



Program Data

Social Security

The Social Security program—Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI)—provides monthly benefits to workers and their families when the worker retires, dies, or becomes disabled. The amount of the worker's retirement insurance (old-age) or disability benefit is based on the worker's level of earnings in employment or self-employment covered by the Social Security program. Monthly benefits are payable to retired workers at age 62 (with reduced benefits) or to disabled workers at any age. The benefit amount for an auxiliary or survivor beneficiary is based on a percentage of the worker's benefit. Auxiliary and survivor beneficiaries must generally meet an age, disability, or child care requirement.

A total of 47,053,140 persons received benefits for December 2003. This number included 29,547,530 retired workers, 4,898,040 widows and widowers, 5,867,460 disabled workers, 2,773,630 wives and husbands, and 3,966,480 children. Social Security beneficiaries represented 15.8 percent of the total population and 90.8 percent of the population aged 65 or older.

Retired workers received an average monthly benefit of \$922; widows and widowers, \$866 (nondisabled widows and widowers, \$888); disabled workers, \$862; and wives and husbands of retired and disabled workers, \$450. Average benefits for children of retired, deceased, and disabled workers were \$446, \$603, and \$254, respectively.

Monthly benefits for December 2003 totaled \$39.6 billion. Of this amount, \$28.7 billion was paid to retired workers and their spouses and children, \$5.4 billion to survivors, and \$5.5 billion to disabled workers and their spouses and children. Average and total monthly benefits include the 2.1 percent cost-of-living increase effective December 2003.

In Louisiana, benefits were paid to 731,080 persons. This number included 373,300 retired workers, 105,980 widows and widowers, 103,980 disabled workers, 59,250 wives and husbands, and 88,570 children. Social Security beneficiaries represented 16.3 percent of

the total population of the state and 90.4 percent of the state's population aged 65 or older.

Retired workers in Louisiana received an average of \$858 per month; widows and widowers, \$797; disabled workers, \$855; and wives and husbands of retired and disabled workers, \$423. Average benefits for children were \$399 for children of retired workers, \$548 for children of deceased workers, and \$242 for children of disabled workers.

Monthly benefits for December 2003 totaled \$555 million. Of this amount, \$348 million was paid to retired workers and their spouses and children, \$108 million to survivors, and \$99 million to disabled workers and their spouses and children.

Supplemental Security Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal cash assistance program that provides monthly payments to low-income aged, blind, and disabled persons in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The program is based on nationally uniform eligibility standards and payment levels. The federal SSI payment is determined by the recipient's countable income, living arrangement, and marital status. As of January 2004, the maximum monthly federal SSI payment for an individual living in his or her own household and with no other countable income is \$564, and for a couple, \$846.

A state may supplement the payment levels of all or selected categories of recipients. These supplemental payments may be administered by the state or the Social Security Administration.

In December 2003, 6,902,364 persons received federally administered SSI payments: 1,232,778 were aged and 5,669,586 were disabled or blind. A total of 1,989,737 recipients were aged 65 or older, 3,953,248 were aged 18 to 64, and 959,379 were under 18.

The total number of persons receiving a Social Security payment, a federally administered SSI payment, or both was 51,534,142. Federally administered payments totaled \$3.1 billion in December 2003: \$2.7 billion in federal SSI payments and \$357 million in state supplements. The average federally administered payment was \$417. Aged persons averaged \$342, and disabled and blind persons, \$433.

In addition, 551,469 persons in 31 states received state-administered payments in December 2003 that totaled \$68.6 million.

In Louisiana, 167,800 persons—20,708 aged and 147,092 disabled and blind—received federally administered SSI payments in December 2003. A total of 39,397 recipients were aged 65 or older, 98,926 were aged 18 to 64, and 29,477 were under 18.

Federally administered SSI payments totaled \$67.7 million, of which all but \$5,058 was federal SSI. The average federally administered payment was \$377 overall: \$193 for aged recipients and \$403 for disabled and blind recipients. In addition, 5,044 persons in Louisiana received state-administered supplementation in December 2003 that totaled \$40,000.

In December 2003, the total number of persons in Louisiana receiving a Social Security benefit, a federally administered SSI payment, or both was 840,165.

Earnings and Employment Data

Social Security

Nationally, in 2002, the latest year for which state data are available, an estimated 153.8 million persons worked in employment that was covered under the Social Security (Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) and Disability Insurance (DI)) program. They earned \$4.2 trillion in Social Security taxable earnings. Employees, employers, and the self-employed paid a total of \$526 billion in Social Security taxes to the OASI and DI trust funds.

In Louisiana in 2002, an estimated 2.11 million residents worked in employment covered under the Social Security program. They had \$48.58 billion in Social Security taxable earnings. Employees, employers, and the self-employed paid a total of \$6.02 billion in Social Security taxes.

Medicare

Nationally, in 2002, the latest year for which state data are available, an estimated 157.5 million persons worked in employment that was covered under the Medicare (Hospital Insurance, or HI) program. They earned \$5.1 trillion in Medicare taxable earnings. Employees, employers, and the self-employed paid a total of \$149 billion in Medicare taxes to the HI trust fund.

In Louisiana in 2002, an estimated 2.26 million residents worked in employment covered under the Medicare program. They had \$60 billion in Medicare taxable earnings. Employees, employers, and the self-employed paid a total of \$1.74 billion in Medicare taxes.

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SOURCE: The data are from the Social Security Administration's administrative files. Program data for Social Security are from the Master Beneficiary Record, 10 percent sample; data for SSI are from the Supplemental Security Record, 100 percent data, and data reported by individual states; earnings and employment data are from the Master Earnings File, 1 percent sample.

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