



SSI For Noncitizens

What is Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and who can get it?

SSI is a federal program from the Social Security Administration that gives monthly benefits to low-income people. NOTE: SSI is different from Social Security Disability Insurance, or SSDI. You can only get SSDI if you have worked a certain amount of time and earned a certain amount of money.

To get SSI, you have to be 65 or older or so disabled you can't work. There are more rules and limits if you are a noncitizen. Even if you are in the U.S. permanently and legally *and* you are at least 65 or disabled, you may not be able to get SSI.

If you were living in the U.S. lawfully and permanently before August 22, 1996, you can get SSI as a noncitizen, but only if you fit into one of these 3 immigration categories:

1. You are an American Indian born in Canada
2. You filed your application for SSI before January 1, 1979
- OR**
3. You are a **“qualified”** noncitizen



How do I know if I am a “qualified” noncitizen?

You are a “qualified” noncitizen if you:

- have a **green card** and were lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).
- have been granted **asylum**.
- have been **paroled** into the U.S. for at least a year.
- have been granted **withholding of deportation** or **cancellation of removal**.
- have been granted a **T-visa** as a victim of severe trafficking.
- have been given **battered immigrant** status.

- are a **refugee** or are treated as if you are a **refugee**. This means you are:
 - An “Amerasian” immigrant whose father was a US citizen in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War years.
 - A Cuban or Haitian entrant
 - An Afghan or Iraqi Special Immigrant
 - An evacuee from Afghanistan by the US military between 7/31/21 and 9/30/22 (until your parole ends)
 - The immediate relative of an evacuee from Afghanistan described above who was paroled after 9/30/22
 - Paroled from Ukraine between 2/24/22 and 9/30/23
 - A citizen of the “Compacts of Free Association.” This means you are from Palau, Micronesia, or the Marshall Islands.

If you came to the U.S. or became a lawful, permanent resident after August 22, 1996, you can get SSI only if you are in of these 4 categories:

- You worked 40 work quarters at Social Security-covered work.
- You are a U.S. veteran, an active-duty member of the U.S. armed forces, or the spouse, minor child, or unremarried widow(er) of a U.S. veteran or active-duty member.
- You are from COFA (Palau, the Marshall Islands, or Micronesia).
- You were granted refugee, asylee, or withholding status. **In this category you can only get benefits for 7 years after the date you were granted that status.**

More Info

If you have questions about SSI and noncitizens, call your local legal aid office at [1\(877\) 696-6529](tel:18776966529) (877-MY-MN-LAW).

Or look for help from other programs at www.lawhelpmn.org/providers-and-clinics.

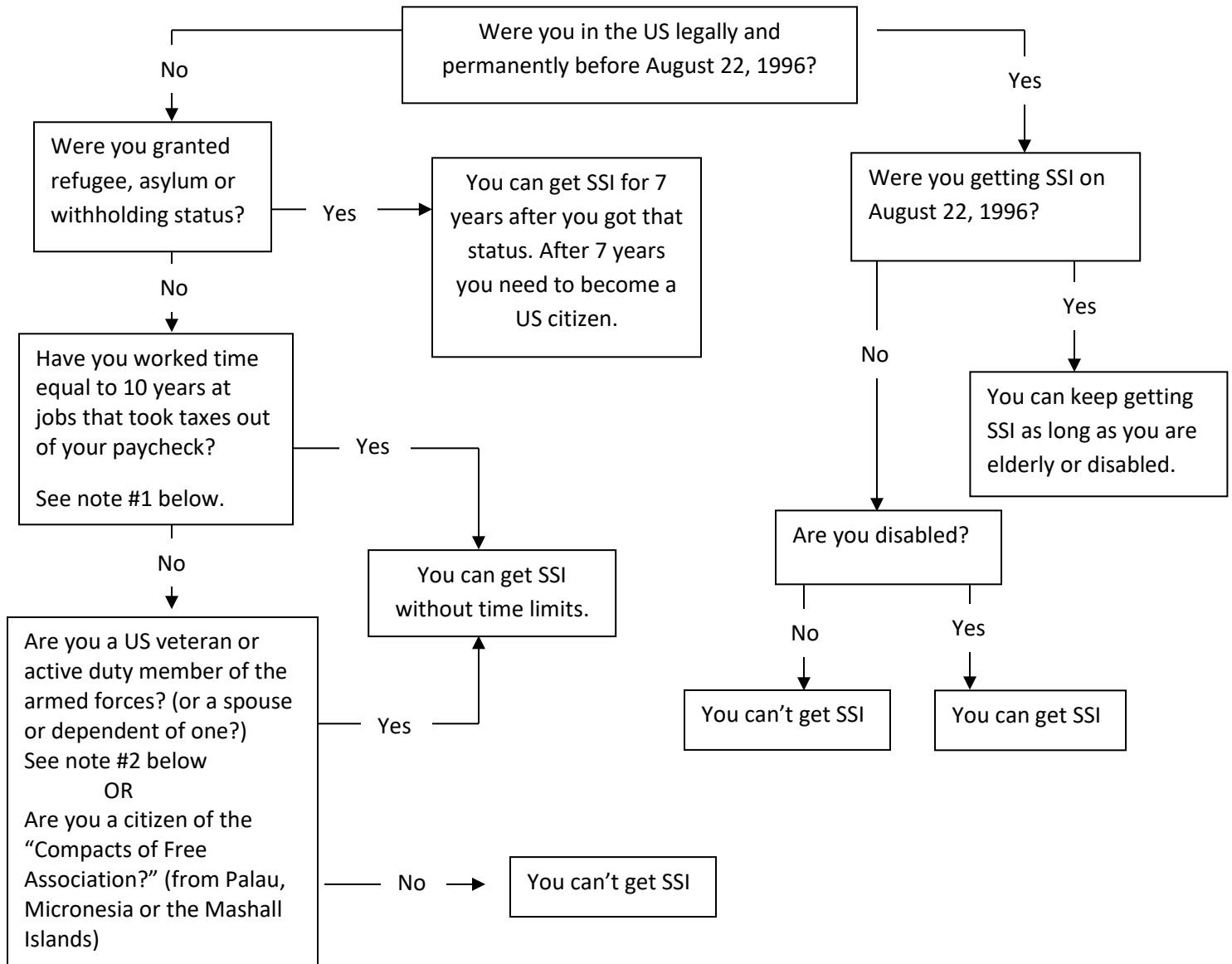


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Okay, I fit into one of the immigration categories listed. Can I get SSI?



Note #1 - Work Time: Time that your spouse spends working counts as your work time. If you immigrated as a child, your parents' work time while you were a minor can be counted. It can be complicated. SSA helps you figure out work time.

You can't count work time for any month after December 31, 1996, if you got federal public benefits (AFDC, Food Stamps, SNAP, MA or MFIP) that month. Talk to SSA or a lawyer for details.

Note #2 – Hmong soldiers and veterans with sponsors:

Hmong soldiers who fought with the CIA during the Vietnam War are not "US veterans" under US law.

If you are a veteran or active duty member of the armed forces who came to the US through the petition of a relative after December 18, 1997, income and assets of your sponsor and your sponsor's spouse are counted as if they are your own. That could put you over the limit to be able to get SSI. But, if you do not have food and shelter because your sponsor is not supporting you, you may get benefits. You may also be able to get benefits if you have been abused by your spouse or parent, you no longer live with your abuser, and your need for benefits is because of the abuse. Talk to a legal aid lawyer if you have questions.