

Social Security Administration Announces New Efforts to Simplify SSI Applications

“People in our communities who need this crucial safety net deserve the dignity of an application process that is less burdensome and more accessible than what we now have, and we’re committed to achieving that vision over the next few years.”

On August 27, 2024, the Social Security Administration announced a large step in a multi-year effort to simplify processes for people who are applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) by starting to offer an online, streamlined application for some applicants starting in December. SSI provides monthly payments to people with disabilities and older adults who have little or no income and resources.

The initial step – known as iClaim expansion – aims to establish a fully online, simplified iClaim application that leverages user-tested, plain-language questions, prepopulated answers where possible, seamless step-by-step transitions, and more. The online application aims to reduce the time spent applying as well as the processing time for initial claim decisions.

“Over the past year, we have asked many applicants and advocates – as well as our workforce –how we could make the SSI application process easier and simpler. Now, we are taking an important first step to do just that,” said Martin O’Malley, Commissioner of Social Security.

The rollout of the iClaim expansion will generally be available to first-time applicants between 18 and almost 65 who never married and are concurrently applying for Social Security benefits and

SSI. A goal of the second phase – currently targeted for late 2025 – is to expand this to all applicants.

The Federal Register Notice that supports this effort was published today and reflects changes based on what Social Security previously received. **To read it, please visit Federal Register: Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Request.**

Subsequent SSI simplification steps will incorporate lessons learned from the iClaim expansion into in-person, phone, mobile, and paper-based processes for SSI applications. As part of that, the agency plans to develop a separate simplified child SSI application.

All of these efforts will support and streamline the way Social Security's staff technicians and applicants work together, providing an applicant journey that reflects continuous feedback gathered from the agency's Customer Experience team, particularly from underserved communities.