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# Notes and Brief Reports

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## Interim Assistance Reimbursement Payments\*

State and local welfare agencies provide cash assistance to cover the basic needs of individuals awaiting the initial determination of their eligibility for supplemental security income (SSI) payments. For persons awarded SSI payments, the Social Security Administration (SSA) reimburses the agencies from the person's accrued SSI amounts at the time the first payment for the interim period is made. The period begins with the month of eligibility for SSI and ends with the month that SSI payments begin. An individual must give written authorization to SSA for a State or local agency to be reimbursed. No reimbursement is made for persons who are denied SSI payments.

The interim assistance reimbursement (IAR) program benefits both SSI applicants and State and local welfare agencies. It puts money into the hands of needy individuals quickly, and it assures that agencies will be reimbursed for the money provided to individuals awarded SSI payments. Without assurances of reimbursement, some agencies might not be able to provide such assistance. The IAR program began in 1974.<sup>1</sup> By 1985, 35 States had agreements with SSA allowing them to receive IAR payments.<sup>2</sup> About 5,000 reimbursements are made by SSA to the States each month. During fiscal year 1985, the States received \$143 million under the IAR program.

The total number of individuals receiving interim assistance from the States during a month could exceed 25,000. A person who participates under the IAR program generally receives cash assistance from a State or local agency for several months before receiving an SSI payment. The median processing time is 5.6 months from application claim to final adjudication.

## Purpose and Methodology

To learn more about the individuals who had received

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\*By Howard Oberheu, Division of Program Management and Analysis, Office of Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Administration.

<sup>1</sup>Original authorization (P.L. 93-368) expired June 30, 1976. The program was made permanent (P.L. 94-365) in 1977. See Social Security Act, section 1631(g).

<sup>2</sup>States must enter into an agreement with SSA to receive IAR payments. States agree to reimburse to individuals any excess amounts within 10 working days and to protect the rights to a hearing of individuals aggrieved by State actions.

interim assistance, a descriptive analysis of the IAR caseload was undertaken. This report describes the characteristics of individuals on whose behalf SSA reimbursed State or local agencies in August 1983. The data are from 4,029 cases in 32 States where payments were made.<sup>3</sup> Table 1 lists States, shows the effective date of the IAR agreement with SSA, the number of IAR payments made in August 1983, and those States with federally administered SSI State supplements.

The IAR cases were originally identified from the "activity list." There were 4,057 cases on the list. The data were obtained from the January 1984 supplemental security record for 4,029 cases using the characteristics extract record (CER) format. Classification of cases by State was based on the residence of the individual as coded in the CER. This information differed in a few instances from the grant reimbursement (GR) code that identifies the State and county to which the IAR payment was made.

It is expected that personal characteristics of persons who received interim assistance from a State or local agency did not change between the two dates (August 1983 to January 1984). Economic and program variables may have changed, although the amount of change could not be measured from the data used in the analysis.

## General Characteristics

The August 1983 IAR caseload was almost equally divided between men and women. Almost half were white, a fourth black, and the remainder of undetermined or other races (table 2). There were substantially more persons aged 50-59 who received interim assistance than there were in any of the other age group intervals. Few were younger than age 18 or older than age 65. Only 1 in 10 was married; the rest were divorced, separated, widowed, or never married.

About half the persons for whom IAR payments were made had no income other than their assistance payments. More than 4 in 10 received title II (social security) benefits. Half also received food stamps or had applied for food stamps within 30 days before filing for SSI. Three in 20 persons had representative payees. The time from eligibility until award of SSI payments was 6 months or

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<sup>3</sup>Iowa, Nevada, and North Carolina were not providing reimbursable interim assistance in August 1983 but have subsequently initiated the IAR program.

