

Government Benefits 101



Consolidated
Planning Group

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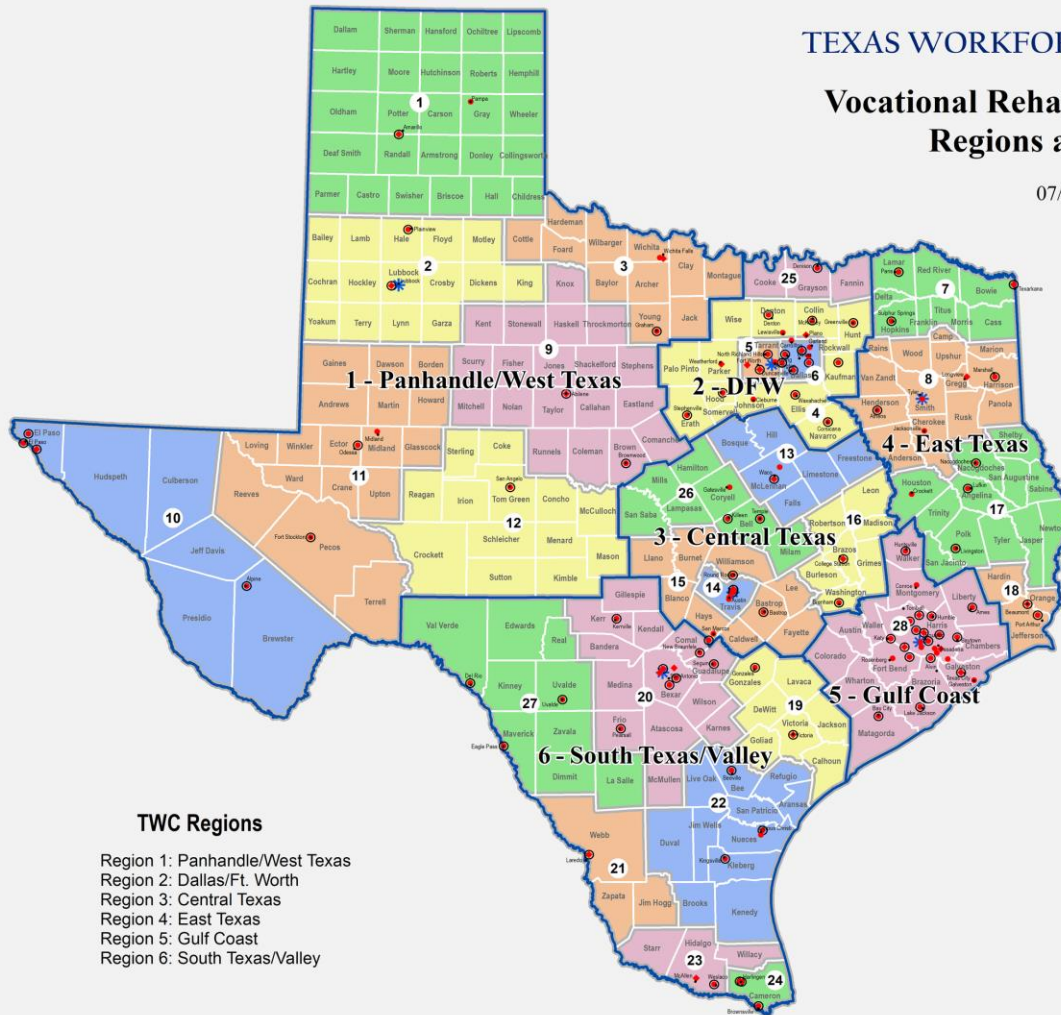


VR & Workforce Offices

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

Vocational Rehabilitation Division Regions and Offices

07/29/2021



- City
- ◆ VR Field Headquarters
- VR Field Office
- Integrated with WFS
- ★ VR Regional Office
- County
- ▭ TWC Region
- ▭ LWDA (with color)

