
- Establish a protective filing date **prior to the end of the month**. This can be done by initiating an online application and getting far enough in the application to obtain the **re-entry** number or by calling the SSA to set up an appointment to apply for Social Security benefits. Note the day the call is made. This will be the applicant's **Protective Filing Date**.
- If you apply online, be sure to either **print or write down the applicant's re-entry #**. This will allow you to start an application, save it, and then go back in to finish it at a later time. If for some reason the number is lost, you'll need to create a **my Social Security account**. You can set it up by going to: <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>
- **Print the "Confirmation" page**, the "Receipt," and a copy of the medical release for your records once you have completed the applicant's online application.
- **For security reasons, there is a time limit for viewing each page.** If you spend 25 minutes on a page without making any changes, you will receive a warning, but you will be able to extend your time on that page if needed.
- **Keep track of the dates** you send information to Social Security or talk to them, as well as the name of any Social Security employees with whom you speak.
- If you take any paperwork into the SSA, **get date stamped copies**.

- Information should be **consistent** throughout the application and supporting documentation.
- **Complete ALL questions** on the application/forms. Do not leave anything blank and be as detailed as possible.
- If asked to complete extra forms, complete them and **return before the due date and** follow the instructions provided as to how to return the paperwork.
- If asked to meet with one of Social Security’s doctors for a **consultative exam**, make every effort to be available on the date that you are assigned.
- Appointment times are limited to 90 minutes, so **be prepared for your appointment!**

Step 2: Apply for Benefits

Ways to apply

- **In person** at your local Social Security office with a **scheduled in-person interview**. (Check your local office for hours of operation)
- **By phone**—call your local Social Security office to **schedule the phone interview** or call the main 800 number for Social Security. They can assist with applications as well.
- **Online**—recommended for a faster application process. (**NOTE:** You can’t apply online if you previously received SSI and lost the benefit. You will need to schedule an appointment with someone at Social Security to complete the application. An appointment can be done by phone or in person.)

There are 2 parts of the application:

- ✓ The Disability Report
- ✓ The SSI application

Both can be completed online for adults. Be sure to select that you wish to apply for SSI while completing the disability report.

The Adult Disability Report

Section 1: Information about the applicant
 Section 2: Contacts
 Section 3: Medical conditions
 Section 4: Work activity
 Section 5: Education and training
 Section 6: Job history (where, when, pay)
 Section 7: Medicines
 Section 8: Medical treatment (providers; hospitalizations)
 Section 9: Other medical information
 Section 10: Vocational rehab, employment, or other support services
 Section 11: Remarks

The SSI Application

Part 1: Basic Eligibility
 Part 2: Living Arrangements
 Part 3: Resources
 Part 4: Income
 Part 5: Potential Eligibility for food stamps, medical assistance/other benefits
 Part 6: Miscellaneous
 Part 7: Remarks
 Part 8: Important Information and signatures

Applying Online



- ✓ Go to <http://www.ssa.gov/> and click on *Apply for benefits*. Apply for benefits
- ✓ Click the age group for the person you are applying for.

Apply for Social Security benefits

Who do you want to apply for?

- An adult (age 18 and over)
- A child (under age 18)

- ✓ Complete the rest of the screening page.

- ✓ **You can also click on these links to get started immediately.**
Start a disability claim online (if age 18 to 64): <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/dib>
Start a disability claim online (if under 18): <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/apply-child.html>
- ✓ **For applicants over the age of 65, click here:** <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/65older.html>. Applicants over the age of 65 will need to contact Social Security to begin the application process.

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How to Apply for SSI

Online applications are not available for adults age 65 and older.

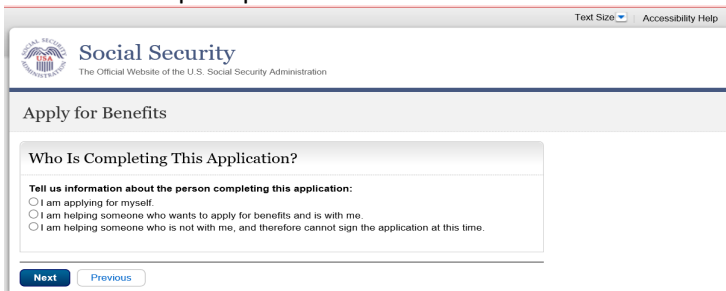
Apply By Phone

Call us to make an appointment to file your application at **1-800-772-1213**. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can call us at TTY **1-800-325-0778**.

Apply With Your Local Office

Call to make an appointment with your local Social Security office.

