



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on July 31, 2013

Study: Disability Recipients Admit Finding Employment Isn't a Priority

According to a 2009 study by the Social Security Administration, recipients of federal disability checks acknowledge that finding a job is not a priority, with a startling majority making no effort to gain professional or educational skills to find employment. While the study was published years ago, it was just recently [brought to light](#) by the *Washington Examiner*, which released a lengthy report on the findings, including the fact that many recipients admit that pursuing opportunities to escape the disability rolls is not among their goals.



Compiled from responses of 2,300 disability beneficiaries, the report noted that most recipients had not seen a doctor or received medical treatment for their condition within a year, even though medical issues are the basis for qualification of disability benefits. The *Examiner* inspected the results from the individuals surveyed and condensed the findings into a pool, which helped highlight the survey's trends.

Unearned disability, or [Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\)](#), applies to individuals who have very limited income and assets, and who have petitioned to be classified as disabled. Earned disability, or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), applies to individuals who were previously employed and have rendered at least some of their income into Social Security before becoming disabled. Approximately 11 million Americans are on the SSDI roll, while seven million Americans are receiving SSI benefits.

Whereas if recipients' claims for disability are genuine one would expect both groups to give similar answers to questions about their levels of suffering, this was not the case. Recipients of government checks in the SSI program were found to have less bodily pain than recipients who paid into the system, according to the analysis, and they are typically uneducated, overweight, or were raised in broken homes.

The *Examiner* listed some of the most noteworthy results of the report:

- Returning to work is not a goal for 71 percent of the SSDI recipients, [or] 60 percent of the SSI recipients.
- 75 percent of the SSDI recipients don't see themselves returning to work within five years, 65 percent of the SSI recipients don't.
- 72 percent of the small number of SSDI recipients who started a job while on disability got cash under the table, as did 70 percent of the small number of SSI recipients who started a job while on disability.
- 24 percent of the SSDI recipients lack even GEDs, as do 43 percent of the SSI recipients.

The *Examiner* also reported that many recipients were in a "general cycle of poverty" — a way of life



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wherein families break down, education efforts fail, and government dependency is virtually assured. The cycle is especially apparent when evaluating recipients who have little knowledge about their fathers.

For example, 30 percent of SSDI recipients are unsure of the highest year or grade their father finished in school, while 40 percent of SSI recipients answered the same; thirty-one percent of SSDI recipients noted that their father did not complete high school or receive a GED, while 26 percent of SSI recipients reported the same.

The number of people claiming disabilities has climbed upward since the recession began. *Investor's Business Daily* [noted](#) in a 2012 report: "More workers joined the federal government's disability program in June than got new jobs, according to two new government reports, a clear indicator of how bleak the nation's jobs picture is after three full years of economic recovery."

With an aging U.S. population, a weakened job market, and a relaxing of eligibility requirements for disability, fraud has undoubtedly played an integral role in the government's rapidly expanding disability system. The U.S. Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations [reported](#) last September that 25 percent of disability cases were granted benefits "without properly addressing insufficient, contradictory and incomplete evidence."

In an 18-month investigation, the 136-page Senate report concluded that the Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security income programs are not only riddled with cheats but that the programs are "teetering on financial bankruptcy."



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