



Can I Get Services from SSB?

What is SSB?

The federal Rehabilitation Act says money has to be used for vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. These services can help you get or keep a job. In Minnesota, State Services for the Blind (SSB) offers services to people who are blind or visually impaired who want to work.

Can I get services?

In general, you are eligible to get services from SSB if:

1. You have a visual disability. This is defined as:
 - a visual acuity of 20/60 or less in the better eye with best correction
 - the absence of at least one full quadrant of binocular vision **or**
 - a physical condition or progressive loss that will likely result in legal blindness

and

2. You need vocational rehabilitation services to get ready for, find, or keep a job

and

3. You can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.



You are automatically eligible if you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) because of your vision loss.

If SSB decides you can't benefit from services because your disability is too severe, they must prove this "by clear and convincing evidence."

Does everyone who's eligible get help?

People with the least severe disabilities may not get services at all unless there is enough funding in the SSB program to serve everyone.

What is a severe disability?

You have a **severe disability** if:

1. your disability makes one or more of these things very hard:

- getting from one place to another
- talking and listening to others
- taking care of yourself
- making or carrying out plans
- work tolerance (you need changes at work to do a job)
- having the skills to have a job
- getting along with others



and

2. you need more than one service over a long time to get ready for, find or keep a job

and

3. along with your visual disability you have a physical or mental disability or combination of disabilities that cause serious functional limitations

How do I apply?

1. You have to apply by writing a letter or sending a completed application form to SSB.

To get an application, call:

- Metro Area Voice: (651) 539-2300
- Toll Free Voice: 1(800) 652-9000

Ask to speak with someone in the Workforce Development Unit.

You can also use the online information request at:

<https://mn.gov/deed/ssb/about/contact/locations/ssbinfoform.jsp>.

You have to sign a “release of information” form. This will let SSB get your medical records to prove you have a visual disability.

2. In most cases, an SSB counselor meets with you within a month of your application. The counselor explains the rehabilitation process and the different programs offered by SSB. You may also need to go to an information session about SSB’s services.

The counselor asks you for any other information they need to figure out your eligibility. It might be things like your past work history, education and training, abilities and interests, rehabilitation needs, and possible career goals.

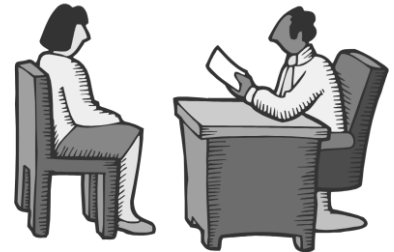
When gathering the information, SSB looks at existing information as much as they can. If that is not enough to decide if you are eligible for services, they work with you to get other information they need. If there is a cost to get that information, you can ask SSB to pay for it.

Most decisions are made within 60 days of the date you hand in your application. If more time is needed, SSB has to talk to you so you both reach an agreement about an extension of time.

If You are Denied Services

If SSB denies your application for rehabilitation services, they have to send you a letter that tells you:

1. Why you were denied
2. What your legal rights and options are, **and**
3. about the Client Assistance Project (CAP) and how CAP may be able to help you



If SSB decides your disability is too severe to make you eligible, they have to give you a chance to have a full consultation before they deny you. If you are denied for this reason, you have 2 basic rights:

1. SSB reviews your application every year to see if you become eligible at a later date, or
2. You can appeal the denial immediately.

If SSB finds you are not eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, they must check to see if you are eligible for one of their other programs like independent living, self-care, or child rehabilitation services.

Client Assistance Project (CAP)

If you are a client or an applicant of VRS or SSB, you can call the Client Assistance Project (CAP) for help if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your vocational rehabilitation services. CAP **does not** provide direct vocational rehabilitation services, like education, training or equipment. See our fact sheet [Client Assistance Project \(CAP\)](#).



CAP is part of the MN Disability Law Center (MDLC). For more information about CAP or to apply for CAP services, call:

- [\(612\) 334-5970](tel:6123345970) (metro area)
- [1-800-292-4150](tel:18002924150) (statewide)

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