



Support Coloradans with Disabilities

Sponsored by Representative Lois Landgraf

Fund SSI and SSDI Application Assistance for Aid to the Needy Disabled Clients

Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) help individuals with disabilities achieve stability by providing income for necessities and enabling access to health care. This bill would target Coloradans with the greatest need by funding SSI/SSDI application assistance for Aid to the Needy Disabled (AND) clients. AND is a state program that provides \$189 per month to individuals with severe disabilities while they are applying for SSI/SSDI. With less than \$200 per month in income, AND clients struggle to meet their most basic needs and are often homeless.

The Need for a Bill

Completing the application process for SSI/SSDI is extremely difficult. The application is complex and applicants must navigate the process while contending with debilitating mental and/or physical health conditions. As a result, individuals that are ultimately eligible are often denied multiple times. In the past year, more than 10,000 people have died while waiting to get approved for SSI. According to the Social Security Administration, the approval rate on initial SSI/SSDI applications is approximately 30% overall and only 15% for homeless applicants. Application assistance greatly improves the rate of approval on initial applications and reduces the time it takes for individuals to access federal support.

The timely access to SSI/SSDI supported by application assistance is critical because –

- **SSI and SSDI help people with disabilities avoid homelessness.** Disability causes and prolongs homelessness. Nearly 10 % percent of the non-institutionalized population in Colorado is disabled, yet Coloradans with disabilities constitute 57% of those who are chronically homeless. SSI and SSDI recipients often use the federal assistance to cover housing costs. Housing alleviates the extraordinary health risks associated with homelessness, expedites recovery, and improves peoples' quality of life.
- **SSI and SSDI help people with disabilities access basic needs.** SSI and SSDI ensure a source of income for people with disabilities. Beneficiaries use the financial assistance to pay for food, transportation and other basic needs. In addition, recipients of SSI or SSDI gain access to health care through Medicaid or Medicare.
- **SSI and SSDI save the State money and help local economies.** SSI and SSDI reduce the need for people with disabilities to use costly services, such as emergency rooms and homeless services. The support also reduces state spending on programs like Old Age Pension and Aid to the Needy Disabled. In addition, recipients spend the federal support in their communities, boosting local economies.

For more information:

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Supporters of Expanding Social Security Disability Application Assistance

Advocacy Denver
Atlantis Community, Inc.
Bayaud Enterprises
Easter Seals Colorado
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Disability Law Colorado
Mental Health Colorado
National Alliance on Mental Illness – Denver
Oral Health Colorado
The Arc Arapahoe and Douglas
The Arc of Adams County
The Arc of Aurora
The Arc of Colorado
Stahlman Disability Consulting, LLC