

How Someone with a Mental Health Condition Can Qualify for SSD Benefits

Social Security disability benefits are a lifeline for millions of people who become sick or disabled and can no longer work. However, some people who are eligible for disability benefits don't apply for them because they think that disability benefits are only available to people with a physical health condition. Social Security disability benefits are available for people with [mental health conditions](#) as well as physical health conditions. If you have worked in the past and you expect that you won't be able to work for at least 12 months because of your condition, then you can file a claim for disability benefits. It doesn't matter if your condition is physical or mental. If it keeps you from working you can apply for benefits.

Medically Qualifying for Social Security Disability Benefits

When you file a claim for Social Security disability benefits you must provide medical proof that you have a disabling condition that is listed in the Social Security Administration's [Blue Book](#) of impairments. Only the conditions listed in the Blue Book qualify for benefits. The Blue Book is split into two sections. One for physical conditions and one of or mental conditions. Each listing in the book also has a set of requirements that you must meet before your claim for benefits will be approved. For example, in order to qualify for disability benefits because of anxiety you need to provide medical evidence showing that you have three of these symptoms:

- Restlessness
- difficulty concentrating
- irritability
- muscle tension
- sleep disturbance, and/or
- getting fatigued easily.

You will also need to prove that those symptoms limit your ability to function. You will need to have evidence to show that you have an extreme limitation in one or more of these areas or a severe limitation in at least two of these areas:

- understanding, remembering, or applying information
- interacting with others
- concentrating, persisting, or maintaining pace in performing tasks
- adapting or managing oneself

If you don't meet the listing requirements or don't have the documentation you need you can also qualify through a Medical Vocational Allowance.

Medical Vocational Allowance

To get a [Medical Vocational Allowance](#) your doctor will need to fill out a form called a Residual Functional Capacity evaluation. This form is on the SSA's website. In this form your doctor needs to describe in detail your symptoms and how they limit your ability work. When you have the Residual Functional Capacity form you can submit your claim, your medical evidence, and the RFC to the SSA. The SSA will look at your documentation, your work history, your age, and your RFC evaluation to determine if there is another kind of work that you can do. If they find that there isn't any other kind of work that you can do, then will approve your claim for benefits.

Filing A Claim

If you haven't filed a claim for Social Security disability benefits because you have a mental health condition and you didn't know you could be eligible for benefits submit your application as soon as you can. You can file a claim online or make an appointment at your [local SSA branch office](#) and you can fill out and submit the claim there.

Resources:

- The Harris Center: <https://theharriscenter.org/>
- Blue Book: <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/blue-book>
- Medical Vocational Allowance: <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/glossary/medical-vocational-allowance>
- Local SSA Office: <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/state-social-security-disability>