**Table 1.—Interim assistance reimbursement program**

State	Effective date of agreement	Number of payments, August 1983	Federal administration of SSI State supplementation
Alabama	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
Alaska	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
Arizona	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
Arkansas	...	...	Mandatory only
California	02/11/75	588	Optional
Colorado	10/15/74	53	( <sup>1</sup> )
Connecticut	03/01/76	99	( <sup>1</sup> )
Delaware	...	...	Optional
District of Columbia	07/01/75	35	Optional
Florida	11/03/75	97	Mandatory only
Georgia	01/01/75	63	Mandatory only
Hawaii	06/18/76	40	Optional
Idaho	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
Illinois	02/01/75	342	( <sup>1</sup> )
Indiana	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
Iowa	06/15/84	( <sup>2</sup> )	Optional
Kansas	05/01/81	61	Mandatory only
Kentucky	01/01/77	20	( <sup>1</sup> )
Louisiana	12/01/74	84	Mandatory only
Maine	01/01/77	( <sup>3</sup> )	Optional
Maryland	01/02/75	123	Mandatory only
Massachusetts	02/10/75	267	Optional
Michigan	06/01/75	284	Optional
Minnesota	11/01/74	125	( <sup>1</sup> )
Mississippi	...	...	Mandatory only
Missouri	03/11/82	83	( <sup>1</sup> )
Montana	12/01/74	8	Optional
Nebraska	10/01/76	16	( <sup>1</sup> )
Nevada	05/01/84	( <sup>2</sup> )	Optional
New Hampshire	11/03/77	3	( <sup>1</sup> )
New Jersey	10/01/74	171	Optional
New Mexico	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
New York	12/09/74	585	Optional
North Carolina	07/27/83	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )
North Dakota	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
Ohio	01/01/75	138	Mandatory only
Oklahoma	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
Oregon	10/18/74	63	( <sup>1</sup> )
Pennsylvania	03/01/75	309	Optional
Rhode Island	12/16/74	20	Optional
South Carolina	...	...	( <sup>1</sup> )
South Dakota	...	...	Mandatory only
Tennessee	10/01/78	15	Mandatory only
Texas	...	...	( <sup>4</sup> )
Utah	11/01/74	18	( <sup>1</sup> )
Vermont	02/15/75	13	Optional
Virginia	03/03/75	71	( <sup>1</sup> )
Washington	10/28/74	166	Optional
West Virginia	...	...	( <sup>4</sup> )
Wisconsin	09/01/75	42	Optional
Wyoming	12/01/74	2	( <sup>1</sup> )
State unknown	...	25	...

<sup>1</sup>Federal SSI payments only. State has State-administered supplementation.

<sup>2</sup>State initiated program after August 1983.

<sup>3</sup>Terminated the program April 1, 1981.

<sup>4</sup>Federal SSI payments only. State supplementary payments not made.

less for more than half the persons and from 7 to 14 months for nearly 40 percent of them.

### Caseload Comparisons

An examination of the August 1983 interim assistance caseload showed that nearly all persons (96 percent) who were given money by a State or local agency received SSI based on disability. To determine if this group is typical, it was compared with the total caseload for disabled SSI recipients for December 1983 (table 3).

Proportionally, there were 11 percent fewer female recipients of interim assistance (49 percent) than there were recipients of SSI because of disability (60 percent).

The 13 percent relatively fewer white and 4 percent relatively fewer black recipients of interim assistance were offset by a greater proportion in the other and unknown race category. The proportions for white recipients were 60 percent (total) and 47 percent (IAR), and for black recipients they were 29 percent (total) and 25 percent (IAR). There were substantially fewer recipients of interim assistance than disabled SSI recipients who were younger than age 18 and aged 65 or older. The proportions for children were 1 percent and 9 percent and for the older group 4 percent and 20 percent, respectively. There was little variation in living arrangements; most of both groups lived in their own households.

Relatively fewer representative payees (15 percent) were

**Table 2.—Interim assistance reimbursement caseload, August 1983**

Characteristic	Number	Percent
Total .....	4,029	100.0
Sex:		
Men .....	2,052	50.9
Women .....	1,977	49.1
Race:		
White .....	1,897	47.1
Black .....	973	24.5
Other and unknown .....	1,159	28.8
Age:		
Under 18 .....	22	.6
18-21 .....	201	5.0
22-29 .....	669	16.6
30-39 .....	649	16.1
40-49 .....	692	17.2
50-59 .....	1,230	30.5
60-64 .....	414	10.3
65 or older .....	152	3.8
Living arrangement:		
Own household .....	3,471	86.2
Another's household .....	385	9.6
Parent's household .....	16	.4
Title XIX institution or unknown .....	157	3.9
Payee:		
Representative .....	611	15.2
Recipient .....	3,418	84.8
Unearned income:		
Title II .....	1,762	43.7
Veterans' Administration .....	62	1.5
In-kind .....	115	2.9
Other .....	8	.2
None .....	2,082	51.7
Marital status:		
Married .....	385	9.6
Unmarried .....	3,644	90.4
Food stamp status:		
Receiving <sup>1</sup> .....	2,009	49.9
Not receiving .....	1,328	33.0
Other .....	692	17.2
Pay status:		
Current-pay .....	2,671	66.3
Nonpay, excess income .....	595	14.8
Terminated/lost eligibility .....	268	6.7
Terminated/death .....	222	5.5
Other .....	273	6.7
Current eligibility was—		
1980 or before .....	60	1.5
1981 .....	233	5.8
1982 .....	1,159	28.8
January 1983 .....	170	4.2
February 1983 .....	204	5.1
March 1983 .....	418	10.4
April 1983 .....	566	14.1
May 1983 .....	630	15.6
June 1983 .....	369	9.2
July 1983 .....	159	4.0
August 1983 .....	43	1.1
Unknown .....	18	.5
Date of onset was—		
1980 or before .....	112	2.8
1981 .....	276	6.9
1982 .....	1,291	32.0
January 1983 .....	206	5.1
February 1983 .....	207	5.1
March 1983 .....	413	10.3
April 1983 .....	513	12.7
May 1983 .....	529	13.1
June 1983 .....	253	6.3
July 1983 .....	47	1.2
August-December 1983 .....	4	.1
Inapplicable .....	178	4.4

