

# Social Security Benefits-SSI

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

**Policy: 1000.0005**

*Effective Date: December 18, 1984 Revised Date: October 11, 1988 Version: 2*

Supplemental Security Income is provided to children of any age who are disabled or blind according to established criteria. If a child is already collecting SSI at the time of placement the benefits unit must be alerted so that change of payee, if appropriate, can be initiated. The benefits are federal and state funds administered and distributed by the federal government. The federal share increases automatically with the cost of living. It is the responsibility of the worker to identify appropriate candidates to maximize the benefits available to the Department on behalf of the child.

## Disabled

1. The child suffers from a medically determinable physical or mental condition of a severity to impair the child's daily functioning and ability to participate and benefit from activities at an age appropriate level.
2. A physical or mental impairment results from anatomical, physiological, or psychological abnormalities which are demonstrable by medically acceptable clinical and laboratory diagnostic techniques.
3. Primary consideration is given to the severity of the individual's impairment, with a criteria of functioning at half their chronological age. Consideration is also given to such other facts as the individual's age, education, and work experience if applicable.
4. The child may suffer one of the stated impairment(s) criteria such as musculoskeletal system, neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular, mental disorders, or if his/her impairment meets the durational requirements of expectation to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months and is determined by the Social Security Administration, with an appropriate consideration of the particular effect of disease processes in childhood, to be medically the equivalent of an identified impairment as listed.

## Blind

1. A central vision acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lens or a visual field restricted to 20 degrees or less.
2. A disabled child of a deceased, retired, or disabled parent may continue to receive SSA benefits past the age of eighteen (18), indefinitely, even if not in school.
3. Full benefits are not paid to a child while he/she is a resident of a public institution. However, SSI will allow \$30 monthly for personal needs.
4. In the case of a child on SSI who is subsequently adopted, the child does not automatically continue to be eligible. The adoptive parents' income/assets must be considered in determining eligibility. A hard-to place child, however, may be eligible for adoption subsidy.

## Income Assets:

1. When a child is at home, the parent's income is considered in eligibility determination. When the child is in placement, only the child's personal assets and/or income is considered.
2. The child can have assets worth up to \$2,000 and still be eligible for SSI payments. This includes savings accounts, stocks, bonds, and other valuables. Personal effects or household goods do not count as assets if their total equity value is \$2,000 or less. If the total of personal assets exceeds \$2,000, the excess is considered in arriving at the total assets permitted. Life insurance policies are not counted if their total face value is \$1,500 or less. If the total face value is more than \$1,500, only the cash surrender value counts.
3. The first \$20 a month in income from parental support and SSA will not affect the SSI payment. If the amount of SSA or parental support exceeds \$20 monthly, a \$20 disregard is applied and the remainder above \$20 is deducted from the SSI payments.

Medical Coverage - Those who are found eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are automatically eligible and certified for medical assistance. It is not necessary to make a separate application for Medical Assistance. If child is entering DCYF care an DCYF #008 is needed to determine IV-E eligibility.

Disposition of Benefits - The Department as representative payee has the responsibility to receive and use the SSI benefits in the best interests of and on behalf of the child. The benefits are applied toward the cost of care for the child in placement.

## **Related Procedures**

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## Application of Social Security Benefits—SSI

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. The worker identifying a child as a candidate for SSI based on mental and/or physical disability or blindness prepares the necessary information:
  - 1. Social Security Number.
  - 2. Birth certificate ( certified - INRHODES verified.).
  - 3. Up-to-date evaluation (within 12 months) consisting of medical, psychiatric, psychological examinations, hospital, residential treatment centers, clinic, and/or school evaluations and reports and other appropriate material.
- B. The worker forwards the above-mentioned supporting documents to the Benefits Unit of the Federal Programs and Benefits.
- C. The Benefits Office prepares the SSI forms and submits these together with a copy of the Certified Birth Certificate and updated documentation for review by the Social Security field representative.
- D. The Social Security Field Representative visits with DCYF Benefits Unit weekly to review applications and forwards completed applications to the Social Security Office in Providence.
- E. The Disability Determination Unit of the Social Security Office determines the eligibility of each application.
- F. Benefits Section will receive written notice from the SSA Office, usually within 60-180 days from the date of application. If the child is determined to be eligible, the benefits are retroactive to the date of application.
- G. Medical Assistance is automatically provided for all eligible individuals.

## Re-determination Finances

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. Continued eligibility is re-determined yearly. The medical and benefits unit completes the re-determination forms, SSA 8203-F4 and 623 which provides a detailed account of how SSI monies were expended.
- B. The re-determination form is reviewed by the social security field representative during the weekly visit.
- C. The field representative forwards the completed re-determination form to the Social Security Office where the re-determination forms are processed. DCYF receives notification in cases of overpayment or when clarification is necessary.

## SSI Annual Review

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. The child's continued eligibility for SSI is re-determined periodically by the Social Security Administration. This is done on a random selection of cases every six months, every year or every two years as deemed appropriate by the Social Security Administration.
- B. The Benefits Section will forward Form #454 to the primary service worker for completion. The worker will complete Form #454 and return to the Benefits Section within five (5) working days.

