



## Introduction to Social Security Disability Benefits

Social Security Advocacy Services (SSAS) Team

# Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Payable to adults and children who are disabled
- Limited income and assets
  - \$2,000 for individuals
  - \$3,000 for couples
  - Parent applying for a child, increase by \$2,000
- 2023 monthly amount: \$914/individual and \$1,371/couple
  - Benefit may be reduced
- Medicaid eligibility (Medical Assistance)

# Social Security Disability Insurance

- Also known as SSDI or RSDI
- Payable to adults who are disabled and are “insured”
- No limits on income and assets
- Amount is based on Social Security taxes paid
- Auxiliary child payments
- Medicare eligibility (federal medical insurance)

# Social Security's definition of adult disability

- Age 18 and over; and
- Physical, mental, or combination of medical conditions; and
- Has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months or result in death; and
- Unable to work Substantial Gainful Activity
  - 2023: \$1,470/month

# Social Security's definition of child disability

- Age 17 or younger; and
- Physical, mental, or combination of medical conditions; and
- Causes marked and severe functional limitations; and
- Has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months or result in death
- Only eligible to apply for an SSI benefit
  - Household income and assets apply

# For a finding of disability

- Adults
  - Meets a medical listing; or
  - Unable to do past work; and
  - Unable to do other work
- Children
  - Meets medical listing; or
  - Functionally equals a medical listing

# Disability documentation

- Medical records
- Laboratory reports
- Diagnostic reports
- Mental health therapy records
- Physical health therapy records
- Hospital records
- Emergency room records
- In-patient treatment records
- Out-patient treatment records
- Social service assessments
- Case management notes
- Vocational rehabilitation records
- Functional evaluations
- School records



Identifying potential referrals

# Is my client ready to apply?

- What medical conditions have you been diagnosed with?
- Are you currently seeing a medical provider for your conditions?
- Are you taking medications prescribed by a medical provider?
- Are you following your prescribed treatment plan?
- Have you been hospitalized in the past year?

# Additional questions

- Does your conditions limit your activities of daily living?
- Have your medical providers restricted you from doing an activity?
- Are you receiving any waiver services?
- Have you been certified disabled by the State Medical Review Team (SMRT)?
- Are you working?
- In the past year, have you applied for Social Security disability?

# Why do people get denied?

- No current medical documentation or lack of medical treatment
- Self-denial of disability
- Complexity of application
- Disconnect between the experience of homelessness and the disability application process
- Inconsistencies in application
- Lack of follow through
- Not providing all medical, treatment, and service providers who provide care for condition
- Co-occurring mental health and chemical dependency disorders not addressed
- Able to do other types of work
- Child functional limitations are not marked or extreme



# Combined Manual Policies

# Applying for Other Benefits

## CM 0012.12 Applying for other Benefits – SSI and RSDI

- Required to apply for SSI and/or RSDI.
- Must apply within 30 days of being told to apply.
- Deny or terminate benefits if a client fails to apply without a good cause.
- Must follow through with appealing an SSA denial.
- DWP clients applying for SSI/RSDI should be converted to MFIP.

# Good cause for not applying for SSI or RSDI

- Circumstances beyond the persons control that prevent them from submitting an application for SSI and/or RSDI or appealing their denial.
- [Bulletin #22-69-01C](#) Referring applicants or participants to apply for Social Security benefits.
  - Page 5 and 6 provides examples of when good cause should be granted.
- Enter a case note in Maxis if a good cause exemption is granted or additional time is granted to apply for benefits.

# Special Services - Applying for Social Security

## CM 0012.12.06

- Workers are required to screen clients to identify who should apply for SSA benefits.
- Explain why a client must apply and what happens if they do not apply.
- Provide referrals to an advocate or other service provider if additional help is needed.
- Track the status of a client's SSA application in Case Notes.
- Provide priority response to SSA staff when DHS inquires about a client's SSA claim.
- Make other benefit adjustments when client becomes eligible for SSI.

# Family Stabilization Services (FSS)

## CM 0011.34

- Are applying for SSI/RSDI including those who are appealing their denial of SSI/RSDI.
- Are age 60 or older.
- Have been diagnosed by a qualified professional as developmentally disabled or mentally ill and the condition severely limits their ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- Have been assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be unemployable.
- Has an IQ below 80 AND the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- Was determined to be learning disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.



