

# Applying for Supplemental Security Income through prerelease

As we discussed last week, people who are incarcerated can use a prerelease procedure to apply for Supplemental Security Income before they are released from prison. This prerelease procedure is only available at certain institutions, so anyone interested in taking care of this before they are released should find out if the institution has the program.

The purpose of the prerelease procedure isn't to get your benefits started while you are incarcerated. Instead, it is so that you can get them started as soon as possible when you are released. You can't be paid benefits while you are still in the institution.

Under the prerelease program, you can apply for SSI benefits and have your application processed if it appears likely that you will qualify for benefits. You can start the process a few months before your release date. Generally, you must be scheduled to be released within several months for your application to be processed.

Some institutions have a prerelease agreement that makes it a little easier for you to apply. Even if this isn't in effect in the institution you are in, you can still apply for benefits so that you can get them soon after your release if you are eligible.

Under a prerelease agreement, the institution would notify the Social Security Administration that you are likely to meet the criteria for benefits. The institution would also provide evidence and other information necessary for your claim, provide anticipated release information, and notify the SSA when you are actually released. Your claim would be processed.

If you provide permission, the institution would be notified of the outcome.

There may be some cases when Pennsylvania inmates are turned down for SSI. In those cases, appealing and fighting for an approval might be the course of action you choose to take.

**Source:** United States Social Security Administration, "[Spotlight on Prerelease Procedure](#)," accessed March. 26, 2015