

# Office of Retirement and Disability Policy

## Office of Disability Policy (ODP)

Policy in Motion

# Disability Benefits and Autism Spectrum Disorder



Securing today  
and tomorrow



# Agenda

- ❖ Disability 101
- ❖ Disability Criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ❖ Application Process
- ❖ Demonstration Projects



# What disability programs does the Social Security Administration administer?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers two programs that provide benefits based on disability:

The [Social Security Disability Insurance \(SSDI\)](#) program, authorized by Title II of the Social Security Act; and

The [Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\)](#) program, authorized by Title XVI of the Act

# Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Benefits – Title II

**Date last insured:** Must meet recent work and duration of work tests

Monthly benefit amount is based on average lifetime earnings

A **5-month waiting period** after disability benefits are awarded

Eligible for **Medicare after 2 years**

*For more information:* <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10029.pdf>

# Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Payments – Title XVI

**Means-tested:** To be eligible, must have limited income and resources

Monthly payments to:

**Adults** age 65 and older, blind, or disabled

**Children** (birth to attainment of age 18) blind or disabled

Eligible for **Medicaid**

*For more information:* [www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm)

# Social Security's Definition of Disability

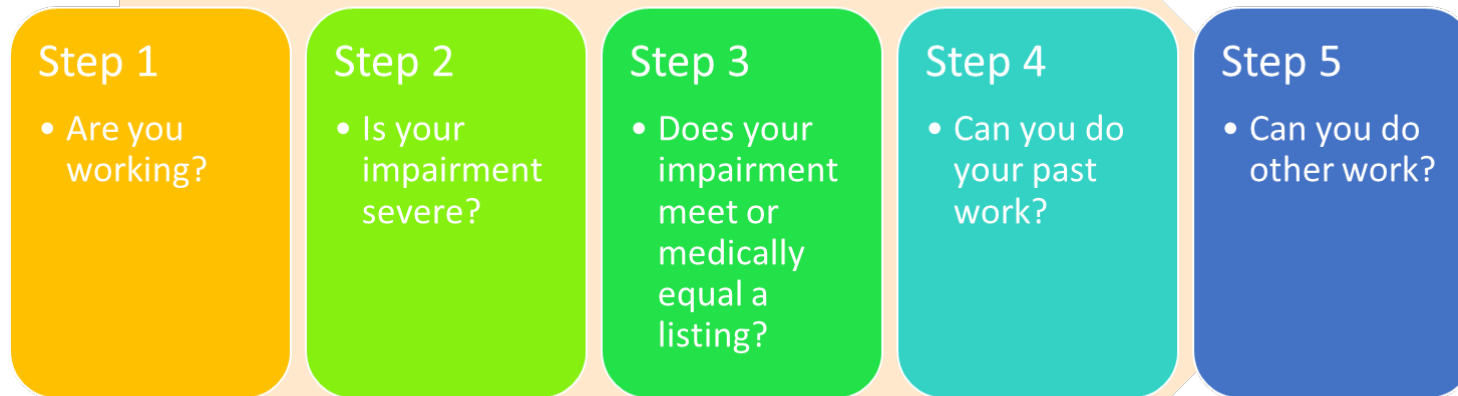
The general definition of disability under Title II and, for adults under Title XVI, is:

[The] **inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity** by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

For children under Title XVI is:

[The child] has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, which **results in marked and severe functional limitations**, and which can be expected to result in death or which has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

# How do we determine if someone qualifies for disability?



# Sequential Evaluation

## **Step 1 – Is the individual working (“substantial gainful activity”)?**

SSA defines SGA according to monthly earnings: 2017 SGA amount is \$1,170

## **Step 2 – Is the impairment severe?**

Severe impairment means any impairment or combination of impairments which significantly limits an individual's physical or mental ability to do basic work activities

## **Step 3 – Does the impairment meet or medically equal a listing?**

# Sequential Evaluation

## **Step 4 – Can the individual still do past relevant work?**

We determine whether the individual's residual functional capacity – which is the most we expect an individual can do despite the impairment – prevents the individual from performing any past relevant work

## **Step 5 – Considering age, education, and work experience, can the individual make an adjustment to other work?**

We determine whether an individual can do OTHER work that exists in significant numbers in the national economy

# Establishing the Medically Determinable Impairment (MDI)

An MDI must result from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities that can be shown by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques

