

You've Been OK'd for SSI, Now What?

Getting on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is not easy. Most people think that once they start getting checks, they will keep coming forever. Wrong.

About every 3 years, Social Security will see if you are still disabled or blind. They call this Continuing Disability Review. They may do it sooner if they think the disability will get better before then.

They also will check your income, what you own and where you live. This helps them decide if you can still get SSI and how much. This is called a "redetermination."

Are you married to someone who is not on SSI? Or are you under age 18 and living with your parents? Then they will also check their income, what they own and where they live. Some people get a redetermination within three months after they go on SSI. After that, it happens once every one to six years.

Redetermination can be done by phone, mail or in person. You will get a letter telling you how yours will be done. Do you have a representative payee? Then the letter will go to them.

If it is by phone, you will get a letter saying what day and time they will call. If it is in person, the letter says what day and time you should go to the Social Security office. They will fill out the papers with the information you give them. If it is by mail, you will get a paper. You need to fill it out and send it back.

Can't meet or talk to them at the time they set? Call right away and ask for a different time. Problems filling out the paper? Call right away and ask them to help you. Important! You only have 30 days to return the paper, call or meet with them.

If they don't hear from you during the 30 days, your checks may stop. Or you may get a check for the wrong amount. If you get too much, you will have to pay it back. If you lose your SSI, you may also lose your Medicaid.

What if you get a letter from Social Security saying your SSI is ending? If it is because of a redetermination or review, you have 30 days to appeal. An appeal gives you a chance to keep your SSI. Appeal within 10 days and you can keep getting SSI until your case is decided.

Legal Aid offices can sometimes help people with these cases.

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Note: This community education column from the Legal Aid Society is not intended to take the place of legal advice. All cases are different and need individual attention. Consult with a private attorney of your choice to review the facts and law specific to your case.

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