



# Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for Non-Citizens

## Who can get Supplemental Security Income?

Generally, to be eligible for SSI as a non-citizen, you must be in one of certain alien classifications granted by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Therefore, you may be eligible for SSI if you are:

- Lawfully admitted for permanent residence;
- Granted conditional entry;
- Paroled into the United States;
- Admitted as a refugee;
- Granted asylum;
- An alien whose removal is being withheld;
- A Cuban or Haitian Entrant;
- Admitted as an Amerasian Immigrant; or
- Admitted as an Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant.

In addition to being in one of the above classifications, you must also satisfy one of these requirements to be eligible for SSI as a non-citizen:

- You were lawfully residing in the United States on Aug. 22, 1996, and you're blind or disabled; or
- You were receiving SSI on Aug. 22, 1996, and you're lawfully residing in the United States; or
- You were lawfully admitted for permanent residence and you have a total of 40 credits of work in the United States. (Your spouse's or parent's work also may count); or
- You're a veteran or active duty member of the United States Armed Forces, or a spouse or dependent of a veteran or active duty member of the United States Armed Forces; or
- You're an American Indian born in Canada; or
- You're a non-citizen member of a federally recognized Indian tribe; or
- You're a victim of severe forms of human trafficking.

There are others who may be eligible for payments. If you're a non-citizen and want to apply for SSI benefits, contact us to see if you're eligible.

**NOTE:** *If you entered the United States on or after Aug. 22, 1996, then you may not be eligible for SSI for the first five years as a lawfully admitted permanent resident, even if you have 40 credits of earnings.*

## Seven-year limit for some non-citizens

Some non-citizens can get SSI for up to seven years. If your SSI payments are limited to seven years because of your particular non-citizen status, we'll send a letter to you telling you when your seven-year period ends. We'll send another letter explaining your rights to appeal before we stop your payments.

If you're a current or former SSI recipient subject to SSI eligibility under the seven-year time limit, and you've applied for citizenship, we encourage you to contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to find out how to:

- Expedite processing of your pending naturalization (N-400) or adjustment of status (I-485) application; and
- Waive fees for the cost associated with filing these applications.

You (or your representative) may call USCIS toll-free at **1-800-375-5283** (wait for the SSI option on the main menu) or **1-800-767-1833** (TTY) if you're deaf or hard of hearing, and request expedited processing. You also may request expedited processing in writing or by going to the local USCIS office. Be sure to tell them that you're a **current or former** SSI recipient. To learn more, contact your local USCIS office, or visit the USCIS website at [www.USCIS.gov/feewaiver](http://www.USCIS.gov/feewaiver).

## Credits of work

A person's work history determines his or her eligibility for Social Security benefits, as well as SSI eligibility for some non-citizens. A person earns work credits based on the amount of money earned. The amount needed to earn a work credit goes up slightly each year as average earnings levels increase.

For Social Security benefits, a person can earn a maximum of four credits per year based on their own earnings. A non-citizen also can receive additional credits per year based on the work of a spouse or parent.

Work credits remain on a person's work record indefinitely. The extra work credits from a spouse or parent help toward eligibility but aren't posted to a non-citizen's work record and aren't counted to determine the amount of benefits. For more information, visit our website, [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) and read our publication, *How You Earn Credits* (Publication No. 05-10072).

## We need proof of your status

When you apply for SSI, you must prove your non-citizen status. Non-citizens who've served in the U.S. armed forces may also need to give us proof of military service. These are examples of things you may need to provide:

- As proof of your non-citizen status — a current Form I-94 (arrival/departure record), or I-551 (lawful permanent resident card) from DHS or an order from an immigration judge withholding deportation or granting asylum; or
- As proof of military service — U.S. military discharge papers (DD Form 214) showing honorable discharge not based on your non-citizen status.

Your local Social Security office can tell you what other types of evidence you can submit to prove your status.

## Information about Medicaid

If you have Medicaid coverage based on your SSI, your Medicaid should continue as long as you get SSI.

## You can file a new claim

If your SSI payments stop because you're not an eligible non-citizen, you can apply again. Contact us right away if your immigration status changes, or if you become a U.S. citizen, and you think you qualify, or you have 40 credits of work. You'll need to bring us your naturalization certificate or other documents that show your current immigration status.

## If you have a sponsor

When you entered the United States, you may have had someone sign an agreement to provide support for you. This agreement is called an affidavit of support, and the person who signed it is called your sponsor.

We count a portion of your sponsor's and his or her spouse's income and resources as yours from the time you came to the United States. Your local Social Security office can give you more information about these rules, and about what they mean to you.

## Social Security numbers

If you're a lawfully admitted non-citizen with permission to work in the United States, you may need a Social Security number. For more information, visit our website [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) and read our publication, *Social Security Numbers for Non-Citizens* (Publication No. 05-10096).

## Becoming a citizen

To learn more about how to become a United States citizen, call USCIS toll-free at **1-800-375-5283** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call the TTY number, **1-800-767-1833**). You also can contact your local USCIS office, or visit them online at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

## Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to contact us from anywhere, on any device, is to visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). There are several things you can do online: apply for benefits; get useful information; find publications; and get answers to frequently asked questions.

When you open a *my* Social Security account, you have more capabilities. You can review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, and print a benefit verification letter. You can also change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, request a replacement Social Security card (if you have no changes and your state participates), and get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S.

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

A member of our staff can answer your call from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, if you need to speak to a person. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience a high rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.



Securing today  
and tomorrow

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