Local Workforce Development Areas

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Panhandle | 15 Rural Capital |
| 2 South Plains | 16 Brazos Valley |
| 3 North Texas | 17 Deep East Texas |
| 4 North Central Texas | 18 Southeast Texas |
| 5 Tarrant County | 19 Golden Crescent |
| 6 Greater Dallas | 20 Alamo |
| 7 Northeast Texas | 21 South Texas |
| 8 East Texas | 22 Coastal Bend |
| 9 West Central Texas | 23 Lower Rio Grande Valley |
| 10 Borderplex | 24 Cameron County |
| 11 Permian Basin | 25 Texoma |
| 12 Concho Valley | 26 Central Texas |
| 13 Heart of Texas | 27 Middle Rio Grande |
| 14 Capital Area | 28 Gulf Coast |

TWC Regions

- Region 1: Panhandle/West Texas
- Region 2: Dallas/Ft. Worth
- Region 3: Central Texas
- Region 4: East Texas
- Region 5: Gulf Coast
- Region 6: South Texas/Valley

**TWC VR
Locator**



**Workforce
Solutions
Board
Websites**



Vocational Rehabilitation

- **Contact local VR office**
- **Call the TWS-VRS statewide contact center at 512-936-6400**
- **Online self-referral “Start My VR” located on the right side under contacts at <https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>**
- **Find your local VR Office at: www.twc.Texas.gov/VRNearMe**
- **Email us at: VR.office.locator@twc.texas.gov**

Texoma Workforce Centers

**Employment
Specialists**

**Skill Up
Texoma**

**Child
Care
Assistance**

Career Planning & Job Services

**Resume
Writing**

**Accessible
Workstations**

Printers

Follow Up Resources

Speakers

Services Transition Students

Adult VR

Webinars & Resources

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TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
PDF
transition-services-twc

TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
PDF
vocational-rehabilitation-services-twc

WHAT COMES AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?
PDF
flyer-vr-pre-ets-students-english-twc (1)

SERVICIOS DE REHABILITACIÓN - VOCACIONAL SOLUCIONES DE LA FUERZA LABORAL DE TEXAS
PDF
vocational-rehabilitation-services-spanish-twc

GOVERNMENT BENEFITS 101
Understanding SSI and Medicaid, SSDI and Medicare as well as Childhood Disability Benefits
TUES, OCT. 3, AT 12:00 NOON
WEBINAR ID: 885 6543 2110
2023 10 3 Government Benefits 101 Eng

4 ESSENTIAL FINANCIAL STEPS TO CONSIDER
PDF
4 Essential financial steps to consider plan 4

Contents of the IEP
Wednesday, October 11, 2023
4:30-5:30 PM
Webinar ID:

Padlet



<https://padlet.com/aprilmartin3/vr-for-students-families-jf21i7wtd4zvie9o>



WHO WE ARE



Consolidated
Planning Group

Consolidated Planning Group, Inc. is a holistic Special Needs Financial Planning Firm in Sugar Land, TX serving families across the U.S.

30 years experience with Insurance & Financial Services. MDRT- Top of the Table. Fully licensed Insurance & Securities. Members of the Special Needs Planning Academy and Nationally certified as Social Security Advisors.

Advisory/Consulting Firm

SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING

- ✓ **Protection Plans**
- ✓ **Lifetime Care**
- ✓ **Transition Planning**
- ✓ **ABLE Accounts**
- ✓ **Advocacy**

Fewer than one-tenth of a percent of all financial advisors in the U.S. focus on Special Needs Planning.



SSDI VS. SSI-Knowing the Difference

Social Security Disability Insurance-SSDI

- Source of payment is through the Disability trust fund.
- An insurance that workers earn by paying Social Security taxes on their wages.
- Pays benefits to disabled individuals who are unable to work, regardless of their household income and resources.
- Benefits for workers and for adults disabled since childhood. Must meet insured status requirements.

Supplemental Security Income-SSI

- Payments come from general tax revenues, NOT SSA trust funds.
- A needs-based public assistance program that does not require a person to have work history.
- Pays disabled individuals who are unable to work AND have limited income and resources.
- Benefits for children and adults in financial need. Must have limited income and limited resources.

