Collaboration to Increase Access to Social Security and SSI Benefits

Presentation for the National Council on Aging Center for Benefits Access Benefits Enrollment Conference 2017 Tuesday, April 18, 2017 Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill
About 173 million workers will pay Social Security taxes in 2017.

About 94 percent of all workers are covered or eligible under Social Security.
Types of Social Security Benefits

Retirement, Disability, and Survivors

- Retired worker
- Disabled worker
- Spouse (or divorced spouse) of retired or disabled worker
- Widow (or divorced widow) of deceased worker
- Child of retired/disabled/deceased worker
- Dependent parent of retired/disabled/deceased worker
- Disabled low-income child (SSI)
- Disabled adult child of a retired/disabled/deceased worker
- Low-income disabled or aged adult (SSI)
- Medicare recipients
- Low-income Medicare recipients (LIS)
- People entitled to multiple benefits (ex. widowed retiree)
Snapshot of Those We Serve

Social Security (“Title II”) 58.0 million

SSI 5.5 million

Both 2.7 million

Disability 17%

Retirement & Survivors 83%

February 2017
How Do We Reach Vulnerable Populations?

- Outreach to, and collaboration with, organizations and individuals serving our beneficiary populations
- Notices and direct mailings targeting specific populations
- Special initiatives targeting specific populations
SSA’s “Potential Entitlements” Process

Our process identifies cases where a beneficiary may be eligible for a new benefit or for a higher benefit amount. We address both the root cause of the issue and ways to prevent recurrence.
In FY 2016, potential entitlement efforts resulted in paying nearly $52 million in benefits to more than 35,000 veterans, widows, aged spouses, and children.
What We Did – Some Accomplishments from FY 16

- Increased Benefits to Title II Spouses Entitled to Higher Benefits on Their Own Records
- Notified Childhood Disability Beneficiaries (CDBs) Entitled to Benefits on Their Own Records
- Identified SSI Recipients Eligible for Title II Spouse Benefits
- Educated the Public on Title II Parent’s Benefits
What We Did – Some Accomplishments from FY 16

• Identified a fix for Medicare-only Beneficiaries Due Reduced or Free Premiums
• Alerted SSI Veterans Who Are Eligible for VA Benefits
• Evaluated an Earlier Project that gave Beneficiaries a Higher Benefit as a Surviving Divorced Spouse
• Evaluated the Release of VA Referral Cases
What We’re Doing – Outreach and Other Efforts in FY 17

• Paying veterans who were not given full credit for their military service
• Paying SSI recipients currently on our rolls who are eligible for CDB benefits
• Paying spouses and children due underpayments because we resumed benefits to the number holder but did not resume benefits to the auxiliaries following a termination
What We’re Doing – Outreach and Other Efforts in FY 17

• Preparing to conduct outreach to secure applications from beneficiaries who are currently receiving widow’s benefits on the record of their most recent spouse but due a higher benefit on the record of a previous deceased spouse

• Identifying SSI recipients entitled to child benefits on the record of a parent

• Revising the date of entitlement and release underpayments to CDBs who, unlike most Title II disability beneficiaries, do not serve a 5-month waiting period
SSA’s Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool (BEST)
www.ssa.gov/potentialentitlement
BEST Homepage: ssabest.benefits.gov

“Find out what benefits you may be eligible for through Social Security”
BEST “Benefit Finder” Questionnaire

**General - Part One**

Answering the questions in the SSA Best Questionnaire will determine your eligibility for any benefits. You must answer all questions. Please allow approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If you are inactive for more than 30 minutes while on the questionnaire, you will be returned to the SSA Best home page and the information you have entered will be deleted from the system and must be reentered.

1. What is your date of birth? (Enter date in mm/dd/yyyy format.)
   - [ ]

2. Where do you live?
   - [ ] One of the 50 states or the District of Columbia
   - [ ] Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands or the U.S. Virgin Islands
   - [ ] Other
Based on your answers so far, you may be eligible for the resources listed below. Add any resources you are interested in to the "Your Favorites" list by clicking the "Add to Your Favorites" button located below each resource. You can further narrow down your resource results list by either returning to the "Answer Questions" tab and answering any remaining questions, or by clicking on the "Review Your Answers" button to edit your responses.

PLEASE NOTE: These results will not be stored on the site. To avoid losing your results, please email this list to yourself or someone else for future reference.

Benefits You May be Eligible For:

- Social Security Insurance: 5
- Social Security Medicare: 2
- Family Social Security: 3
- Spouse & Widower(er): 2
- Social Security: 15
Benefits.gov from BEST Homepage

Find out what benefits you may be eligible for through Social Security

START QUESTIONNAIRE

Welcome to the Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool (BEST)
BEST helps you find out if you could get benefits that Social Security administers. Based on your answers to questions, this tool will list benefits for which you might be eligible and tell you more information about how to qualify and apply.

BEST is NOT an application for benefits and:
- does not know, or ask for, your name or Social Security number.
- does not access your personal Social Security records.
- will not give you an estimate of benefit amounts.

BEST will NOT screen for help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs. If you have Medicare, you might be eligible for this program.

Are you interested in other Government Benefits?
Go to Benefits.gov to search for more than 1,000 other benefit programs.

OUR PARTNERS
The White House
E-Gov

GOVERNMENT BENEFITS RESOURCES
Benefits.gov
Disaster Assistance

PRIVACY & TERMS OF USE
Benefits.gov Homepage

Looking for Benefits?
Answer questions to find out which government benefits you may be eligible to receive.

Discover Popular Benefits in Maryland

Maryland Food Supplement Program
Maryland Medical Assistance Program
Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)
Maryland Temporary Cash Assistance
Maryland Unemployment Insurance

Maryland Food Supplement Program
Category: Food/Nutrition

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), called the Food Stamp Program (FSP) in Maryland, provides food benefits, access to a healthy diet, and education on food preparation and nutrition to low-income households. Recipients spend their benefits (provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM card) to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores.

SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) works...

News & Updates
Benefits.gov “Benefit Finder”
Applying for Social Security Benefits

3 options available to apply:

- Online
- By phone 1-800-772-1213
- At a field office
my Social Security

Set yourself free. Open a my Social Security account today and rest easy knowing that you're in control of your future.

Sign In or Create an Account

socialsecurity.gov/myaccount
How can you help us?

• Educate your clients about our benefits, and help us identify people who might be eligible

• Use the BEST tool and Benefits.gov to see if your clients might be eligible for benefits

• Encourage people to apply for benefits and/or contact SSA if they might be eligible
How can we help you?

• First, Kathy Raley (HICAP Manager with the County of Ventura Area Agency on Aging) will share her experiences collaborating with Social Security

• Then we’d like to hear from YOU! What can we do to help you or your clients? How can we work together to help vulnerable populations access Social Security benefits?