# Social Security Advocacy Services

[CM 0012.12.06](#)

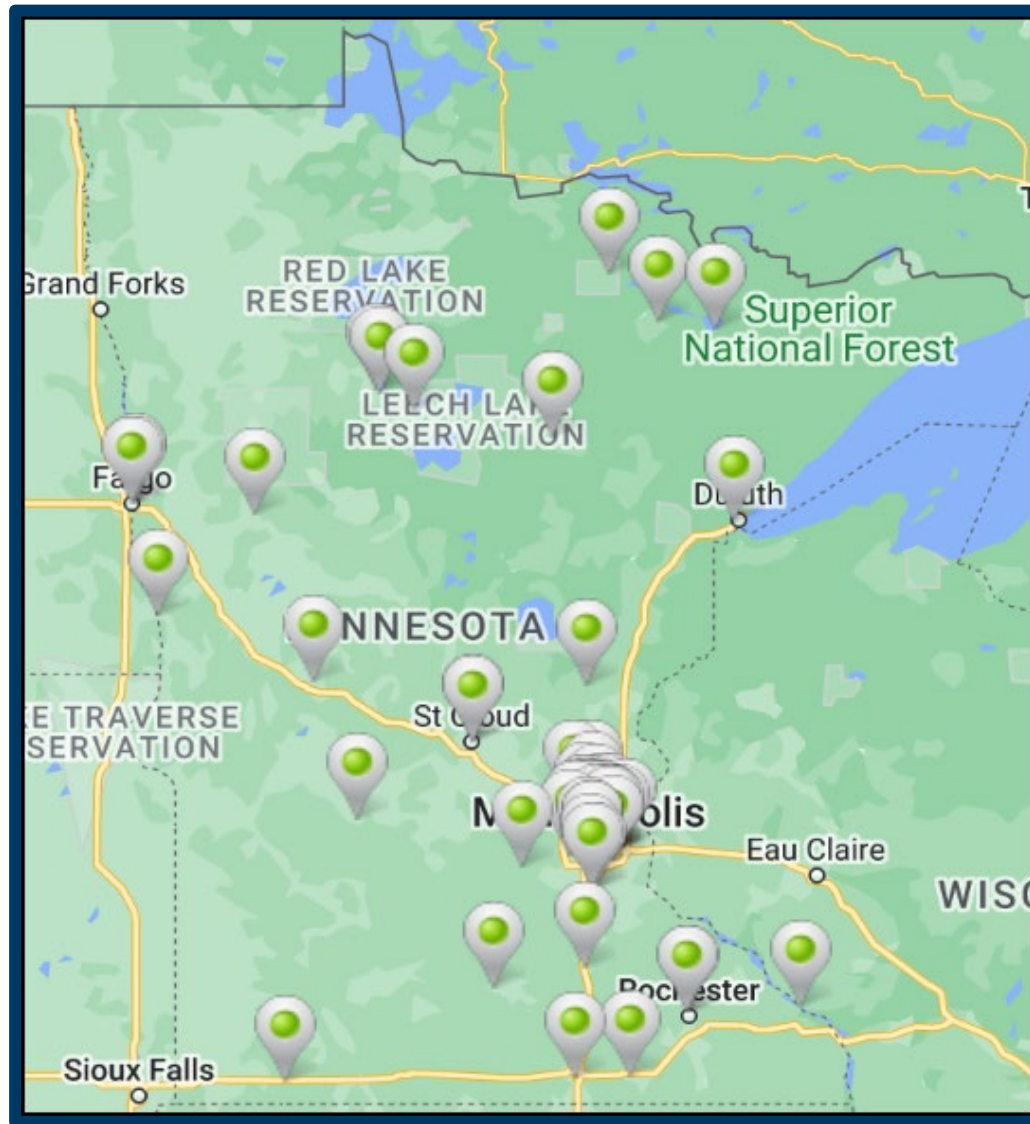
# How advocates can help

- Answer questions about SSA processes, rules, eligibility, etc.
- Conduct screenings and intake assessments.
- Act as an Authorized Representative with the Social Security Administration.
- Help fill out forms and talk with Social Security staff.
- File applications and appeals.
- Represent clients at hearings.

For-profits

Nonprofits

Legal Aids



Counties

Tribal Nations

State agencies

# Contracted Social Security Advocates

# Who is eligible for DHS' free services?

Social Security Advocacy Services are available for free to:

- Children and adults between the ages of birth and 65;
- Have a disability which has lasted or will last for 12 months or longer;
- Live in Minnesota; and
- Are currently homeless OR at risk for homelessness.

# Homeless and At Risk for Homeless Definitions...

## Homeless

- Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- Not on a lease
- Living doubled up
- Fleeing domestic violence

## At Risk for Homelessness

- Recipient of state cash benefits
- Behind in rent/mortgage/utilities
- Recipient of a housing subsidy program:
  - Public housing or Housing Support
  - Section 8 or 811

# Resources

## DHS Social Security Advocacy Services

- Phone: 1-651-431-6271
- [DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us)
- [Public website](#)
- [Online directory](#)

## Disability Hub MN

- Phone: 1-866-333-2466
- [Public website](#)

## LinkVet

- Phone: 1-888-546-5838
- [Public website](#)

## Social Security Administration

- Phone: 1-800-772-1213
- [Online office locator](#)
- [Online services](#)
- [my SSA Account](#)

# Thank you!

Jennifer Youngstrom – *SSAS Tribal and Northern Minnesota Coordinator*

Jill Hillebregt – *SSAS and IAR Supervisor*

[DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us)