

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME AND AGE 18 REDETERMINATION

What is Age 18 Redetermination?

The adult definition of disability for SSI is different than that for children. Individuals who are found eligible for SSI under the childhood disability definition are required to go through a full disability “redetermination” after reaching the age of 18. The SSA calls this process the “age 18 redetermination.”

Requirements for Age 18 Redetermination

Under current law, individuals who are 18 years of age who receive SSI benefits must have their eligibility reviewed as if they were applying for adult SSI for the first time, without consideration of previous disability determinations. In other words, the person can be determined ineligible for benefits at the age of 18 although there has been no change in medical condition or ability to function since being found eligible for childhood SSI benefits.

Impact of Age 18 Redetermination

The SSA process for redetermination at age 18 includes both the gathering of information on the young adult and determination of eligibility under the adult criteria for SSI. The general process is as follows:

- The local Social Security Field Office sends written notification to the individual and parents that the case will be redetermined. However, if this paperwork is not received by the student, contact the local Social Security office to request the redetermination in order to avoid a possible overpayment situation.
- The benefit recipient and their family, guardian, or representative goes to the field office to complete an initial eligibility interview.
- All the information gathered at the interview is forwarded to the state Disability Determination Services, who will review medical and non-medical information to determine if the individual is or is not disabled under the law. DDS follows a detailed process to determine if the youth's impairment is disabling by the SSA's criteria.

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Based on a combination of these factors, the DDS determines if the young adult will continue to be eligible for SSI benefits. If a determination for SSI eligibility is made, the individual continues to receive benefits in the adult SSI program. If the determination is made for denial of eligibility, the individual has the opportunity to file a formal appeal of the determination.

Disability benefit payments may continue even though the student is not found to meet the adult definition of disability if eligibility can be established for “section 301” status. Payment of benefits under section 301 requires that the beneficiary be actively participating in an approved vocational rehabilitation program or be receiving special education services under an IEP prior to the adverse disability determination. For transition age youth under age 22, SSA assumes that continued participation in an educational program under an IEP is likely to result in permanent removal from the disability rolls.