

Social Security (Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance)

Employment and Earnings

Workers in OASDI covered employment, 2020	174.8 million
Average earnings, 2020	\$53,616
Earnings required in 2021 for—	
1 quarter of coverage	\$1,470
Maximum of 4 quarters of coverage	\$5,880
Earnings test exempt amounts for 2021	
Under full retirement age for entire year	\$18,960
For months before reaching full retirement age in 2021	\$50,520
Beginning with month of reaching full retirement age in 2021	Test eliminated

Program Data

Cost-of-living adjustment for December 2020	1.3 percent
Average monthly benefit, December 2020	
Retired workers	\$1,544
Widows and widowers, nondisabled	\$1,455
Disabled workers	\$1,277
Number of beneficiaries, December 2020	
Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance	64.9 million
Old-Age Insurance	
Total	49.4 million
Retired workers	46.3 million
Survivors Insurance	
Total	5.9 million
Widows and widowers, nondisabled	3.6 million
Disability Insurance	
Total	9.6 million
Disabled workers	8.2 million
Benefit payments, 2020	
Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance	\$1,095.9 billion
Old-Age and Survivors Insurance	\$952.4 billion
Disability Insurance	\$143.6 billion
Administrative expenses, 2020	
Old-Age and Survivors Insurance	
Amount	\$3.7 billion
As a percentage of total benefits paid	0.4 percent
Disability Insurance	
Amount	\$2.6 billion
As a percentage of total benefits paid	1.8 percent

Program Trends

- About 64.9 million persons received Social Security benefits for December 2020, an increase of 786,371 (1.2 percent) since December 2019. Approximately 76 percent were retired workers and their spouses and children, 9 percent were survivors of deceased workers, and 15 percent were disabled workers and their spouses and children.
- Sixty-six percent of the 46.3 million retired workers received reduced benefits because of entitlement prior to full retirement age. Relatively more women (69.0 percent) than men (63.0 percent) received reduced benefits.
- The number of beneficiaries aged 65 or older rose from about 43.0 million in 2015 to about 49.7 million in 2020 (15.2 percent). The number of beneficiaries aged 85 or older increased by about 2.1 percent during the 5-year period from about 5.7 million in 2015 to about 5.8 million in 2020. In 2020, about 70,000 centenarians were Social Security beneficiaries.
- About 27.5 million women aged 65 or older received benefits for December 2020. About 15.4 million (56.2 percent) were entitled solely to a retired-worker benefit. About 6.9 million (25.1 percent) were dually entitled to a retired-worker benefit and a wife's or widow's benefit, and about 5.1 million (18.6 percent) were receiving wife's or widow's benefits only.
- About 2.8 million children under age 18 received benefits, including 1,206,254 children of deceased workers, 1,207,900 children of disabled workers, and 340,539 children of retired workers.
- About 9.6 million persons received benefits based on disability—8,151,016 disabled workers, 1,149,967 disabled adult children, and 236,923 disabled widows and widowers. In addition, 104,014 spouses and 1,242,348 minor and student children of disabled workers received benefits.
- Average monthly benefits for December 2020, including the 1.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment, were \$1,544 for retired workers, \$1,277 for disabled workers, and \$1,455 for nondisabled widows and widowers. Among retired workers, monthly benefits averaged \$1,714 for men and \$1,378 for women. For disabled workers, average monthly benefits were \$1,404 for men and \$1,149 for women.
- Average monthly family benefits for December 2020 were \$2,617 for a widowed mother or father and children; \$2,269 for a disabled worker, wife, and children; and \$3,191 for a retired worker, wife, and children.
- Total OASDI benefit payments for calendar year 2020 were \$1,095.9 billion. Payments from the OASI trust fund were \$952.4 billion—an increase of 5.5 percent from the \$902.8 billion paid in 2019.
- Benefit payments from the DI trust fund, from which benefits are paid to disabled workers, their spouses, and children, decreased by 1.1 percent from \$145.1 billion in 2019 to \$143.6 billion in 2020.
- OASDI benefit awards in calendar year 2020 totaled 5,761,009, including 3,367,537 to retired workers, 536,101 to their spouses and children, and 937,227 to survivors of insured workers. Benefits were awarded to 619,636 disabled workers and to 300,508 of their spouses and children.

Supplemental Security Income

Annual Payment Adjustments

Monthly federal benefit rate, effective January 2021

Individual living in his or her own household	\$794
Couple with both members eligible	\$1,191

Cost-of-living adjustment 1.3 percent

Program Data

Federally administered payments

Benefits paid in 2020	\$56.3 billion
Number of recipients, December 2020	8.0 million
Average benefit, December 2020	\$575.73

Federal SSI payments

Benefits paid in 2020	\$53.8 billion
Number of recipients, December 2020	7.8 million
Average benefit, December 2020	\$559.82

Federally administered state supplementation

Benefits paid in 2020	\$2.5 billion
Number of recipients, December 2020	^a 1.4 million
Average benefit, December 2020	\$145.23

a. Includes approximately 1.3 million persons receiving federal SSI and state supplementation and almost 142,000 persons receiving state supplementation only.

Program Trends

- In December 2020, 7,959,766 persons received federally administered SSI payments—117,101 fewer than the previous year. Of the total, 2,295,023 (28.8 percent) were aged 65 or older; 4,556,131 (57.2 percent) were blind or disabled aged 18–64; and 1,108,612 (13.9 percent) were blind or disabled under age 18.
- The number of blind or disabled aged 18–64 declined by 90,428 (1.9 percent) between December 2019 and December 2020, and the number under age 18 decreased by 23,468 (2.1 percent).
- During 2020, 594,089 persons were awarded federally administered payments, a decrease of 127,504 from the previous year. Of the 2020 awards, 388,825 went to blind or disabled recipients aged 18–64, 129,167 to those blind or disabled under age 18, and 76,097 to recipients aged 65 or older.
- Total federally administered SSI payments were \$56.3 billion in 2020, up 0.8 percent from 2019. Federal SSI payments in 2020 were \$53.8 billion (an increase of 0.9 percent over the previous year). Federally administered state supplementation totaled \$2.5 billion.

Poverty Data

Weighted average poverty thresholds, 2020

Individual, aged 65 or older	\$12,413
Couple, householder aged 65 or older	\$15,659
Family of four	\$26,496