<sup>1</sup>Includes those who applied within 30 days before filing for SSI.

found among those provided interim assistance than the total caseload for the disabled (38 percent). This difference could be a result of fewer children receiving interim assistance, a group most likely to have a representative payee. More of the recipients of interim assistance had income in addition to SSI (48 percent) than did disabled SSI recipients (45 percent). Those with no income could be expected to continue to receive SSI payments, thus accounting for the smaller proportion of recipients with unearned income among the total caseload for the disabled. The fact that some individuals receive interim assistance until they are simultaneously determined to be eligible for both title II and SSI benefits could explain why more recipients of interim assistance than disabled SSI recipients had title II benefits (44 percent and 36 percent, respectively.)

### Average Payments

National payment standards and uniform eligibility requirements for the Federal SSI program require that payment levels not vary among individuals simply because of their demographic characteristics. Variations in the amount paid result from differences in countable income and in living arrangements. The supplementary payment amount, however, varies among States.

The average January 1984 Federal SSI payment was \$227.27 for all individuals for whom IAR payments were made in August 1983 (table 4). The comparable State

**Table 3.—Percentage distribution of August 1983 interim assistance reimbursement caseload and total December 1983 SSI disability caseload**

Characteristic	IAR caseload	Disability caseload
Total .....	100.0	100.0
Sex:		
Men .....	50.9	39.8
Women .....	49.1	60.2
Race:		
White .....	47.1	60.3
Black .....	24.2	28.5
Other and unknown .....	28.7	11.2
Age:		
Under 18 .....	.6	8.6
18-21 .....	5.0	5.4
22-29 .....	16.6	12.0
30-39 .....	16.1	11.8
40-49 .....	17.2	10.8
50-59 .....	30.5	18.4
60-64 .....	10.3	12.9
65 or older .....	3.8	20.1
Living arrangement:		
Own household .....	86.2	87.7
Another's household .....	9.6	6.3
Parent's household .....	.4	
Title XIX institution or unknown .....	3.9	5.8
Payee:		
Representative .....	15.2	37.5
Recipient .....	84.8	62.5
Unearned income:		
Title II .....	43.7	36.3
Veterans' Administration .....	1.5	2.0
In-kind .....	2.9	3.0
Other .....	.2	3.8
None .....	51.7	54.9

supplementation level was \$57.28. Relatively higher Federal averages were noted for women (\$231.34), blacks (\$239.08), persons under age 18 (\$266.89), and unmarried individuals (\$228.94). Those who lived in another's household or who received title II or veterans' benefits had smaller average SSI payments.

## Continuing Eligibility

Only two-thirds of the individuals who were provided interim assistance by a State or local agency in August 1983 received an SSI payment in January 1984 (table 5). The remaining third were not paid for various reasons.

