

Social Security (Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance)

Employment and Earnings

Workers in OASDI covered employment, 2018	175.9 million
Average earnings, 2018	\$49,864
Earnings required in 2019 for—	
1 quarter of coverage	\$1,360
Maximum of 4 quarters of coverage	\$5,440
Earnings test exempt amounts for 2019	
Under full retirement age for entire year	\$17,640
For months before reaching full retirement age in 2019	\$46,920
Beginning with month of reaching full retirement age in 2019	Test eliminated

Program Data

Cost-of-living adjustment for December 2018	2.8 percent
Average monthly benefit, December 2018	
Retired workers	\$1,461
Widows and widowers, nondisabled	\$1,388
Disabled workers	\$1,234
Number of beneficiaries, December 2018	
Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance	62.9 million
Old-Age Insurance	
Total	46.8 million
Retired workers	43.7 million
Survivors Insurance	
Total	5.9 million
Widows and widowers, nondisabled	3.7 million
Disability Insurance	
Total	10.2 million
Disabled workers	8.5 million
Benefit payments, 2018	
Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance	\$988.6 billion
Old-Age and Survivors Insurance	\$844.9 billion
Disability Insurance	\$143.7 billion
Administrative expenses, 2018	
Old-Age and Survivors Insurance	
Amount	\$3.8 billion
As a percentage of total benefits paid	0.4 percent
Disability Insurance	
Amount	\$2.9 billion
As a percentage of total benefits paid	2.0 percent

Program Trends

- About 62.9 million persons received Social Security benefits for December 2018, an increase of 1,002,862 (1.6 percent) since December 2017. Almost 75 percent were retired workers and their spouses and children, 9 percent were survivors of deceased workers, and 16 percent were disabled workers and their spouses and children.
- Sixty-nine percent of the 43.7 million retired workers received reduced benefits because of entitlement prior to full retirement age. Relatively more women (71.4 percent) than men (65.6 percent) received reduced benefits.
- The number of beneficiaries aged 65 or older rose from about 40.8 million in 2013 to about 47.1 million in 2018 (15.4 percent). The number of beneficiaries aged 85 or older increased by about 4.3 percent during the 5-year period from about 5.5 million in 2013 to about 5.8 million in 2018. In 2018, about 68,000 centenarians were Social Security beneficiaries.
- About 26.1 million women aged 65 or older received benefits for December 2018. About 14.0 million (53.7 percent) were entitled solely to a retired-worker benefit. About 6.8 million (26.0 percent) were dually entitled to a retired-worker benefit and a wife's or widow's benefit, and about 5.3 million (20.3 percent) were receiving wife's or widow's benefits only.
- About 2.9 million children under age 18 received benefits, including 1,182,080 children of deceased workers, 1,337,019 children of disabled workers, and 339,202 children of retired workers.
- About 9.9 million persons received benefits based on disability—8,537,332 disabled workers, 1,127,181 disabled adult children, and 254,581 disabled widows and widowers. In addition, 118,514 spouses and 1,382,920 minor and student children of disabled workers received benefits.
- Average monthly benefits for December 2018, including the 2.8 percent cost-of-living adjustment, were \$1,461 for retired workers, \$1,234 for disabled workers, and \$1,388 for nondisabled widows and widowers. Among retired workers, monthly benefits averaged \$1,627 for men and \$1,297 for women. For disabled workers, average monthly benefits were \$1,360 for men and \$1,104 for women.
- Average monthly family benefits for December 2018 were \$2,503 for a widowed mother or father and children; \$2,168 for a disabled worker, wife, and children; and \$3,032 for a retired worker, wife, and children.
- Total OASDI benefit payments for calendar year 2018 were \$988.6 billion. Payments from the OASI trust fund were \$844.9 billion—an increase of 5.8 percent from the \$798.7 billion paid in 2017.
- Benefit payments from the DI trust fund, from which benefits are paid to disabled workers, their spouses, and children, increased by 0.7 percent from \$142.8 billion in 2017 to \$143.7 billion in 2018.
- OASDI benefit awards in calendar year 2018 totaled 5,597,369, including 3,082,080 to retired workers, 585,178 to their spouses and children, and 890,530 to survivors of insured workers. Benefits were awarded to 686,723 disabled workers and to 352,858 of their spouses and children.

Supplemental Security Income

Annual Payment Adjustments

Monthly federal benefit rate, effective January 2019

Individual living in his or her own household	\$771
Couple with both members eligible	\$1,157

Cost-of-living adjustment 2.8 percent

Program Data

Federally administered payments

Benefits paid in 2018	\$54.8 billion
Number of recipients, December 2018	8.1 million
Average benefit, December 2018	\$550.86

Federal SSI payments

Benefits paid in 2018	\$52.2 billion
Number of recipients, December 2018	8.0 million
Average benefit, December 2018	\$534.67

Federally administered state supplementation

Benefits paid in 2018	\$2.6 billion
Number of recipients, December 2018	^a 1.5 million
Average benefit, December 2018	\$145.53

a. Includes almost 1.5 million persons receiving federal SSI and state supplementation and almost 0.2 million persons receiving state supplementation only.

Program Trends

- In December 2018, 8,128,652 persons received federally administered SSI payments—99,024 fewer than the previous year. Of the total, 2,266,380 (27.9 percent) were aged 65 or older; 4,714,234 (58.0 percent) were blind or disabled aged 18–64; and 1,148,038 (14.1 percent) were blind or disabled under age 18.
- The number of blind or disabled aged 18–64 declined by 90,878 (1.9 percent) between December 2017 and December 2018, and the number under age 18 decreased by 34,555 (2.9 percent).
- During 2018, 718,069 persons were awarded federally administered payments, a decrease of 47,975 from the previous year. Of the 2018 awards, 460,289 went to blind or disabled recipients aged 18–64, 156,755 to those blind or disabled under age 18, and 101,025 to recipients aged 65 or older.
- Total federally administered SSI payments were \$54.8 billion in 2018, up 0.6 percent from 2017. Federal SSI payments in 2018 were \$52.2 billion (an increase of 0.7 percent over the previous year). Federally administered state supplementation totaled \$2.6 billion.

Poverty Data

Weighted average poverty thresholds, 2018

Individual, aged 65 or older	\$12,043
Couple, householder aged 65 or older	\$15,193
Family of four	\$25,701