- ✓ **When prompted to answer: WHO IS COMPLETING THE APPLICATION?**



Adults should choose the option -- I am applying for myself, even if someone is helping them to complete the application. If support is needed, the applicant should be in the room while their parent/mentor/provider is helping them to apply.

- ✓ Complete the **Disability Report**:

Applicants over the age of 18 will be directed to complete the **Adult Disability Report**.

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov/forms/ssa-3368.pdf>

- ✓ **Medical Release form:**

a. If you are completing the application for yourself: Sign and submit the **medical release form**. At the end of the report, the SSA will ask you to sign a medical release form (SSA-827), which allows SSA to get information from the applicant's doctors. This can be done electronically as part of the online Disability application, or you can print, sign, and send the form to your Social Security office. You will be able to print a cover sheet that you can use to send SSA the signed medical release and any medical records you already have in your possession.

b. If you checked that someone is helping you to complete the application, a medical release form will be mailed to you to sign and return to The Social Security Administration.

- ✓ **Submit requested documents**—At the end of the online application, the applicant may be given a list of documents that the SSA would like to review. **Either mail or hand deliver** (if SSA is open) the documents to your local Social Security office. Ask for **date stamped copies**.

- You will be contacted by the SSA if they need more information about your claim. **Keep an eye out for mail from SSA and Disability Determination Services (DDS)**.
- If the individual has not worked and does not have a parent who is deceased, collecting disability, or collecting retirement, then the applicant **will most likely receive a denial letter for SSDI**. This is NOT a



- denial letter for SSI. If you have any questions about denial paperwork (or any paperwork) from Social Security, please call them directly to discuss.
- SSA will review financial qualifications and then forward the file to Disability Determination Services (DDS) to review the disability portion of the application.
 - Once DDS receives the file, they will send a letter to the applicant, stating that they are working on reviewing the disability portion of the application. **Keep an eye out for this letter!** The letter should arrive within 4 to 6 weeks of when you complete the application.
 - The letter from DDS should provide the name and contact information for the **Disability Examiner (DE)** who has been assigned to the applicant's case.
 - It may also contain **additional paperwork** that must be completed and returned by a specific due date.
 - You can always call DDS to check in if you haven't received the letter!

Step 3: Follow-up – THIS STEP IS KEY!

PLEASE NOTE: If you submit supporting documents to the Social Security Administration, they will only fax the first 20 pages to DDS and then will mail the remaining pages. To best ensure that DDS receive all of the pages, we suggest the following:

- ✓ **Gather supporting documents** once you have completed the applications.
- ✓ **Keep an eye out for a letter from DDS.** You should receive this approximately 4 to 6 weeks after you have completed both the SSI and Disability applications.
- ✓ **Contact the Disability Examiner (DE) and ask the following questions:**
 - Did they get all of the supporting documentation that you submitted to the Social Security office?
 - Do they need additional supporting documentation? If so, what is the best way to get it to them?
 - Do they need help collecting paperwork from any of the medical professionals, therapists, teachers, etc. that were listed on the application?
 - Ask that they call you if they need ANYTHING.
- **Check the status of your application online.**
 - The applicant can check their application status by creating and then logging into a mysocialsecurity account. <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

Step 4: Account Set-up

- ✓ Decide what account into which the SSA money will be directly deposited. Effective March 1, 2013, all SSA payments must be delivered electronically.
- ✓ Will the SSA recipient need a representative payee?
 - a. A rep payee helps beneficiaries who need assistance managing their Social Security benefits/money.
 - b. In order to be a rep payee a person or organization must apply for and be appointed by SSA. Complete the **Appointment of Representative form**, listed in the next section of the guide.
 - c. Generally, a family member, provider, or friend serves as a representative payee.
- ❖ **For more information about Representative Payees, please go to:** <https://www.ssa.gov/payee/> and <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10076.pdf>
- ❖ **Article from SSA about Representative Payees:** https://blog.ssa.gov/making-wise-choices-when-a-representative-payee-manages-your-money/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery



If you are denied, we have a guide to help you with the appeal. If you are connected with DP, ask your case manager or coordinator for a copy of the *Filing a Social Security Appeal or Reconsideration Guide*. For more information about understanding Social Security’s decision, check out this resource:

https://co.db101.org/co/programs/income_support/ssi2/program2a.htm

Important Forms

Form #	Form Name	Link
3368	Adult Disability Report	https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-3368-bk.pdf
1372	Advance Notice of Termination of Child’s Benefits (complete if receiving survivor’s benefits, is 18, and still in school)	https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-1372.pdf
1696	Appointment of Representative	https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-1696.pdf
827	Authorization to Disclose Information to SSA • Instructions for completing form 827	http://ssa.gov/forms/ssa-827.pdf • http://ssa.gov/forms/ssa-827-inst.pdf
3820	Child Disability Report	https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/i3820/main.html
3288	Consent for Release of Information	https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-3288.pdf
3373	Function Report (adults)	http://www.socialsecurity.gov/forms/ssa-3373-bk.pdf
3369	Work History Report (adults)	http://www.socialsecurity.gov/forms/ssa-3369.pdf

Social Security Administration Contacts

- **DDS (Disability Determination Services):** 303-368-4100
- **Social Security:** 1-800-772-1213; 1-800-325-0778 TTY; <http://www.ssa.gov/>
- You can either call your local office or the main number for Social Security.