**Table 4.—Average Federal and State supplemental security income (SSI) payment for August 1983 and interim assistance reimbursement caseload in current-pay status in January 1984**

Characteristic	Current-pay status	Average payment	
		Federal SSI	State supplementation
Total .....	2,671	\$227.27	\$57.28
Sex:			
Men .....	1,128	221.71	60.19
Women .....	1,543	231.34	55.15
Race:			
White .....	1,204	213.76	59.39
Black .....	651	239.08	49.94
Other and unknown .....	816	237.79	60.03
Age:			
Under 18 .....	18	266.89	28.78
18-21 .....	162	258.10	54.68
22-29 .....	451	216.17	62.71
30-39 .....	397	228.93	58.03
40-49 .....	427	236.03	58.02
50-59 .....	811	229.36	50.35
60-64 .....	284	206.80	60.82
65 or older .....	121	219.21	77.89
Living arrangement:			
Own household .....	2,467	232.73	59.43
Another's household .....	162	174.29	38.19
Parent's household .....	14	283.14	13.86
Title XIX institution or unknown .....	28	25.00	0
Payee:			
Representative .....	420	227.14	57.62
Recipient .....	2,251	227.30	57.22
Unearned income:			
Title II .....	838	86.89	58.35
Veterans' Administration .....	25	88.48	74.40
In-kind .....	76	253.62	50.16
Other .....	4	239.00	13.25
None .....	1,728	296.18	56.93
Marital status:			
Married .....	223	208.95	54.70
Unmarried .....	2,448	228.94	57.52
Food stamp status:			
Receiving <sup>1</sup> .....	1,283	237.77	26.59
Not receiving .....	850	220.24	46.24
Other .....	538	213.37	147.93
Current eligibility was—			
1980 or before .....	39	237.64	64.41
1981 .....	151	226.75	71.82
1982 .....	779	215.15	69.78
January 1983 .....	109	220.74	64.89
February 1983 .....	130	237.09	62.97
March 1983 .....	276	238.92	49.46
April 1983 .....	382	234.56	49.24
May 1983 .....	418	244.79	46.81
June 1983 .....	214	223.76	36.31
July 1983 .....	104	193.43	56.63
August 1983 .....	39	218.95	79.56
Unknown .....	3	205.67	86.00
Date of onset was—			
1980 or before .....	64	195.78	58.63
1981 .....	169	215.50	70.11
1982 .....	822	208.20	69.21
January 1983 .....	117	206.75	61.44
February 1983 .....	133	231.80	59.68
March 1983 .....	272	240.44	48.41
April 1983 .....	360	245.73	47.71
May 1983 .....	379	258.20	44.27
June 1983 .....	186	237.94	35.56
July 1983 .....	33	234.61	32.33
August-December 1983 .....	1	314.00	0
Inapplicable .....	135	206.68	78.35

<sup>1</sup>Includes those who applied within 30 days before filing for SSI.

**Table 5.—Interim assistance reimbursement caseload in August 1983 and number and percent in current-pay status in January 1984**

Characteristic	August 1983 IAR caseload		August 1983–January 1984 retention rate
	Total	In current pay, January 1984	
Total .....	4,029	2,671	66.3
Sex:			
Men .....	2,052	1,128	55.0
Women .....	1,977	1,543	78.0
Race:			
White .....	1,897	1,204	63.5
Black .....	973	651	66.9
Other and unknown .....	1,159	816	70.4
Age:			
Under 18 .....	22	18	81.8
18–21 .....	201	162	80.6
22–29 .....	669	451	67.4
30–39 .....	649	397	61.2
40–49 .....	692	427	61.7
50–59 .....	1,230	811	66.0
60–64 .....	414	284	68.6
65 or older .....	152	121	79.6
Living arrangement:			
Own household .....	3,471	2,467	71.1
Another's household .....	385	162	42.1
Parent's household .....	16	14	87.5
Title XIX institution or unknown .....	157	28	17.8
Payee:			
Representative .....	611	420	68.7
Recipient .....	3,418	2,251	65.9
Uncearned income:			
Title II .....	1,762	838	47.6
Veterans' Administration .....	62	25	40.3
In-kind .....	115	76	66.1
Other .....	8	4	50.0
None .....	2,082	1,728	83.0
Marital status:			
Married .....	385	223	57.9
Unmarried .....	3,644	2,448	67.2
Food stamp status:			
Receiving <sup>1</sup> .....	2,009	1,283	63.9
Not receiving .....	1,328	850	64.0
Other .....	692	538	77.7
Current eligibility was—			
1980 or before .....	60	39	65.0
1981 .....	233	151	64.8
1982 .....	1,159	779	67.2
January 1983 .....	170	109	64.1
February 1983 .....	204	130	63.7
March 1983 .....	418	276	66.0
April 1983 .....	566	382	67.5
May 1983 .....	630	418	66.3
June 1983 .....	369	214	65.3
July 1983 .....	159	104	65.4
August 1983 .....	43	39	90.7
Unknown .....	18	3	16.7
Date of onset was—			
1980 or before .....	112	64	57.1
1981 .....	276	169	61.2
1982 .....	1,291	822	63.7
January 1983 .....	206	117	56.8
February 1983 .....	207	133	64.3
March 1983 .....	413	272	65.9
April 1983 .....	513	360	70.2
May 1983 .....	529	379	71.6
June 1983 .....	253	186	73.5
July 1983 .....	47	33	70.2
August–December 1983 .....	4	1	25.0
Inapplicable .....	178	135	75.8

<sup>1</sup>Includes those who applied within 30 days before filing for SSI.

