

Understanding the Needs of Individuals that Leave Disability Programs

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is conducting the Beyond Benefits Study to collect information about the service, medical, and employment needs of working-age adults exiting Social Security disability programs due to medical improvement.



Study Background

SSA periodically reviews the medical impairments of many Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program beneficiaries. If the review determines a substantial improvement in health status, then the beneficiary “exits” from the program and their benefits cease. Individuals who leave disability programs tend to reapply or return to disability programs with little success at finding sustainable employment and only few engage in a level of work that supports self-sufficiency (Hemmeter & Stegman, 2013; Hemmeter & Bailey, 2016).

The goal of this information gathering is to identify potential interventions and to inform policy recommendations that are likely to help individuals exited (Exiters) or possibly exiting (Possible Exiters) to achieve sustainable, substantial work that leads to self-sufficiency. Data collection through key informant interviews, a nationally representative survey, and a Motivational Interview Pilot will focus on identifying service, medical, and employment needs of Exiters and Possible Exiters. The study will be completed in November 2024.

Overview of the Study

Research Questions

1. What are the service, medical, and employment needs to achieve sustainable, substantive employment among individuals who exit SSDI/SSI programs?
2. What types of services, resources and interventions, that help individuals exiting SSDI/SSI programs become and remain employed, should SSA consider testing in a larger study?
3. What policy recommendations will facilitate substantive and sustainable employment among individuals who exit SSDI/SSI programs?

Data Collection Activities

Qualitative Data

Interviews and focus groups

Quantitative Data

Survey and SSA program data

Motivational Interviewing Pilot Test

Reporting Activities

- ❖ Summary of findings about target population
- ❖ Intervention recommendations
- ❖ Inform policy recommendations