



1 APPLICATION INITIATED



The SSI/SSDI application process starts when an individual, or their duly authorized representative, first contacts the Social Security Administration (SSA) to request benefits.



Individual contacts SSA in person via phone, fax, mail, or online submission, establishing the protective filing date.



Once the protective filing date is set, the application must be submitted within 60 days.

2 SSA DETERMINES NON-MEDICAL ELIGIBILITY



An SSA claims representative assembles and reviews the non-medical information.

3 SSA TRANSFERS CLAIM TO DDS



If the application meets non-medical eligibility requirements, SSA sends it to the state's Disability Determination Services (DDS), which is under contract to SSA.

4 DDS DETERMINES MEDICAL ELIGIBILITY



DDS assigns a disability examiner (a.k.a. "disability adjudicator"), who sends requests for medical records to all listed treatment providers.



Medical, functional, work, and other information is assembled and reviewed.

5 DDS RETURNS RECORD TO SSA



DDS returns applicant's electronic record to initiating SSA office with a decision on medical eligibility.

6 SSA NOTIFIES APPLICANT



SSA notifies the applicant of the determination decision by letter. If approved, the applicant may need to confirm information or establish a representative payee at the SSA office.