## The Appeal of Denial of SSI Benefits

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. A copy of the denial of SSI eligibility will be sent to the child's worker by the Benefits Section. The notification is filed in the case record.
- B. If the worker wishes to file an appeal, the Benefits Section is so notified; and the appeal process is initiated by that office.
- C. Benefits Section staff request the Social Security field representative to file appropriate forms for "Reconsideration" within 60 days of the denial notice.
- D. The worker compiles any available up-to-date medical/psychological/psychiatric documentation and electronically forwards this information to the Benefits Section.
- E. The reconsideration is forwarded to the SSA office.
- F. At the appeal hearing the worker, Department Legal Counsel, court appointed physician/psychologist/psychiatrist may participate, supervisor or appointee from the Benefits Section appear before the Federal Judge.
- G. If the appeal is denied and the Department chooses to pursue further appeal, there is recourse for further appeal through the Social Security Administration Office. The Medical and Benefits Office will proceed to file according to federal regulations if so instructed by the worker.

## Disposition of Assets

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. The Business Office will update the amount of money in the child's savings account as deposits are made. When the savings account balance reaches one thousand (\$1,000), this information will be forwarded to the appropriate worker in the Federal Benefits Unit. The Federal Benefits Unit will send an e-mail message to the worker requesting appropriate action to apply the savings to the child's needs. The worker is responsible to keep track of these benefits and to make appropriate use of these funds towards the child's needs. These may include therapeutic, recreational, or educational activities, devices not covered by medical assistance, homemaker, respite care, clothing, bicycle, furniture, or any other purchases for the personal use of the child. (Note: If the account exceeds \$2000, all savings over that amount must be returned to Social Security, the benefits temporarily cease, and the Department must then reinstate child benefits through the Social Security Office.)
- B. A notice will be sent to the foster parent(s) or residential provider informing him/her when the child's saving account benefits exceed the cost of care. The worker consults with the child's caretaker (foster parent(s) or residential care provider) to discuss the child's needs and appropriate expenditures on behalf of the child.
- C. The expenditures can be made by either of the following courses of action:
  1. Issuance of Payment Prior to Purchase:
    - a. The worker, foster parent(s), or caretaker can price selected items.
    - b. The worker prepares an on-line interoffice memo itemizing the anticipated purchase and the price.
    - c. The worker electronically forwards the memo to the Supervisor of the Business Office and to the Regional Director for approval. The memo is forwarded to the Division of Management and Budgeting for approval by the Chief of Administrative Services.
    - d. When approved, a check will be issued payable to the foster parent(s), caretaker(s), or merchant for the amount and mailed to the foster parent(s), provider(s), or caseworker as appropriate.
    - e. Upon purchase of the approved items with the issued checks, the worker or caretaker(s) will submit receipts or stubs to the Division of Management and Budgeting.
  2. Reimbursement for Purchases Made:
    - a. The steps in Section C, 1 (a - c) above will be followed and, if approved by Management and Budgeting, proceed with Item b below.
    - b. The worker or caretaker can purchase the approved items and forward receipts to Management and Budgeting for reimbursement.
    - c. A check will be issued for the amount to the purchaser.

## Purchase of Services Placement

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. When an SSI eligible child is placed in a purchase of service substitute care placement the following must occur:
  - 1. The primary service worker shall notify the Federal Benefits Unit regarding the child's placement at the time the child is placed.
  - 2. The primary service worker will electronically notify the Benefits Unit if the child is returned to placement in Rhode Island.

## Transfer of Payments

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. Child Entering Placement:
  - 1. When a child who enters placement receives SSI benefits, the INRHODES worker electronically contacts the Benefits Unit in order to effect a payee change; and
  - 2. The Benefits Unit staff verifies the child's beneficiary status with the Social Security Office via Form #1610 and upon verification prepares the necessary form for transfer of payee to the Department. These forms are given to the Social Security Field Representative for processing.
- B. Child in Placement Returning Home:
  - 1. When a child in placement returns home, it is the responsibility of the worker to advise the parent to file with the Social Security Administration to become payee. If required RICHIST will generate a notice that the primary service worker will send to the family informing them of benefits they need to apply for;
  - 2. The Department returns all savings account monies to the Social Security Office which then determines the proper payee for future benefits. In certain circumstances, savings accrued may be released by Management and Budgeting directly to the child or his/her parent/guardian upon verbal approval from the Social Security Administration or Veteran's Administration and with written notification from the primary service worker/supervisor. This shall only be done when there is an immediate financial need and any delay in the release of savings would cause a financial burden. This re-determination must be made jointly by the Social Security Administration/ Veteran's Administration, primary service worker/supervisor and the Division of Management and Budgeting; and
  - 3. If the stability of the return home is questionable and there is a possibility that the return home might disrupt and will be supervised for a trial period, it may be advisable to postpone the filing of a Change of Payee. If this is the case, the worker should call the Benefits Office to discuss the particular circumstances and the timing for change of payee of Social Security benefits.

## Reimbursement of Benefits

### **Procedure From Policy 1000.0005: Social Security Benefits - SSI**

- A. At the time of placement of the SSI eligible child, the primary service worker shall have the parents'/guardians' sign a DCYF #081, parental authorization for a reimbursement of benefits. This form will be filed in the case record. Upon the child's return home, this form will enable the Department to collect these SSI payments retroactive to the time of the child's placement.
- B. The primary service worker will notify the Medical and Benefits Unit of the child's return home at the appropriate time and forward a copy of the signed DCYF #081 to the Medical and Benefits Unit.