

NC Family to Family Health Information Center

*"A beacon for families of children with special
health care needs."*

NC Family to Family Health Information Center
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Fact Sheet

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Public Health Programs 1 Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income or SSI is a federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes). It is designed to help the aged, blind, and disabled individuals who have little or no income. It provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.

Who is eligible for SSI benefits?

Anyone who is:

- Aged (age 65 or older);
- Blind; or
- Disabled.

And who:

- Has limited income; and
- Has limited resources; and
- Is a US citizen or national, or in one of certain categories of aliens; and
- Is a resident of one of the 50 states, including the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands; and
- Is not absent from the country for a full calendar month or more than 30 consecutive days; and
- Agrees to apply for any other cash benefits for which he or she may be entitled*; and
- Meets certain other requirements.

* **In NC people who receive SSI automatically receive Medicaid.**

What is "blindness" for an adult or child?

"Blindness" in Social Security disability programs is "**statutory blindness**", which means:

- You have a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in your better eye, even while you are wearing glasses or a correcting contact lens or glasses in that eye; or
- You have a limitation in the field of vision of your better eye, so that:

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-The widest diameter of your visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

If you have a visual impairment that is not "blindness" as defined above you may still be eligible for SSI benefits on the basis of disability.

What does "Disabled" mean for a child?

An individual under age 18 is "**disabled**" if he or she has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, which:

- Results in marked and severe functional limitations; and
- Can be expected to result in death; or
- Has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

If the individual is age 18 or older, the adult definition of disability explained below applies.

What does "Disabled" mean for an adult?

An individual age 18 and older is "disabled" if he or she has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, which:

- Results in the inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity; and
- Can be expected to result in death; or
- Has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

What does "Limited Income" include:

Income includes:

- Money you earn from work;
- Money you receive from other sources such as Social Security, workers compensation, unemployment benefits, Department of Veterans' Affairs, friends or relatives; and
- Free food or shelter.

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What are "Limited Resources"?

Resources are things you own such as:

- Cash;
- Bank account(s), stocks, US savings bonds;
- Land;
- Vehicles;
- Personal property;
- Life insurance; and
- Anything else you own that could be converted to cash and used for food or shelter.

The SSI limits for resources that are counted are:

Individual - \$2,000
Couple - \$3,000

Are there any other requirements?

Yes. You must apply for all other benefits or payments for which you may be eligible such as pensions or Social Security.

Who is not eligible for SSI benefits?

- Someone who is a fugitive felon.
- Someone who is in prison or jail.
- Someone who gives away resources.

If you give away a resource or sell it for less than it is worth in order to reduce your resources below the SSI resource limit, you may be ineligible for SSI for up to 36 months!

- Someone who is a non-citizen SSI recipient who fails to meet the alien status requirements.
- Someone who is an SSI beneficiary who is absent from the United States for a full calendar month or more than 30 consecutive days.

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For more information call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or contact your local social security office.

You may also visit:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/11000.html#part1>

Source: Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Understanding Supplemental Security Income SSI Eligibility Requirements 2007 Edition