



OCTOBER 2020

Building a Strong SSI Application for Transition Age Youth

**GUIDE, SAMPLES, AND
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

ALLIANCE
for CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS

Preparing the SSI Application

Applicant Key Information Summary

Creating a key information summary helps organize information for the SSI application. Refer to the key information summary as you complete the forms.

[\[DOWNLOAD SUMMARY TEMPLATE \]](#) [\[SAMPLE \]](#)

Application Form Samples

Once you have created a key information summary for the applicant, use the below filled-out sample forms as a guide.

- SSA-8000 (Application for SSI)

[\[SAMPLE FORM \]](#) [\[BLANK FORM \]](#)

- SSA-3368 (Adult Disability Report)

[\[SAMPLE FORM \]](#) [\[BLANK FORM \]](#)

- SSA-3373 (Adult Function Report)

[\[SAMPLE FORM \]](#) [\[BLANK FORM \]](#)

- SSA-827 (Authorization to Disclose Information to SSA)

[\[SAMPLE FORM \]](#) [\[BLANK FORM \]](#)

- SSA-1696 (Claimant's Appointment of Representative)

[\[SAMPLE FORM \]](#) [\[BLANK FORM \]](#)

- SSA-3380 (Adult Third Party Function Report)

[\[SAMPLE FORM \]](#) [\[BLANK FORM \]](#)

- SSA-8240 (Authorization for SSA to Obtain Wage/Employment Information)

[\[SAMPLE FORM \]](#) [\[BLANK FORM \]](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility Screening

Q: When should youth in foster care be screened for SSI eligibility?

A: Recognizing the importance of SSI for TAY with disabilities, in 2007 the California Legislature passed AB 1331 creating responsibilities for county child welfare agencies. The goal is to ensure that transition age youth with special needs are provided a safe and supported transition out of foster care. **All youth must be screened before age 17.5, even if they are going to remain in foster care until age 21** using an “SSI Disability Screening Guide.”

Caseworkers should prioritize screening and referral to SSI Unit for following groups: (1) youth who are Regional Center clients; (2) youth who receive a Specialized Care Increment or Regional Center rate; and (3) youth with presumptive disabilities such as amputation, deafness, use of a wheelchair, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Intellectual Disability, or HIV/AIDS.

Welfare and Institutions Code § [13757\(a\)\(2\)](#)

Q: Why did California establish a timeline to screen between 16.5 and 17.5?

A: The timeline to screen between 16.5 and 17.5 was established to provide ample time for an application to be submitted and a determination made, but not so much time that suspense status would exceed 12 months.

Welfare and Institutions Code § [13757\(a\)\(2\)](#)

Q: Can youth remain in foster care beyond their 18th birthday through the extended foster care program and how does that impact SSI eligibility?

A: When the extended foster care program was enacted into law, the Foster Care Social Security and Supplement Income Assistance Program was amended to clarify the legislature’s intent to ensure that foster youth be able to participate in the extended foster care program but also benefit from the SSI screening and application support required in law. Specifically, the statute was amended to state: “It is the intent of the Legislature that nothing in this section shall be interpreted to preclude a nonminor dependent from accessing the same benefits, services, and supports, and exercise the same choices available to all dependents.” In addition, the statute states that: “It is further the intent of the Legislature that

individuals who have had their eligibility for federal Supplemental Security Income benefits established pursuant to Section 13757 be able to maintain that eligibility even when they remain in the state's care as a nonminor dependent. In order to facilitate this, it is the intent of the Legislature that the county child welfare agency ensure that the youth receives an SSI payment during at least one month of each 12-month period while the youth is a nonminor dependent. It is further the intent of the Legislature that the county child welfare agency supplement the SSI payment that a youth receives during this one-month period with nonfederal AFDC-FC benefits."

Welfare and Institutions Code § 13754(a)(2)

Q: Why is it so important to screen for eligibility for transition age youth?

A: Evidence used to establish SSI eligibility for a child helpful in establishing ongoing eligibility for a youth adult. Ensuring SSI is in place at age 18 provides youth maximum flexibility and choice among benefits, services and supports.

Q: What happens if a youth has not been screened for SSI eligibility before they turn 18?

A: As mentioned above, state law mandates that youth in foster care be screened for SSI eligibility before they reach 17.5 years of age, however, if a youth is not screened, they should be screened and an application should be submitted using the SSA-3368 (Adult Disability Report) and SSA-3373 (Adult Function Report).

Submitting the SSI Application

Q: Where should I start on submitting the SSI application?

A: The SSA-8000 is the cover letter to the application. It provides the basic summary information. It's important to focus on several issues specific to youth in foster care on this form:

- For date that youth/NMD was unable to work, generally this is earliest diagnosis date. But if someone was badly injured and that caused their disability, the date of the injury could predate the formal diagnosis.
- If youth/NMD lives in foster home or group home, this is "non-institutional care"- skip Qs 24 through 36
- Contact youth/NMD and caregiver to gather information about youth/NMD's assets, bank accounts, insurance policies, stocks, bonds, etc.
- Confirm if youth/NMD has employment history and if so, obtain wage and employer contact information

- Note that foster care funding is not considered “income” for purposes of SSI
- Have youth/NMD sign under Question 63

Q: What are the best practices in completing the SSA-8000?

A: Caseworkers should view themselves as the youth/NMD’s advocate throughout the SSI application process: the better the application, the better chance that SSA will approve it.

Because such a large number of initial applications are denied, it’s important to include significant detail regarding the NMD’s functional limitations that will prevent the NMD from being able to work.

Creating a key summary will make the process of completing SSI application forms much faster and will assist in tracking what forms have been completed. As the caseworker reviews the forms, watch out for any facts related to diagnoses, assessments, symptoms, medications, functional limitations, hospitalizations, services, etc.

Contacting third party providers and following up to ensure they understand the importance of completing the SSA-3380 (Adult Third Party Function Report) will help build a successful SSI application.

Q: What are the best practices in completing the Adult Disability Report?

A: The caseworker should pull up the SSI Listing that the applicant may meet when preparing the SSA-3368 (Adult Disability Report), to review the symptoms section while comparing to the listing to make sure that the application mirrors the language of the listing and supports the application.

[SSI Listings](#)

Representative Payee

Q: Can a nonminor dependent be the “payee” for the purposes of receiving SSI benefits?

A: California law requires that when a youth turns 18 and participates in Extended Foster Care, the county must provide information to the nonminor dependent on the process for becoming their own payee and assist the NMD in becoming their own payee unless it is not in the best interests of the NMD. If the NMD is not able to serve as their own payee, the county must assist the youth in finding and designating an appropriate representative payee.

Welfare and Institutions Code [§ 13754\(b\)\(2\)](#)

Q: Can the county be the “representative payee”?

A: The county should be the payee of last resort. California law (WIC 13754) provides: “The county shall apply to be appointed representative payee on behalf of a child beneficiary in its custody when no other appropriate party is available to serve.”

As a best practice, the payee should be switched to the minor youth’s caregiver or other appropriate person who is managing the youth’s finances when the minor youth exits care if the County becomes payee.

If an SSI-eligible youth isn’t eligible for federal foster care funding and is instead getting foster care funding from state/county funds, DCFS becomes representative payee and can draw down SSI funds to help cover the cost of caring for the child.

Welfare and Institutions Code § 13754