To utilize the Social Security office locator, go to: <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

OR— Go to the Social Security website at www.ssa.gov

- ✓ Find the **Support** section near the bottom of the first page

Support

[Contact us](#)

[Find an office](#)

[Forms](#)

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[Report fraud](#)

- ✓ Click on **Find an office** and then click **Locate An Office By Zip**

Still need to find an office near you?

Locate An Office By Zip

- ✓ Enter your zip code and press **Locate**.
Find the Office for this ZIP Code.

ZIP:

Other Contacts

Contact	Application Assistance	Supporting document support	Application training/ Webinars
Your current case manager/coordinator at Developmental Pathways	Limited	PMIP and 100.2 assessment (if enrolled in waiver services)	n/a
Easter Seals Disability Benefits Services (DBS): (303) 233-1666 x 230; dintake@eastersealscolorado.org https://www.easterseals.com/co/our-programs/work/disability-benefits-services/	Yes AND they offer webinars about the application process.	Limited	Yes
All Health Network (must be an All Health Network member): http://www.allhealthnetwork.org/ ; 303-730-8858	Available	Unknown	Unknown
Mental Health Center of Denver (must be receiving services/supports from MHCD): 303-504-7900	Available	Unknown	Unknown
Mile High United Way: http://www.unitedwaydenver.org/ ; 303-433-8383; or dial 211	Available	Unknown	Unknown
Atlantis Community, Inc.: http://atlantiscommunity.org/ ; 303-733-9324	Yes	Unknown	Unknown
Colorado Legal Services (assistance with the appeal process, if denied): 303-837-1321; http://www.coloradolegalservices.org/	Appeals/ request for reconsideration	Appeals/ request for reconsideration	unknown
Disability Law Colorado (assistance with the appeal process, if denied): https://disabilitylawco.org/contact	Appeals/ request for reconsideration	Appeals/ request for reconsideration	unknown
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (assistance with the appeal process, if denied): https://nosscr.org/referral-service/	Appeals/ request for reconsideration	Appeals/ request for reconsideration	unknown

Important Terms and Acronyms and their Definitions

The Social Security Administration (SSA): An independent Federal agency that, among other responsibilities, oversees two income support programs for people with disabilities: SSI and SSDI.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): A government assistance program that provides supplemental income to specific populations to address basic needs (i.e., food, clothing, and shelter). To receive SSI benefits, an individual must be “financially needy and disabled; financially needy and aged (over the age of 65); financially needy and blind.”

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI): Federal disability program, administered by the SSA—that provides benefits to individuals who are blind or disabled who are “insured” based on contributions (through work) paid into the Social Security trust fund, as authorized by FICA. Medicare eligibility usually comes two years after the first SSDI payment.

Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA): To be eligible for disability benefits, a person must be unable to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA). A person who is earning more than a certain monthly amount (net of impairment-related work expenses) is ordinarily considered to be engaging in SGA. For more information, please click on the following link: <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/sga.html>

Disability Determination Services (DDS): State agency that contracts with the SSA to review the medical portion of the application and make a disability determination.

Consultative Examination (CE): A consultative examination is sometimes ordered by the Disability Examiner. It is an evaluation performed by a physician or psychologist who contracts with DDS. The evaluation is scheduled when existing medical evidence for an applicant collected by the DDS is insufficient to make a disability determination. SSA will pay for this exam if they have ordered it.

Claims Representative: SSA staff person who meets with the applicant and processes the application information.

Disability Examiner (DE): The staff person from Disability Determination Services who is assigned to work on and process the disability determination. This person examines the medical record and the applicant’s forms, can order a Consultative Examination, and can request medical opinions. They then reach a medical determination on whether the the applicant meets the SSA’s disability criteria.

Protective Filing Date: Date the applicant tells the SSA they intend to file for disability. This date is used to determine the eligibility date provided the applicant files an SSI application within 60 days and an SSDI application within 180 days.

Representative Payee: A person or an organization, appointed by the Social Security administration, to receive the Social Security or SSI benefits for anyone who can't manage or direct the management of his or her benefits.