To establish an MDI, we require objective medical evidence from an acceptable medical source

We do not use an individual's statement of symptoms, a diagnosis, or a medical opinion to establish the existence of the MDI

# Determining Impairment Severity for Autism Spectrum Disorder

## *Psychiatric Review Technique (PRT)*

PRT involves using a five-point rating scale to rate the degree of limitation an individual has using the four areas of mental functioning (the “Paragraph B” criteria)

Paragraph B criteria:

Understand, remember, or apply information

Interact with others

Concentrate, persist, or maintain pace

Adapt or manage oneself

# Determining Impairment Severity for Autism Spectrum Disorder

## *PRT and Five-Point Rating Scale*

**No limitation** – Able to function

**Mild limitation** – Functioning is slightly limited

**Moderate limitation** – Functioning is fair

**Marked limitation** – Functioning is seriously limited

**Extreme limitation** – Not able to function

# Step 3 – Listing Criteria

**12.10** and **112.10** *Autism spectrum disorder*

Paragraph A – Medical criteria

Paragraph B – Functional criteria



# Listings 12.10 and 112.10

## *Paragraph A – Medical Criteria*

**A.** Medical documentation of both of the following:

1. Qualitative deficits in verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and social interaction
2. Significantly restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities

# Listings 12.10 and 112.10

## *Paragraph B – Functional Criteria*

**B.** Extreme limitation of one, or marked limitation of two, of the following areas of mental functioning:

1. Understand, remember, or apply information
2. Interact with others
3. Concentrate, persist, or maintain pace
4. Adapt or manage oneself

# How does someone apply for benefits through SSA?

Adults can complete the application process online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](https://www.socialsecurity.gov), or call our toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213, to make an appointment at a local SSA office.

The application process for children must be completed in-person at a local SSA office.

When you apply for either SSDI or SSI, we will collect medical and other information from you and make a decision about whether or not you meet Social Security's definition of disability.

# What information does SSA need from an applicant?

- ☐ Social Security number
- ☐ Birth or baptismal certificate
- ☐ Names, addresses and phone numbers of the doctors, caseworkers, hospitals and clinics that took care of the individual, and dates of visits
- ☐ Names and dosage of all the medicine he or she takes
- ☐ Medical records that the individual already has in his/her possession
- ☐ Laboratory and test results
- ☐ A summary of where he or she worked and the kind of work performed
- ☐ A copy of his or her most recent W-2 Form (Wage and Tax Statement) or, if self-employed, federal tax returns for the past year

# Supported Employment Demonstration (SED)

Background	<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SSA will evaluate whether offering evidence-based packages of integrated vocational, medical, and mental health services to recently denied disability applicants could reduce the demand for SSA disability benefits</li></ul>
Intervention Design	<p><b>Participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Individuals aged 18-50 who express a desire to work and who have been recently denied disability benefits (DI or SSI) while alleging a mental illness</li></ul> <p><b>Randomized Experiment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Coordinating with 30 community health centers across the country, SED will enroll and randomly assign 3,000 participants into one of three arms:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Full Treatment Arm:</i> Participants receive Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services, a nurse care coordinator, systematic medication management, and assistance with cost sharing for medications and behavioral-health and work related expenses</li><li><i>Basic Treatment Arm:</i> Participants will receive IPS services and assistance with behavioral health and work-related expenses</li><li><i>Control Arm:</i> Participants will have access to all behavioral health or employment – related services available at the community health center and will receive a local Community Resources information book</li></ul></li></ul>

# Supported Employment Demonstration (SED) Continued

Project Activities	<p><b>Current Project Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final site selections; testing of survey tools; awaiting OMB clearance (FY2017)</li><li>• Enrollment begins September 1, 2017; 36 months of services to enrollees (FY2017-2020)</li></ul>
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SSA: \$72.5M over 6 years (Section 1110)</li></ul>

# Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE)

