
Although the Social Security Administration (SSA) issues both RSDI and SSI payments, the terms are not interchangeable. Both programs are funded and administered by the federal government but have different purposes and eligibility requirements.

RSDI payments are funded by payroll taxes. Payments are made to people who retire, become disabled for an extended period, or who are dependents of a wage earner who has died. The amount of the payment is based on the earnings and payroll taxes of the qualifying person. Most retired people also qualify for Medicare. Disabled people qualify for Medicare after they have been continuously disabled for at least 2 years. People under 65 who receive survivors' benefits do not qualify for Medicare.

EXAMPLE:

Herb retires at age 65. He and his employer made social security payments on his behalf for 40 years. His 66-year-old wife did not work outside the home. Both receive RSDI retirement benefits based on Herb's earnings and social security contributions. Both are eligible for Medicare. Herb and his wife are ineligible for MinnesotaCare because they are covered by Medicare. See §0910 (Other Health Coverage). They may qualify for MA.

EXAMPLE:

Laura became unable to work due to a disability 12 months ago. She and her employer made social security payments on her behalf for 15 years. Laura receives social security disability payments. If she is still disabled 24 months after her disability payments began, she will qualify for Medicare. Advise Laura to report Medicare benefits when she becomes eligible for them.

EXAMPLE:

Anna died after she and her employer made social security payments on her behalf for 10 years. Her surviving spouse, Ken, receives survivor's benefits for their 3 children. He is employed and does not receive benefits for himself. Neither Ken nor the children qualify for Medicare. For MinnesotaCare, count the full amount of RSDI benefits as unearned income to the household. For MA, count the full amount of RSDI benefits each child receives as unearned income for that child.

SSI payments are made to people who are:

- > Over 65.
- OR
- > Disabled.
- OR
- > Blind.

AND

> Who do not qualify for RSDI payments because they have not made payments to the RSDI system.

OR

> Whose RSDI payments are less than the SSI income standard.

People must be within SSI income and asset limits to qualify for payment. Income and assets of responsible household members (spouses and parents of minor children) are counted in determining eligibility and payment amount. However, responsible household members are not included in the payment unless they are also elderly, disabled, or blind and meet SSI income and asset requirements.

SSI recipients do not automatically qualify for Medicare. However, DHS may purchase Medicare benefits for them through the Buy-In. See §0910.05.05 (Medicare Premium Payment).

Most SSI recipients qualify for MA without a spenddown.

If you are unsure what type of payment an applicant/enrollee receives, review the social security claim number. The first part of the claim number is the social security number (SSN) of the wage earner on whose account claims are being paid. If the person receiving benefits is a dependent of the wage earner, the claim number SSN will not be the same as the SSN of the person receiving benefits.

EXAMPLE:

Mildred receives survivor's benefits on the account of her deceased husband, Milton. The first part of the claim number is 444-33-2222. Mildred's SSN is 444-34-5555. The claim number is based on Milton's SSN, not Mildred's.

The suffix following the claim number SSN is usually a letter which may or may not be followed by a digit. The suffix indicates what type of benefits the claimant receives. The Social Security Administration publishes a reference guide which identifies claim types by suffix.

MinnesotaCare:

Count the gross amount of RSDI and SSI payments as unearned income to the household.

EXAMPLE:

Bob is disabled and did not work long enough to qualify for RSDI disability payments. He receives SSI of \$470 per month based on his and his wife Agnes's assets and Agnes's earnings from part-time employment. Bob is not eligible for Medicare and receives MA. Agnes is not elderly, disabled, or blind. They apply for MinnesotaCare for Agnes. Count Agnes's earnings and Bob's SSI to determine eligibility.

Many RSDI beneficiaries have their Medicare Part B premiums deducted from the RSDI check. Count the amount before the Part B payment is deducted. See §0911.09.15.03 (Determining Gross RSDI).

EXAMPLE:

Mildred is retired and receives an RSDI check for \$683. \$78.20 is deducted for Medicare Part B. Mildred's countable RSDI benefit is \$761, the amount to which she is entitled before deductions.

The Medicare premium amount changes annually. If someone reports that they receive RSDI, check to see if they are also covered by Medicare Part B. If so, add the current Medicare premium to the amount of the RSDI check the person actually receives. Consider the availability of Medicare in determining the person's MinnesotaCare eligibility. See §0910 (Other Health Coverage).

MA/GAMC:

See §0911.09.15.01 (Income From RSDI and SSI--MA/GAMC).