

Reopening Pandemic Assistance SSI Claims

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team (for reprint)

As of November 29, 2021, the Social Security Administration began sending outreach mailers to roughly 144,000 people who were inappropriately denied Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits due to the receipt of certain types of pandemic-related financial assistance. The mailers will inform applicants that SSA may have denied their SSI claim because they received pandemic-related financial assistance; that they may now be eligible for SSI and/or retroactive payments; and, that they should contact SSA to reevaluate whether they are eligible for SSI and/or retroactive payments. There is no time limit for recipients to respond to these mailers and their SSI cases are eligible to be reopened indefinitely.

Other applicants who were denied due to incorrectly counted pandemic assistance will not receive an outreach mailer but will still be eligible to request that their cases be reopened for up to two years from the initial denial. Types of pandemic relief that may have been inappropriately counted include the three rounds of Economic Impact Payments – also known as stimulus 13 payments or recovery rebates – that issued in 2020 and early 2021. Applicants who think that their SSI claims may have been denied as a result of pandemic financial assistance should call their local SSA to request that their cases be reopened and reviewed for denial based on the counting of COVID-19 pandemic disaster assistance.

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