Disability Rules over age 18


SSDI and SSI

- ✓ Physical and/or mental impairment
- ✓ Disability is expected to last 12 consecutive months or result in death
- ✓ Consideration: age, education, and past work activity
- ✓ Inability to perform substantial work activity



Substantial Gainful Activity



- ✓ **SGA 2023: \$1,470/month; Blind \$2,460/month**
 - ✓ **SSI only uses SGA as a measure of work during initial claims.**
 - ✓ **SSDI uses SGA throughout the life of the claim.**
- 

2023 SSI Benefit Rates

- Effective January 2023
- Individual- \$914 a month
- Couple- \$1,371 a month
(Both parties are disabled)



Do I qualify?

SSI & Medicaid - Means Test -

Single, No more than \$2000 in assets,

Married couples \$3000 in assets

Child & One Parent \$4000 in assets

Child & two Parents \$5000

*In all cases you can have 1 House and 1 Car which are not countable assets.

SSDI/RSDI & Medicare-


Based of work record & taxes paid into Social Security



The Blue Book



The Blue Book, another name for the Social Security Administration's publication "Disability Evaluation under Social Security", is designed for use by healthcare professionals in assisting the **SSA** when determining eligibility for Social Security disability.



<https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/AdultListings.htm>

Understanding SSI

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi>



What should you apply for and when?

Apply for SSI the month of your child's 18th birthday. Appointments should be scheduled a few months in advance for after they turn 18. Apply through your local office, by phone, or online.

Apply for SSI online:
<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/start.html>

This will save the date of the application and if approved benefits will be backdated to date.

Have evidence that demonstrates that the child's disability began before age 22 to qualify for Childhood Disability Benefits (CDB) formerly called Disabled Adult Child (DAC) on one of the parent's records.

Gather medical history- physician's name, address, phone number, diagnosis history, medications, employer info if any, earnings, and the last 3 months of Bank statements.

Consider chatting with PCP first and reviewing their records.



What should you expect after you apply?

- ❑ A decision typically takes up to six months (sometimes longer)
- ❑ After your local office has finalized your application, it is sent to DDS-Disability Determination Services in Austin.
- ❑ They request and review your loved one's medical records looking for evidence of a disability.
- ❑ DDS Can Be Reached at 1-800-252-7009 You can check that they have received the file, find out who it's been assigned to and find out which medical records have been received and which ones are outstanding.



What is a Presumptive Disability?

Up to 6 months of SSI based on disability if applicant has a condition on the compassionate allowance list.

<https://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/conditions.htm>

Determination is made by local Social Security office

If there is a likelihood that case will be approved, DDS can also make a presumptive decision



Examples of Presumptive Disabilities

- Amputation of a leg at the hip
- Total deafness, no sound perception in either ear
- Total blindness, no light perception in either eye
- Bed confinement or immobility without a wheelchair, walker, or crutches, due to a longstanding condition excluding recent accident and recent surgery
- Stroke, more than 3 months in the past, continued marked difficulty in walking/using a hand or arm
- Cerebral palsy/muscular dystrophy/muscular atrophy and marked difficulty in walking (use of braces)
- Down syndrome
- Intellectual disability/ neurodevelopmental impairment (autism spectrum disorder) with complete inability to independently perform basic self-care activities (such as toileting, eating, dressing, or bathing)





Working?

How does working affect benefits?

SSI Income Deduction Example:

- **\$1200.00 gross monthly earned income (-\$20 general exclusion and -\$65 earned income exclusion)**
- **\$1115.00 divided by 2 = \$557.50 countable income**
- **\$914.00 - \$557.50 = \$356.50 payable in SSI benefits**

Student Earned Income Exclusion

If your loved one is under age 22 and **regularly attending school**, SSA does not count up to **\$2,220** of their earned income per month when they figure the SSI payment amount. The maximum yearly exclusion for 2023 is **\$8,950**

“Regularly Attending School” means:

- in a college or university for at least **8 hours a week**
- OR in grades 7-12 for at least 12 hours a week
- OR in a training course to prepare for employment for at least 12 hours a week (15 hours a week if the course involves shop practice), or for less time than indicated above for reasons beyond the student’s control, such as illness
- OR home schooling, if instructed in grades 7-12 for at least 12 hours a week.