Background	<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote positive outcomes for youth who receive SSI and their families through improved provision and coordination of employment and education services; long-term reduction in youth's reliance on SSI</li></ul> <p><b>Inter-agency Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Department of Education (ED) awarded 6 grants in September 2013 to 5 individual states—Arkansas, California, Maryland, New York, Wisconsin—and one consortium of 6 states (Arizona, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah); the 6 grantees designed and are implementing separate Model Demonstration Projects</li></ul> <p><b>SSA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Responsible for the national evaluation; awarded a contract to Mathematica Policy Research in late FY13</li><li>Random assignment design; minimum sample of 2,000 youth per project—1,000 treatment and 1,000 control</li></ul>
Intervention Design	<p><b>Unique Model in Each State/Consortium with Common Elements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Formal partnerships expected between state agencies; Services must include case management, benefits counseling, career and work-based learning experiences, and parent training and information</li></ul> <p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Non-institutionalized SSI recipients ages 14-16 and their families</li></ul>
Project Activities	<p><b>Current Status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enrollment ended April 2016</li><li>Services provided (ED) through September 2018</li></ul>

# Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD)

Background	<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section 823 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 requires SSA to conduct a five-year (2017 to 2021) demonstration to test a benefit offset for Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) beneficiaries, including a simplification of work incentives, intended to promote employment.</li></ul> <p><b>Section 823 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benefits reduced \$1 for every \$2 earned greater than the beneficiary’s impairment-related work expenses (IRWE) or a threshold determined by SSA but no greater than SGA</li><li>• Entitlement to benefits may terminate due to work if benefits are reduced to zero</li><li>• The Trial Work Period and Extended Period of Eligibility do not apply</li><li>• Continued Medicare eligibility for 93 months after termination, if the impairment continues</li></ul>
Intervention Design	<p><b>Randomized Experiment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruit, enroll, and randomly assign (starting October 2017) 15,000 volunteers into three groups (approximately 5,000 per group) – control group continues under current law rules, one treatment group receives the benefit offset and no termination of entitlement in full offset (benefits are zero), and a second treatment group receives the benefit offset with termination of entitlement after 12 consecutive months in full offset</li><li>• Each month, beneficiaries must report earnings and IRWE for the prior month to offset the benefit paid in the following month.</li><li>• The standard POD monthly offset threshold is the TWP-level of SGA (\$840 in 2017)</li><li>• All participants volunteer and provide written informed consent</li></ul> <p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DI Worker beneficiaries at least age 20 and under 62 throughout the project</li></ul>

# Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND)

Background	<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 directed SSA to conduct a demonstration projects evaluating the effects of a \$1 for \$2 withholding of Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) payments for earnings over a level specified by the Commissioner</li><li>• Designed to test whether a benefit offset will encourage return to work</li><li>• Awarded the implementation and evaluation contract to Abt Associates (13 subcontractors) in December 2009</li></ul>
Intervention Design	<p><b>Two Stages, Randomized Experiment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stage 1: Non-volunteers assigned to two groups:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Treatment 1: offset for a five-year period; or</li><li>○ Control 1: no offset</li></ul></li><li>• Stage 2: Volunteers assigned to three groups:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Treatment 21: offset for a five-year period; or</li><li>○ Treatment 22: offset for a five-year period with Enhanced Work Incentives Counseling; or</li><li>○ Control 2: no offset</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The BOND sites are in operation in the following states: Alabama, Arizona and southern California, Colorado and Wyoming, Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Greater Detroit, Greater Houston, Northern New England, Southern Florida, Western New York, and Wisconsin.</li><li>• Beneficiaries must be between 21 and 59 at the time of enrollment</li></ul>



# Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) Continued

Project Activities	<p><b>Current Status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enrollment closed in September 2012<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Stage 1: 968,145 beneficiaries</li><li>◦ Stage 2: 12,744 beneficiaries</li></ul></li><li>• Ongoing treatment services such as work incentives counseling (WIC) and enhanced work incentives counseling (EWIC), and helping beneficiaries use the offset will continue until September 2017. The contract ends December 2018.</li></ul> <p><b>Timeline/Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multiple reports released on SSA demonstration page</li><li>• Participation, Process and Impact report drafts due April - June 2017</li><li>• Final report draft due October 2017</li></ul>
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$128M over 9 years (Section 234)</li><li>• Remaining: FY2017: \$6.7M; FY2018: \$5.6M</li></ul>



# *my* Social Security

Create a *my* Social Security account to verify your earnings or see an estimate of future benefits while still working and manage your monthly benefits once you begin receiving payments.

**Step 1:** Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](https://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount) and select *my* Social Security

**Step 2:** Select “Create an Account”