

# In SSI, who decides if I am disabled or blind?

Supplemental Security Income, often abbreviated as SSI, is a form of governmental financial assistance available to Americans who meet certain criteria. An application for SSI is carefully examined to ensure applicants meet the income and resource criteria as well as other eligibility requirements.

During the application and approval process, the Social Security office will hand over the responsibility of disability determination to the [Disability Determination Services](#) (DDS). This state agency will determine whether or not your condition meets the SSA's definition of disability.

It is not uncommon for the DDS to reach out to people from the applicant's past to gain a clear understanding of the condition. Doctors, nurses, teachers, therapists or family members might be contacted to answer questions and provide valuable information regarding the impairment. The applicant, however, is rarely contacted in person. If the DDS cannot gain the proper amount of information from these sources, an examination might be ordered (at their cost) to receive new data. If the applicant rejects or misses the scheduled examination, the DDS might deny the claim.

Throughout the process, it is wise to provide honest and thorough answers. Even if you feel you are hurting your chances at approval, the DDS will likely uncover inconsistencies in your symptoms and medical history.

Whether you are applying for Social Security Disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income benefits, it is wise to have your questions answered. Internet research can be valuable, but the care and attention of an experienced legal professional can be priceless. An attorney can research your

case and provide clear direction specifically tailored to your needs and concerns.

**Source:** Social Security Administration, "Understanding Supplemental Security Income If You Are Disabled Or Blind – – 2014 Edition."□ Accessed 4/10/15.