You must ask the Social Security Administration to Apply the SEIE

It is NOT ever automatically applied



The Red Book



The Red Book serves as a general reference source about the employment-related provisions of the Social Security Disability Insurance and the Supplemental Security Income Programs for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals, and counselors who serve people with disabilities.

<https://www.ssa.gov/redbook>



Child Support

Before you apply, have child support directed correctly

Child Support post age 18 will be counted against the child as income if it is not going to a 1st Party Special Needs Trust. Currently, one-third of monthly child support payments are excluded from countable income when calculating the benefit amount for a child approved for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The remaining two-thirds of the monthly child support payment is countable income and may be used to reduce the amount of SSI benefits a child will receive.

Work with a qualified attorney to help you get a court order to redirect the child support to a 1st Party Special Needs Trust.

If both parties agree, it can be a simple process to have drawn up and get signed off on.

If going through a divorce, make sure to address this in your documents on the front end!



RSDI Benefit-Childhood Disability Benefits (CDB)

❑ To Be Entitled to RSDI (Retirement, Survivor, CDB Disability Insurance)


- ✓ Is 18 years of age or older
- ✓ Disability began before age 22 (To be covered under a Parents record.)
- ✓ Is the dependent of an “insured worker” parent
- ✓ Is not married
- ✓ Has not previously performed Substantial Gainful Activity

SGA for 2023 is \$1,470 Gross earnings per month.



SSA Benefits- Drawing from a parent's record



- When a parent applies to receive their own social security benefits through retirement or disability, the disabled adult child is entitled to receive ½ of the parent's benefit. This benefit also applies to minor children that are not disabled. This benefit was formerly referred to as Disabled Adult Child (**DAC**) is now referred to as **Childhood Disability Benefits or (CDB)**.
 - 24 months after receiving Title II benefits, the child eligible for disability benefits under a parent's record will be eligible for Medicare. (Once over Age 18)
 - When a parent passes away the disabled adult child is entitled to **75% of the deceased parent's social security**.
 - **Be aware of family maximums if a non-working spouse is also drawing from their spousal record or if there is more than one child in the household with a disability.**
- 

SSDI- To be entitled to Social Security Disability Insurance



1. File an application
2. Found to be medically disabled
3. Fully insured
4. Is not working or working but countable earned income is less than the substantial gainful activity level- \$1,470 gross per month.

How to protect your child's benefits

- ✓ Ensure that you have your assets and your child's assets in the appropriate buckets.
- ✓ Ensure your special needs family member's name is not set up as a beneficiary on any life insurance, investment or bank accounts.
- ✓ Ensure well-meaning family members do not leave assets to the named individual, as opposed to a 3rd Party Special Needs Trust for the benefit of the Special Needs family member.



Is your money in the right buckets?




**Do you have a Special Needs Trust?
Do you have an ABLE Account?**



ABLE Accounts



- Beneficiary is account owner
 - Income earned in account is not taxable
 - Contributions are not deductible (although some states may offer state income tax deductions)
 - Does not jeopardize SSI, Medicaid or other public benefits
 - Special contribution and distribution limits
- 

ABLE Accounts

If it can be construed as achieving a better life for an individual with a disability, you can pay for it out of an ABLE account

PARTICIPANTS	Disabled individuals whose disability started before age 26.
CONTRIBUTIONS	May be made by anyone. Limited to gift tax annual exclusion (currently \$17,000) in total annually. Funds held in an ABLE account in excess of \$100,000 disqualify the beneficiary for SSI benefits. (However, ABLE account owners who work may contribute up to an additional \$13,590 (in 2023) of their gross income into their ABLE account if they do not have an employer sponsored retirement plan.)
DISTRIBUTIONS	Distributions for “qualified disability expenses” are not taxable. Earnings on distributions for non-qualified expenses are subject to ordinary income taxes and a 10% penalty.
GROWTH	Tax-free growth in investments that can be changed by the participant twice a year.
ROLLOVERS	May be rolled over to other family members who are eligible beneficiaries.
AT DEATH	States may be able to claim reimbursement for expenses paid by Medicaid. Any additional funds can be distributed to designated beneficiaries or rolled over to eligible family members.

