

## How to Qualify for Social Security Disability Benefits if You are a Non-Citizen

Social Security benefits are payments made out by the [Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#) for those who are unable to work because of disability. Even though it's a program run by the United States government, Social Security benefits can be available to non-U.S. citizens. If awarded, they can be used to pay for prescription medication, medical bills, as well as any other day-to-day living needs. If you or someone you know is a non-citizen and cannot work due to a disability, there are resources out there for help. Non-citizens may be able to qualify in the following ways:

### How to Qualify for SSDI Benefits

[Social Security Disability Insurance \(SSDI\)](#) provides income to those who are unable to work due to a mental or physical disability, such as anxiety or osteoarthritis. To qualify, you must have a sufficient amount of [work credits](#). The amount of work credits needed to qualify for SSDI benefits depends on how old you are and how many years you worked. Your disability must also be [severe enough](#) that you will be out of work for at least 12 months and you must have paid into the Social Security payroll tax and you need to be deemed disabled by the SSA.

If you have a Green Card, you can qualify for SSDI Benefits. You must be able to satisfy the technical and medical eligibility requirements for Social Security Disability Insurance, as well as:

- You must have a Social Security Number that was assigned after 2004, that allows you work legally in the U.S.
- You must have an appropriate VISA: D-1, D-2, or B-1

### How to Qualify for SSI Benefits

[Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\)](#) provides benefits to individuals who have a disability with very low income. People of all ages, including children are eligible for SSI benefits. Like SSDI, the Social Security Administration must deem you as disabled, but the biggest difference is for SSI, there is no work history required. Having said that, income limitation for SSI recipients are very strict. Qualifying for SSI benefits if you are non-citizen is a little bit more complex than SSDI. One must be able to meet the technical and medical eligibility requirements, as well as:

- You must meet one of the “predefined conditions or circumstances” for eligibility
- You must be a “qualified alien”

## Eligibility Requirements for “Qualified Aliens”

There are seven factors in which the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) determines who is a “qualified alien,” some of them include:

- Those who are deemed as Lawfully Admitted for Permanent Residence (LAPR)
- Those granted condition entry under Section 203(a)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) as in effect before April 1, 1980
- Those who are refugees under Section 207 of the INA; or Asylees under Section 208 of the INA

If you fall under at least one of the categories of a “qualified alien,” you may be eligible for SSI benefits. You must *also* meet one of the following conditions:

- If you are an active duty U.S. Armed Forces member or if you were honorably discharged
- If you are lawfully residing in the U.S on August 22, 1996 and you are blind or disabled
- If you are a LAPR with 40 qualifying quarters of work.

The [SSA's website](#) goes into a lot more detail on eligibility and the qualification requirements for qualified aliens.

## How to Start Your Application for Social Security Benefits

The actual application process is a lot more straightforward than all eligibility requirements for non-U.S. citizens. To apply for Social Security benefits, simply go to your [local SSA office](#) and speak with a representative there. You are able to apply online at your own leisure, but only if you are applying for SSDI benefits. To schedule an appointment, you can call the SSA's toll free hotline at 1-800-772-1213.

### Resources Found Via:

<https://www.ssa.gov/>

<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/>

<https://www.ssa.gov/planners/disability/qualify.html>

<https://www.disability-benefits-help.org/glossary/severe-impairment>

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/>

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-non-citizens.htm>

<https://www.disability-benefits-help.org/social-security-disability-locations>