

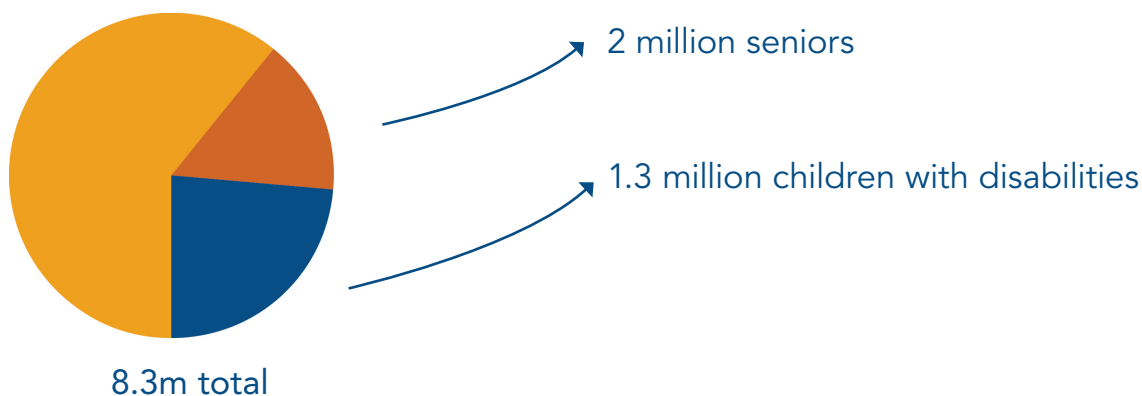
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, is a federal safety net program that provides a very basic income to older adults and people with disabilities who have little-to-no other income or resources. With a rapidly aging population and rising income inequality, the nation's senior population is becoming larger and poorer. SSI is now more important than ever to people in every community around the country.

Who SSI Helps

The SSI program provides vital assistance to low-income seniors

Low-income people over age 65 or with disabilities are the only individuals eligible for SSI. 8.3 million people rely on SSI benefits, including over 2 million seniors and almost 1.3 million children with significant disabilities.

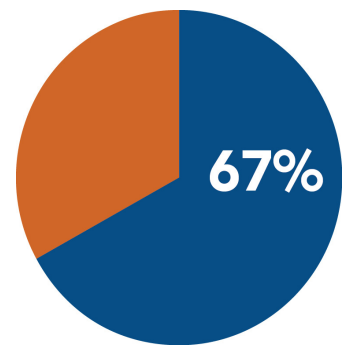


**1.1
million**

Over half of all seniors who receive SSI benefits also receive Social Security benefits based on their work history. More than 1.1 million seniors receiving SSI received enough credits for their work to qualify them for a small amount of Social Security benefits. They may have earned low, irregular wages, or spent time as unpaid family caregivers. These seniors rely on both SSI and Social Security to avoid deep poverty.

Women make up the majority of SSI recipients

Most SSI recipients are women—53% of all SSI recipients and 67% of older SSI recipients. Women are disproportionately reliant on SSI because they are more likely to have spent time out of the workforce caring for their families, or to have worked in low-wage or part-time jobs, or in jobs where they did not receive Social Security credits.



About two-thirds of older SSI recipients are women

How SSI Works

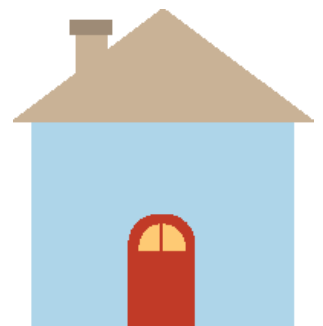
SSI helps seniors escape deep poverty, although many still live below the poverty level

\$735
per month

In 2017, the maximum SSI federal benefit is \$735 per month, or 73% of the federal poverty level. The average SSI benefit, however, is only \$435 for seniors. SSI benefits are reduced when recipients have other income. Even when including income from other sources such as Social Security or a pension, a person receiving SSI is likely living below the federal poverty level.

SSI reduces homelessness

SSI benefits can be used to pay for rent, utilities, property taxes, home repair, and other basic costs that allow people to remain in their homes. SSI also provides reliable income to secure a lease. **SSI benefits often mean the difference between an elderly woman having a home versus surviving on the streets.**



SSI benefits support local communities

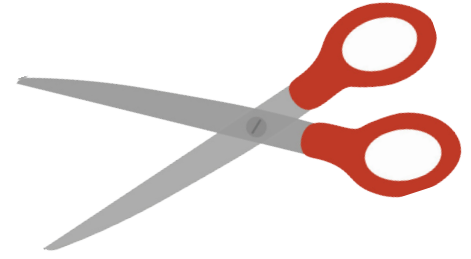
People who receive SSI spend the money on their basic, immediate expenses, such as food and shelter. It also supports grandparents, who are the cornerstone of many families. Because of this, SSI benefits go directly into the local communities where SSI recipients live.

With 10,000 people turning 65 every day in America, and an increasing number of people retiring without sufficient resources, it is imperative that we not only protect the SSI program but also improve, update, and expand it.

Protecting and Strengthening SSI

SSI is in danger of significant cuts

Members of Congress have circulated a number of proposals that would make significant cuts to the SSI program and hurt millions of seniors.



- Block grants would limit the amount of money available for SSI and allow states to spend that money on other programs. If weakened by block grants, the SSI program will be hard to defend from those who would cut it entirely, **leaving our most vulnerable citizens without the support they need to survive.**
- We have already seen proposals that would restrict the classes of people eligible for SSI. Such measures **take critical benefits away from seniors and people with disabilities** and attempt to pit vulnerable groups against each other.

The SSI program needs to be strengthened

SSI is a highly-targeted program meant to help those most in need, but some of the rules and requirements are outdated and have not kept up with current economic realities. **Rising costs for necessities like housing and health care mean that SSI recipients are pushed further into poverty every year.**

- A low resource limit prevents SSI recipients from saving more than \$2,000 (or \$3,000 for a couple). This means SSI recipients cannot save for property taxes, a new roof, or a needed car repair without losing their monthly benefits, leaving people just one emergency away from homelessness and hunger.
- SSI recipients can receive only \$20 a month from non-employment sources before their SSI benefits are cut dollar-for-dollar. This provision has not been updated in over 40 years. This means recipients are left to survive below the poverty line, even when they have income from other sources like Social Security benefits.
- SSI recipients can earn only \$65 a month from work before their SSI benefits are reduced, creating a disincentive to work for those who are able, and taking money out of the pockets of extremely low-income seniors who do work.

SSI is the only resource standing between home and homelessness for many. Without it, society's most vulnerable members—those who worked all their lives at low-wage jobs and couldn't save for retirement, lifelong caregivers from low-income households who watched over their family without pay, and those who are unable to work due to disability—would be left with no resources to enable their survival.