

Follow-up on Disabled Supplemental Security Income Recipients Potentially Eligible for Childhood Disability Benefits

A-13-18-50714



December 2020

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients were potentially eligible for childhood disability benefits (CDB) under the Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program.

Background

The SSI program provides cash assistance to individuals who have limited income and resources and who are age 65 or older, blind, or disabled. The OASDI program provides benefits to qualified retired and disabled workers and their dependents as well as survivors of insured workers.

According to Social Security Administration (SSA) policy, SSI “... is intended to be a program of last resort.” Therefore, it is important that the Agency assess the other benefit programs for which an individual is eligible.

An SSI recipient may be eligible for CDB as a disabled child on a wage earner’s record under the OASDI program when the recipient meets the criteria for benefits.

To conduct our review, we identified 1,017 SSI recipients who were potentially eligible for CDB from 1 of 20 segments in SSA’s system. From this population, we selected a random sample of 50 recipients for review.

Findings

Similar to our 2012 review, we identified SSI recipients who were eligible for CDB. Our analysis of 50 SSI recipients identified 22 who were potentially eligible for, and 15 potentially technically entitled to, CDB. This occurred because SSA did not always (1) develop and dispose of leads related to CDB and/or (2) identify SSI recipients eligible for CDB during reviews of their non-medical eligibility factors and SSI payment amounts. Separate from our review, SSA has conducted projects, which identify SSI recipients who were potentially eligible for CDB.

Based on the results of our review, we estimate 8,140 SSI recipients were potentially eligible for CDB and may be due underpayments totaling approximately \$18.5 million. If SSA does not take action, we estimate the 8,140 SSI recipients may lose an additional \$3.6 million over a 12-month period.

Furthermore, SSA did not complete action, as reported, for SSI recipients related to a recommendation in our 2012 audit report. In our 2012 report, we referred 14,434 SSI recipients potentially eligible for CDB to SSA for review. SSA reported it took action. Of 14,434 recipients, we identified 630 whom SSA should review to determine potential eligibility for CDB. Of the 630 recipients, we and SSA reviewed 6 and determined 3 were potentially eligible for, and 3 were potentially technically entitled to, CDB. Of the remaining 624 recipients, in May 2020, SSA reported

- 233 were potentially eligible for CDB,
- 286 were potentially technically entitled to CDB, and
- 105 were not eligible for CDB.

Recommendations

We made five recommendations related to SSI recipients potentially eligible for CDB. SSA agreed with our recommendations.