Some had been placed in nonpay status because of excess income (15 percent), loss of eligibility (7 percent), or death (6 percent). Other reasons each accounted for 1 percent or less of the total number of recipients not receiving SSI.

Fewer male recipients of interim assistance in August 1983 remained on SSI in January 1984 (55 percent) than did female recipients (78 percent). The race of an individual appeared to have no bearing on continuing eligibility. Both the youngest and oldest age groups had

high continuation rates (80 percent or more). Continuing eligibility rates dropped into the 60 percent range for the other age groups. The retention rate by age resembles an inverse bell-shaped curve.

Most individuals living with their parents continued to receive SSI, as did many who lived in their own homes. Only 4 in 10 of those who lived in the household of another remained on the SSI rolls. Nearly all the residents of title XIX (Medicaid) institutions had stopped receiving SSI. The recipient's payee status had little effect on whether he or she continued to receive assistance.

Individuals with some income were much more likely than those without income to leave the SSI rolls. About half (52 percent) of the social security beneficiaries no longer received SSI. Being married also increased the chances that SSI payments would be terminated. Neither the date of current eligibility nor the onset of disability contributed to substantial variation in retention rates.

## State IAR Caseloads

Thirty-two States have agreements that allow for interim assistance reimbursement. California and New York, with nearly 600 cases each, account for 30 percent of the total. These States plus Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Michigan account for about half of all the cases. Massachusetts, New Jersey, Washington, Ohio, Minnesota, and Maryland account for 25 percent. Little variation existed among the States in the distribution of cases by other selected characteristics. The greatest amount of variation usually occurred among States with very few IAR cases.

## Readings in Social Security\*

The following is a sample of recent acquisitions of the Social Security Library in Baltimore. After the general list of new materials is a more selected list of books and periodicals on long-term care for older persons that may be of specific interest to those interested in health issues that affect older Americans.

### General List

Chamber of Commerce of the United States,  
**Employee Benefits 1984.** Washington, DC: CCUS, 1985

On an industry-by-industry basis, shows company paid benefits for health care, FICA taxes, private pensions,

\*Prepared by the Reference Staff, Social Security Library. These titles are available at local libraries or through the interlibrary loan system. The SSA Library is located in Room 571, Altmeyer Building, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

vacations, holidays, and rest and lunch periods for 1984. Also reveals the trends of these categories of benefits as a percentage of payroll from 1951 to 1984.

Committee on an Aging Society, **Health in an Older Society.** Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1985. 241 pages.

This report addresses two kinds of health issues. It first considers the patterns of age and disability in older persons today and likely patterns in the future. It then projects what kinds of services will be required by an aging society.

Guest, Dennis,  
**The Emergence of Social Security in Canada,** 2nd ed., rev. Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia Press, 1985. 303 pages.

The first edition of this book focused on the development of social security in Canada before World War II. In this second edition, the author records the changes in the economy and in social policies that have occurred since the late 1970's, including the early months of a new Conservative government.

National Commission for Employment Policy, **Older Workers: Prospects, Problems and Policies, 9th Annual Report (Report No. 17).** Washington, DC: NCEP, 1985. 69 pages.

This report concentrates on employment issues in terms of poor people who are working or desire gainful employment. On the basis of the findings and conclusions contained in this report, the Commission gives its recommendations for improving the employment conditions of older workers.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development,  
**Measuring Health Care, 1960-1983: Expenditure, Costs and Performance.** Paris, France: OECD, 1985.

A "first attempt to establish a consistent statistical basis which will permit international comparisons" of the cost and results of health care delivery for 29 nations.

U.S. Congress, Senate, Special Committee on Aging,  
**Aging America: Trends and Projections, 1985-86 Edition.** Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, 1986. 129 pages.

This report provides a broad overview of the health, income, employment, housing, and social conditions of today's population aged 65 or older. Where possible,