

# How a Cancer Patient Can Seek Disability via Social Security

## Understand the Two Types of SSA Disability Benefits

- **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI):** For people who have worked and paid Social Security taxes. Benefits are based on work history.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** For people with limited income and resources, regardless of work history.

## Check if Your Cancer Qualifies Under SSA Guidelines

The SSA maintains a “Blue Book” of conditions that qualify for disability. Examples include leukemia, lymphoma, many cancers with metastasis, and lung cancer. Some aggressive or advanced-stage cancers qualify for fast-track approval under the Compassionate Allowances Program.

## Gather Required Documentation

- **Medical Records:** pathology reports, treatment records, imaging results, surgical notes.
- **Doctor’s Statements:** details about diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, and limitations. Work History (for SSDI): W-2s, tax returns, job descriptions.
- **Financial Records (for SSI):** bank statements, proof of income/assets.

### TIP

*Ask your oncologist to specifically address how your condition prevents you from working.*

## Get Support Along the Way

American Cancer Society: <https://www.cancer.org>

Cancer Legal Resource Center: <https://thedrlc.org/cancer/>

Triage Cancer: <https://triagecancer.org>

### Apply for Benefits

You can apply three ways:

- Online: <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/>
- By phone: 1-800-772-1213
- In person: At your local SSA office (appointments recommended).

