

Resources

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Why are resources important in the SSI program?

One of the requirements to get SSI benefits is that you have limited resources—including cash, savings in a bank account, stocks, savings bonds, property, life insurance and vehicles. The Social Security Administration (SSA) does not count some of your resources, like your home and one vehicle, but the limit for countable resources is **\$2,000 for one person** and **\$3,000 for a couple**.

Can I spend down my resources to get under the resource limit?

Yes. You can spend down your resources by buying things you need or paying bills you owe. Keep receipts so you can show SSA how you spent the money.

What happens if I give away a resource to try and get under the resource limit?

If you give away a resource or sell it for **less than fair market value**, SSA might decide you cannot get SSI benefits for up to 36 months. This **transfer penalty** can apply even if you transfer the resource before you apply for SSI benefits. SSA will look to see whether you transferred any resources for less than fair market value during the three years before you applied.

Are there any exceptions to the transfer penalty?

Yes. SSA will not apply the penalty for transfers:

- To certain types of trusts (for example, a special needs trust for your blind or disabled child)
- Of a home to certain family members
- Of resources other than the home to your spouse or your blind or disabled child
- For reasons other than to get SSI benefits (for example, if you gave away a resource before you became disabled and knew you would need SSI benefits)

How can Project HEAL help?

Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, and Law), a community-based program of the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute, can help answer specific questions about resources, the transfer penalty and the SSI program.

For more information on Project HEAL and its services, visit: KennedyKrieger.org/ProjectHEAL

To connect with Project HEAL, call **443-923-4414** or complete an [online intake form](#).

*** SSA's policies may change. Contact SSA (ssa.gov) or Project HEAL for updates. ***

