



Government Financial Resources

A number of governmental financial resources may be available for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Medicaid Home and Community Based Services

Waivers

Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers are available through many state's Medicaid health care programs. Generally, HCBS waivers allow states to provide funding for a variety of home and community-based services for individuals with developmental disabilities. HCBS waivers are state-specific and require additional research to determine what assistance may be available, the eligibility requirements and the process. Medicaid waivers are available in many states to fund home or community based services (i.e., nursing services, minor home modifications, counseling and therapies, supervised living, day habilitation, etc.) and a limited number of states provide autism-specific waivers. Generally, HCBS waivers fund programs and related services and are not intended to go directly to individuals, however, certain states have started Self Determination Initiatives which allow individuals to select, purchase and direct particular services.

To learn more about Waivers in your state, visit the [Autism Speaks Resource Guide](#), click on your state, and select the category Home & Community Based Waivers.

Social Security Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal government financial assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration that provides financial assistance to individuals that meet certain qualifications with low-income or limited resources who are 65 and older or blind or disabled. To be eligible for SSI assistance prior to age 18, an individual must (i) not be working and earning in excess of a specified wage (\$1000 per month as of 2010), (ii) have a physical or mental condition that results in "marked and severe functional limitations" (i.e., seriously limit the individual's activities) and (iii) such condition must last or be expected to last at least 12 continuous months. In addition, for individuals under 18 the income and resources of family members living in the individual's household will be considered. If an individual has been receiving SSI benefits prior to age 18, during the one year period after such individual's 18th birthday his or her SSI benefit eligibility will be re-evaluated based on the adult disability rules and such individual's income. If an individual was unable to receive SSI benefits prior to age 18 due to the individual's family income or resources, such individual may qualify

for SSI benefits at age 18 based on such individual's independent income and resources. To encourage young adults with disabilities to work, a large percentage of the income of an individual under age 22 applying for SSI may be excluded. Determining whether an individual meets the eligibility requirements (both before and after age 18) will be a fact specific analysis based on the individual's medical diagnosis and such diagnosis impacts his or her daily life activities and work capabilities.

For more information, read the [Social Security Administration's Electronic Booklet: Benefits for Children with Disabilities](#).

Social Security Disability Insurance

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is a federal government financial assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration that provides financial assistance to individuals who have a disability that began before age 22. SSDI financial assistance is paid based on a parent's Social Security earnings record and are available if one of the parents (i) is receiving Social Security retirement or disability benefits, (ii) has died and worked for a sufficient amount of time under Social Security or (iii) if the disabled adult received "dependents benefits" on the parent's Social Security earnings prior to age 18. The disability determination for SSDI benefits will be based on a determination by the Disability Determination Services agency in the individual's state and will generally take into consideration the individual's medical diagnosis and how the individual's medical diagnosis impacts his or her daily life activities and work capabilities.

Applying for Government Financial Assistance

To begin the application process for SSI or SSDI payments and get additional information regarding eligibility for such payments, please access their website at www.socialsecurity.gov and begin the online application or call the Social Security Administration offices directly (800) 772-1213 to locate A local Social Security Administration office. HCBS waivers are state-specific, therefore, to get more information contact a local Medicaid office.

Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

There are a number of government financial resources that may be available to adults with autism spectrum disorders or to fund programs that such adults may participate in, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and state Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers.

Autism Speaks Resources

In addition, [Goodwin Procter LLP](#) has provided legal information and contacts for families affected by autism. Click [here](#) to read Goodwin Procter's legal guide.

For more information about legal issues for young adults with autism, view the Transition Tool Kit section "Legal Matters to Consider":

www.autismspeaks.org/docs/family_services_docs/transition/Legal_Matters.pdf

The [Autism Speaks Resource Guide](#) also contains legal information by state, and includes listings of attorneys and advocates in your local area.