ABLE Accounts

Items that you **CAN** pay for from your **ABLE** account-without a 1/3 reduction to SSI

- ✓ Food & Shelter
- ✓ Financial Management and Administrative Services
- ✓ Transportation- such as Car, Public Transportation Fares, Taxis, Uber
- ✓ Education & Training- such as Employment Supports like Job Coach, Classes to Learn New Skills
- ✓ Assistive Technology- Mobile Devices
- ✓ Personal Support Services
- ✓ Legal Expenses



An ABLE account CAN pay for food and shelter without a 1/3 reduction in SSI.

Items the Special Needs Trust CAN pay for-

- Telephone
- Cable or Satellite TV
- Premiums for Personal Property Insurance
- Paper Products
- Laundry and Cleaning supplies
- Staff Salaries
- Capital Improvements to the Home
- Repairs to the Home
- Out of Pocket medical, dental and eye expenses
- Eyeglasses
- Exercise Equipment
- Annual Independent Checkups
- Transportation
- Motor Vehicle
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Vehicle Insurance Premiums and Registration
- Life Insurance Premiums (See Medicaid Rules)
- Physical Rehabilitation services
- Vehicle Fuel
- Materials for Hobbies
- Tickets for recreational or Cultural Events
- Music Instruments
- Cosmetics
- Membership in book, health, record, video, or other clubs
- Clothing
- Prescriptions
- Home Improvements
- Computer or electronic equipment
- Cable TV
- Trips and Vacations (no Food)
- Visits to Friends
- Entertainment
- Home Furnishings
- Newspaper and Magazines Subscriptions
- Athletic Training or Competitions
- Personal Care Attendant or escort
- Vocational Rehabilitation or Habilitation
- Professional Services
- Tuition and Expenses connect with Education
- Costs of attending or participation in meetings, conferences, seminars or training sessions
- Cigarettes
- Buying a House or Real Property (Based on Trustee's discretion)



Don't use your special needs trust for these:

- Rent
- Mortgage payments
- Real Estate Taxes
- Gas
- Electricity
- Water
- Sewage
- Homeowner's Insurance Required by Lender
- Condo charges that include the above items
- NO CASH
- NO FOOD

Using your trust for these items can cause a 1/3 reduction to your SSI benefits!





Special Needs Planning

Who will care for your child when you no longer can?

- ✓ Developing a future care plan now will answer these questions
- ✓ Consider post High School educational and vocational options.
- ✓ Consider touring transition programs, partial-care and full-care residential communities. Waiting lists can be quite long, so plan early!
- ✓ Make careful consideration before naming siblings as a future caregiver.

Things to keep on your radar...

- **How to develop a comprehensive Special Needs Care Plan**
- **Future Care Cost Estimates**
- **Texas Waivers- Interest Lists**
- **SSI & SSDI- Understanding the differences and knowing when to apply**
- **ABLE Accounts**
- **Beneficiary Designations**
- **Special Needs Trusts- How to fund them (Note: Child Support post 18 redirected to a First Party SNT)**
- **Start touring Residential Living Communities- waiting lists can be long**
- **Consider Guardianship, Alternatives to Guardianship, POA, HCPOA and Supported Decision-Making Agreement (Guardianship process can begin 6 months before turning 18)**
- **Post High School Education Options**





Consolidated Planning Group

**Click the link for our
upcoming webinars**

Upcoming
Webinars

Meet the team!



Allison Schaberg
Owner/Advisor



Jeff Schaberg
Owner/Advisor



Michelle Morris
Advisor



Andrew Morris
Advisor



Sarah Smithey
Operations



Meredith Haynes
Marketing Director



Madi Smith
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Sarah Sohail
Operations

Schedule your free consultation

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2. Hover over QR code
3. Click link!

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