

Spotlight on American Indians and Alaska Native Provisions



Securing today
and tomorrow

Can you apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability (SSDI), Medicaid or Medicare at your Tribal Social Services Office?

Yes, you can apply for benefits in your Tribal Social Services Office. If there are no Social Security Administration (SSA) personnel available on site, your Tribal Social Services Office can help you fill out the SSA forms and collect the information you need to complete them.

You can also:

- Apply online at www.ssa.gov/applyforbenefits;
- Call our toll-free number, **1-800-772-1213**, to make an appointment to file a claim at your local Social Security office or to set up an appointment for someone to take your claim over the telephone; and
- Visit [your local Social Security Field Office](#) to file.

What income and resources do I need to report if I receive SSI benefits?

You need to report all of your income and resources to Social Security so we can calculate the correct amount of your SSI check, if you are eligible. Income is any item you receive, in cash or in-kind, that can be used to meet the basic needs of food or shelter. We do not count all income for SSI, but the income that we do count reduces the amount of your SSI check. Resources are things you own such as cash, bank accounts, vehicles, property, or anything else you own, and can sell or convert into cash. We do not count all resources, but the resources we do count may affect your SSI eligibility.

These are some common types of income and resources tribal members must report:

- Per capita payments received from your tribe or from funds held in trust by the Secretary of Interior;
- Distributions from Alaska native villages or village corporations;
- Distribution of Settlement or Judgement Funds (e.g., Tribal Trust Accounting and Management Settlement payments);
- [All Tribal program payments \(e.g., Elder care payments\)](#). The factors of eligibility used to determine eligibility to any tribal program payment must be provided to SSA to determine if the payment is countable or excluded as [Assistance Based on Need \(ABON\)](#);
- [Interest of Individual Indians in Trust or Restricted Lands](#)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Individual Indian Money Accounts (IIM) and revenue distributions; and

- [Trusts Established under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act \(IGRA Trust\)](#)
You can find more information using the following links:
 - » [Information on Trusts](#)
 - » [Trusts established with the assets of an individual on or after 1/1/2000](#)
 - » [Achieving a Better Life Experience Act \(ABLE\)](#)

Not all income and resources are counted against you. The following are some of the exclusion we will consider, when determining your SSI eligibility and payment amount:

- [Indian-Related Exclusions](#);
- [SSI Income and Resource Exclusions](#);
- [What is NOT income for SSI purposes](#);
- [Support and Maintenance Assistance](#); and
- [Exclusion from Resources; provided by other statutes](#).

You need to report changes in income or resources to Social Security as soon as possible, but no later than the [10th day](#) after the month in which there is a change.

Can I go to my Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program to use my Ticket to Work?

Yes, if your tribe has a vocational rehabilitation program, you can use your Ticket there or through another employment network (EN) provider. Although all Tribal VR programs are automatically eligible to become EN service providers, there are currently only three Tribal VR programs operating as EN providers who can accept a Ticket: the Jemez Pueblo, the Moapa Band of Paiute, and the Eastern Shoshone Tribes. You can find more information online about Social Security's [Ticket to Work](#) program.

Can I use Medicare and Medicaid for medical services at an Indian Health Service (IHS) clinic or reservation hospital?

Yes, you can use Medicare and Medicaid at an IHS clinic or reservation hospital for medical services the Indian Health Service does not cover. The [Indian Health Service \(IHS\)](#) is the “[payor of last resort](#)” so individuals must apply for all alternate resources available including Medicare and Medicaid. IHS [provides health care](#) and disease prevention services to [eligible applicants](#) through a network of hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and contractors, during the 24 month waiting period for Disability Beneficiaries. You can find more information using the following links:

- [CMS American Indian/Alaska Native Center](#)
- [VIDEO: The Role of CMS in Indian Health Care](#)
- [Medicare – Items and Services Furnished by a Federal Provider of Services or Federal Agency](#)
- [Medicare is the primary payer and the IHS the secondary payer](#)
- [Indian Health & Medicaid](#)