



Adult SSI/SSDI Starter Guide

A simple first step before you begin your application

Clear information • Simple checklists • One step at a time

1 Start with the basics

An adult claim asks how your health limits your ability to work. Keep your answers clear, honest, and consistent.

- ✓ Write down every physical and mental health condition that limits you.
- ✓ List the dates, addresses, and phone numbers for your doctors, clinics, and hospitals.
- ✓ Gather your medicine names, who prescribed them, and why you take them.
- ✓ List your jobs from the past 15 years and what you did at each job.

3 Keep a claim folder

Use one paper folder or one digital folder for everything about your claim.

- ✓ Save copies of forms, letters, medical records, and appointment notes.
- ✓ Write down call dates and the name of each person you spoke with.
- ✓ Open your mail right away. Some notices have short deadlines.
- ✓ Tell Social Security if your address or phone number changes.

2 Describe your limits

A diagnosis tells what you have. Your day-to-day limits show how the condition affects you.

- ✓ Think about sitting, standing, walking, lifting, reaching, remembering, and staying focused.
- ✓ Use real examples. Explain what happened, how often it happens, and how long it lasts.
- ✓ Do not guess. If you do not know an exact date, say it is your best estimate.
- ✓ Do not leave out hard days, but do not make every day sound the same if it is not.

Your next step

Use this guide to gather your basic facts. The full application asks for more detail. Guided tools can help you stay organized and avoid missed steps.

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