

OLDER SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) RECIPIENTS WORK LESS FREQUENTLY THAN THEIR YOUNGER COUNTERPARTS, BUT USE WORK INCENTIVE 1619(B) AT HIGHER RATES

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Data Source: Social Security Administration, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics: SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2019

Section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act allows individuals to continue receiving Medicaid benefits if their earnings disqualify them from eligibility for SSI cash payments but are not enough to allow them to afford medical insurance.

In 2019, 4.7 million Blind and disabled recipients (including section 1619(b) participants) ages 18–64 received SSI benefits (Table 43 of the SSI Statistical Annual Report, 2019). Out of all people receiving benefits, just 6.8% (n=324,018) of people worked. Out of those who worked, only 2% (n=96,919) were enrolled in 1619(b) (Social Security Administration, 2019).

Adults with disabilities between the ages of 40 and 64 constituted almost two-thirds of SSI recipients in 2019 (n = 3,026,855, 64%). Only 3.8% of SSI recipients with disabilities in this age range (40–64) work. Out of those recipients who work, 34% participate in 1619(b).

Younger SSI recipients—those between the ages of 18 and 39—were three times more likely to be working than SSI recipients 40 and older (12.3% compared to 3.8%) in 2019. Interestingly, their participation in 1619(b) was lower (28%) compared to the 40–64 age group (34%).

Specifically, 18- to 21-year-olds reported the lowest 1619(b) participation rate at just 12%. For the 22–25 age group, the number of recipients reporting 1619(b) participation was 25%.

The highest use of section 1619(b) is among people ages 40–49, at 35%. There is not sufficient research to conclude why this age group has the highest usage of 1619(b). Researchers should consider examining the reasons for this phenomenon.

Table 1. Number of SSI recipients, those who work, and section 1619(b) participants aged 18–64, by age (2019)

Age Groups	Number of SSI Recipients	% of SSI Recipients	Number of SSI Recipients who Work	% of SSI Recipients who Work	Number of SSI Recipients Participating in 1619b	% of SSI Recipients Participating in 1619b
18–21	315,746		30,293		3,678	12.1%
22–25	304,964		46,316		11,787	25.4%
26–29	342,237		51,348		16,412	32.0%
30–39	753,676		82,415		26,813	32.5%
SUM (18–39)	1,716,623	36.2%	210,372	12.3%	58,690	27.9%
40–49	756,449		44,413		15,328	34.5%
50–59	1,445,912		48,344		15,749	32.6%
60–64	824,494		20,889		7,152	34.2%
SUM (40–64)	3,026,855	63.8%	113,646	3.8%	38,229	33.6%

To learn more, please refer to the Social Security Administration (2000–2019) chapter on page 35 of [StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes Through 2019](#).

Reference

Social Security Administration. (2019). SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2019. Retrieved from www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_asr/2019/index.html

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