

How Much Can I Have in Assets and Still Be Eligible for Disability Benefits?

SSI limits how much you can have in assets (property) and be eligible for disability benefits, but many assets don't count.

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Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a need-based program for people with low income and low assets. Unlike SSI, Social Security disability insurance, or SSDI, is a benefit that people qualify for as a result of contributions paid into the Social Security system. The SSDI program has no asset limits.

SSI Asset Limits

To be eligible to receive SSI benefits based on disability, an SSI applicant or a current SSI recipient who is single cannot have more than \$2,000 in assets. (Though not all assets count toward the SSI resource limit, discussed below.)

If an SSI applicant or recipient is married (even if only one person is eligible for disability), the asset limit is \$3,000. Only the IRA or pension plan of the ineligible spouse isn't treated as part of the spouses' assets.

Similarly, if a child under age 18 lives with one parent, the SSA deems the resources of a parent or parent's spouse. The SSA will ignore the first \$2,000 of the parent's total countable resources, or, if the child lives with two parents, \$3,000. Any assets above that amount will be counted toward the child's \$2,000 resource limit.

What Assets Count Toward the SSI Asset Limit

How does the SSA define assets? Actually, the SSA calls assets "resources." The SSA counts the following as resources:

- cash
- money in a checking or savings account
- cash value in life insurance policies (over \$1,500)
- stocks and bonds
- household goods and personal effects (over \$2,000)
- motor vehicles (except for one), and
- real estate (other than the home in which a claimant resides).

What Resources Don't Count Toward the SSI Resource Limit

Your home. To be excluded from the SSA's asset limit, your house must be your principal residence. The exclusion includes your home, the land it's built on, and any adjacent buildings.

Your car. You may have one car excluded from the asset limit if you need it for transportation; otherwise, the value of a car will be excluded from the limit up to \$4,500 (that is, any value in the car over \$4,500 counts as an asset).

Wedding rings. A wedding ring and engagement ring (of any value) will be excluded from the resource limit.

ABLE accounts. Up to \$100,000 that is kept in an ABLE account (for those disabled before the age of 26) doesn't count as assets for the purpose of SSI eligibility.

PASS savings. Income set aside for an SSI "plan for achieving self-support" (PASS) is not counted.

IDA savings. Money saved in an individual development account (IDA) is not counted. IDAs are special accounts designed to allow those receiving TANF funds to save specifically for school, the purchase of a home, or to start a business without affecting their SSI benefits. (TANF stands for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.) The money used to fund the account comes from money you make from working, and in addition, some states' TANF programs match the savings you put into the account.

Burial savings. Burial funds up to \$1,500 in value, plus burial plots for your immediate family, are not counted.

Support payments. Some support payments can be held for up to nine months before they count toward your resource limit (without this exception, they would count as cash or money in the bank that could put you over the resource limit). They include:

- state or local relocation assistance payments
- crime victim's assistance
- earned income tax credit payments
- grants, scholarships, fellowships or gifts used for tuition and educational expenses, and
- child tax credit payments.

What Happens If Your Resources Are Over the Limit?

SSI claimants who exceed the \$2,000 limit (\$3,000 if married) are ineligible for benefits. And, in fact, claimants who are over the resource limit will not even have their disability claim fully evaluated to see if they are medically eligible for disability benefits. They will get a "technical denial" of benefits.

Source: <https://www.disabilitysecrets.com/how-much-can-i-have-in-assets-and-get-disability.html>