

# What Prisoners Should Know About Social Security



**S**ocial Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments generally are not payable for months that you are confined to a jail, prison or certain other public institutions for commission of a crime. And, you are not eligible for Social Security or SSI payments automatically when you are released.

## Who can get Social Security benefits?

Social Security disability benefits can be paid to people who have recently worked and paid Social Security taxes and are unable to work because of a serious medical condition that is expected to last at least a year or result in death. The fact that a person is a recent parolee or is unemployed does not qualify as a disability. No benefits are payable for months you are in a jail, prison or other correctional facility or certain other public institutions.

Social Security retirement benefits can be paid to people who are 62 or older. Generally, you must have worked and paid Social Security taxes for 10 years to be eligible. Benefits are not paid for the months you have been sentenced to a jail, prison or correctional facility or confined to certain public institutions for committing a crime.

Although you cannot receive monthly Social Security benefit payments while you are confined, your spouse or children can be paid benefits on your record if they are eligible.

And if you have worked and paid Social Security taxes, survivors benefits also may be paid to certain family members in the event of your death.

## Who can get SSI payments?

SSI payments can be paid to people who are 65 or older, or who are blind or disabled and whose income and resources are below certain limits. No benefits are payable for any month throughout which you reside in a jail, prison or certain other public institutions.

When you are ready to be released, contact Social Security to apply for SSI so that an SSI payment can be made right after your release if you meet all the requirements.

## If you think you qualify for benefits

In all cases, if you think you may qualify for Social Security or SSI payments, you should contact Social Security to apply for benefits.

## Contacting Social Security

For more information, visit our website at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or call toll-free **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer specific questions and provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.



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