

Applying for Social Security:

1. The first step in obtaining Social Security benefits is to apply. Applying entails speaking to a Social Security representative at the national hotline (1-800-772-1213). This stage also requires gathering financial and medical records for Social Security to verify eligibility.
2. If Social Security denies the initial application, the first step of the appeals process is called a Request for Reconsideration. At this stage, Social Security collects any updated information and reassesses one's eligibility.
3. If Social Security denies the Reconsideration, the next step in the appeals process is to Request a Hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. At the hearing, a Social Security judge will review the applicant's evidence, hear any pertinent testimony, and decide on the person's eligibility.
4. If the judge denies the claim, the applicant can appeal again to an appeals council and then before a federal court.

At any stage, applicants have 60 days to file an appeal.

FOR INFORMATION,
CALL:

1-800-499-4302
OAHU: 536-4302

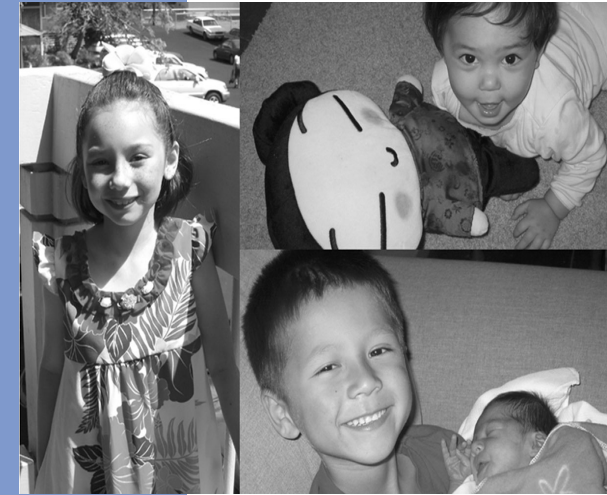
LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF HAWAII
924 BETHEL STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96813
Phone: 536-4302
Fax: 527-8088

WWW.LEGALAI DHAWAII.ORG



This brochure was created through the AmeriCorps Access to Justice Project at the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii.

LEGAL AID
SOCIETY OF HAWAII



FOSTER KIDS
SSI PROJECT

A collaboration between the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii and the Department of Human Services.

What is the Foster Kids SSI Project?

The Foster Kids SSI Project is a partnership between the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii and the State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS). It is a program established to ensure that all non-Title IVE foster children—children who are not eligible for federal money for foster care and adoption assistance—have the opportunity to obtain Social Security benefits.

What is SSI?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI), is a financial benefit administered by the Social Security administration for low-income individuals with disabilities. A child may qualify if he or she has a physical or mental condition that very seriously limits his or her daily activities. This condition must have lasted for a year, will be expected to last for at least a year, or may result in the child's death.

Who qualifies for the project?

DHS refers foster children who are potential Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients to Legal Aid. These children are all non-Title IVE foster children and receive Difficulty of Care (DOC) payments.

What happens after the referral?

Once Legal Aid receives the referral, a Legal Aid advocate contacts DHS to set up an appointment to review the files of the particular child. At the review, the advocate will determine whether or not to apply for benefits for the child.

What will help determine the child's eligibility?

An advocate will mainly need to review the child's medical and school records. Sometimes, if these documents are incomplete, an advocate can determine a child's eligibility through court records discussing the child's progress in the foster home.

How do we file the application?

If we decide to apply for benefits for the child, Legal Aid will complete all the necessary paperwork for the SSI claim. The social worker will then sign the appropriate forms, provide records such as the child's birth certificate and the court order showing DHS custody of the child, and update the advocate on the child's condition when necessary.

Who will the Project help?

State of Hawai'i: SSI saves the state money. Getting SSI means that money from the federal government, instead of the state, would go towards supporting the child.

Foster child: SSI offers the child more financial stability. As long as the household's income and assets qualify, a foster child on SSI will continue to receive payments even after DHS involvement ends. Also, it is easier for a person to continue receiving benefits by transitioning from child to adult status rather than to apply for the first time as an adult.

Biological or Adoptive Parents: SSI could be an invaluable source of income for the family. Depending on the parents' income, the child could continue receiving SSI after returning home or being adopted.