

Public Benefits

1. How do I apply for Social Security and SSI disability benefits?

Much of the application can be completed on-line at www.ssa.gov . Or you can call your local Social Security office or the national Social Security call center at 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for benefits. Even if you submit your application on-line, you still need to call to make an appointment to finish the application. If you need help filling out the on-line forms, you can call the Disability Benefits Specialist or the Elder Benefits Specialist at your local ADRC.

2. Social Security says I've been overpaid—what should I do?

Contact your local ADRC to discuss your situation with the Elder Benefits Specialist or the Disability Benefits Specialist. They can explain your choices and help you file an appeal or a waiver request.

3. My child's been on SSI and now that he's turned 18, Social Security says he's no longer disabled. What can I do about this?

You can contact the Disability Benefits Specialist at your local ADRC. He or she can find out why he's no longer getting SSI, may advocate for your child, and can assist you in filing appeals.

4. What should I do to keep my Medicaid from ending next month like the letter says?

If you are age 60 or older, contact the Elder Benefit Specialist and if you are between 18 and 60, contact the Disability Benefit Specialist at your local ADRC. These benefits specialists can work with you and your economic support worker to resolve the problem if possible.

5. Where can I get help finding a job since my disability keeps me from being able to do my regular work?

The local ADRC can help you connect with agencies that can help you find work or can help you get the retraining you need to get back to working.

6. Where can I get some help with filling out a Medicaid form?

You can apply for Medicaid and Badgercare on line at www.access.wisconsin.gov. You can also call your local ADRC to make an appointment with the Elder Benefits Specialist if you're age 60 or more or with the Disability Benefits Specialist if you're between 18 and 60 and disabled.

7. My sister gets only a small Social Security disability check and wants to know about getting SSI as well.

SSI disability is a program for people who have very low income and very limited assets, not counting the house a person lives in and one car. Your sister can contact the Social Security office to apply for SSI or she can call the national Social Security call center at 1-800-772-1213 for more information.

8. I'm on SSI and I didn't get my state supplement check this month. What can I do about that?

You can contact your local economic support worker at your county department of health and human services to find out what happened to the check or you can call the Recipient's Call Line in Madison at 1-800-362-3002 to report that you didn't receive the check.

9. I'm getting SSI disability and I need help doing my housework and laundry but can't afford to hire anyone. Is there any help for that?

Contact your local ADRC and ask to apply for an "SSI-E assessment." If you qualify, you can get some extra money from the state to pay for these kinds of services.

10. Since I had to quit my job to stay home and care for my disabled husband, is there any way I can get paid for this?

Unfortunately, there is not any program that will pay you for caring for a family member. You may want to contact your local ADRC to find out if there are any programs that can help reduce some of your other household expenses, such as Food Share and Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program.

11. Can I file for Homestead Tax Credit if I'm on SSI and Social Security?

Yes, you can. Anyone in the state of Wisconsin who is low income can file for Homestead Tax Credit for this year as well as for some past years if you didn't file then. The Elder Benefits Specialist and the Disability Benefits Specialist at your local ADRC can help you with this.

12. Can I work and still get my SSI and Social Security disability benefits?

Absolutely. The Social Security Administration encourages disabled people to work if they can. However, there are limits to how much you can earn and still keep your benefits. You can contact the local Social Security office or the national Social Security call center at 1-800-772-1213 for more information. You can also contact your local ADRC for more information.

13. Can I set up a small in-home business if I'm on SSI?

Yes, you can. Your local DVR (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) office may be able to assist you in developing your business. You should also contact the Social Security office to find out how much you can earn and still keep your SSI benefits and how you will report your income to them.

14. I get both Social Security and SSI disability benefits and I would like to save money to go to school. Is this possible?

Social Security offers a “PASS” program for disabled people like you who need to save money to go to school or start a business. You must have an approved PASS plan in place before you begin saving money.

This program allows you to save up your Social Security money for education or business development while it increases your SSI check so you have about the same amount of monthly income. Also, the \$2000 asset limit is waived with the PASS program.

You will want to discuss this with your local Social Security office and/or the Disability Benefits Specialist in your local ADRC to get more information about this program. Also, you can contact your local DVR (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) office for help in setting up your PASS plan.

15. Can a disabled person get any help paying their property taxes?

No. In Wisconsin, the only property tax relief program is for low income seniors.

16. I’m not eligible for regular Medicaid because my income from Social Security disability and a part time job is too high. Are there any other medical insurance programs for me?

You can apply for Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) which is a Medicaid program for working disabled people with income too high for regular Medicaid. If you don’t qualify, you can check out the HIRSP program disabled people at www.hirsp.org or you can call them at 1-800-828-4277 for more information and/or to apply.

17. Will getting a divorce affect my Social Security disability benefits?

Probably not, but you should contact your local Social Security office to make sure and to find out if there are any other benefits for you as a divorced disabled person.

18. Can I get disability benefits even though I’m 62 and drawing my retirement benefits?

Yes, you can. If Social Security determines that you meet the medical criteria for disability, you will probably be entitled to a larger monthly check than what you’re getting now. You also will be eligible for Medicare 24 months after you are eligible for disability benefits and you may qualify for Medicaid as well. Contact your local Social Security office to apply. Your local Elder Benefits Specialist may be able to assist you with the application as well.

19. I don’t think my representative payee is handling my money very well. What can I do about this?

You need to speak with someone at your local Social Security office about the situation. If you have proof that your representative payee is misusing your money, Social Security may appoint a new payee for you. The Elder Benefits Specialist and/or Disability Benefits Specialist at your local ADRC can assist you if needed.

20. Are there any programs to help disabled farmers keep farming?

Yes. In Wisconsin, we have the AgrAbility program. You can go find out more at their website <http://bse.wisc.edu/agrability/> or call them at 1-608-262-9336 or for TTY users: 1-800-947-3529.

21. What is the difference between Medicare and Medicaid (also known as the “Forward” card, MA)?

Medicare is insurance you sign up for when you turn age 65. Medicaid is a government supported benefit that covers all medical expenses for low-income people.

22. What happens to me if my spouse has to go live in a nursing home?

There are certain protections designed to ensure the at home spouse does not lose their home or become impoverished because their husband or wife had to move into a nursing home and go onto the Medicaid program. This is called “Spousal Impoverishment Protection” and applies when only one spouse must go to a nursing home and the other can remain living at home. For more specific information on this protection, contact your local ADRC Benefit Specialist who can explain this in more depth.