
Notes

The tables in this section provide data on the outcomes of disabled-worker applications. The data on applications are derived from the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) Disability Research File (DRF) maintained by the Office of Disability Programs. Each year the DRF is updated with information about applications for disability benefits that is then used to determine the outcome of those applications. The outcome data in these tables are reported by year of filing and include decisions made through the administrative appeals process.

Table 50 shows the total number of applications filed in a year, the number denied for nonmedical reasons before a medical decision is made (technical denials), the number that are pending a final decision, the outcome of applications for which a medical allowance or denial was made, and award and allowance rates. Applications for which a medical allowance or denial decision was made but were subsequently denied for nonmedical reasons are shown under the medical decision header as subsequent denials. The most common nonmedical reason for denying a claim is insufficient number of recent work credits.

The allowance rate is calculated by dividing the number of medical allowances (including subsequent technical denials) by the total number of medical decisions made for a 1-year cohort. The award rate is a broader program measure that is calculated as the number of allowances minus subsequent denials divided by total applications (minus pending claims) filed for a given year.

Claims that remain pending after 6 years are probably the result of imperfect data rather than excessive delays in the decisionmaking process. It is highly probable that decisions have been rendered on most of the older claims. For more recent years, the award and allowance rates will change as decisions are made on pending claims.

Tables 51–53 show the allowance rate for Social Security only and the Social Security portion of concurrent (a claim for both Social Security and SSI disability benefits) applications, one for each level in the administrative decisionmaking process, that is, initial, reconsideration, and hearing or higher level.

Beginning with 2000, the proportion of claims awarded at each level of the process changed as a result of the Prototype Process being tested in 10 states. Under this test, the reconsideration step of the appeals process was eliminated for applications filed October 1, 1999, or later. Elimination of the reconsideration level in these states results in a decrease in the aggregate proportion of claims awarded at this step.

This section includes one table that shows the reason for medical allowance and one that shows reason for medical denial (Tables 54 and 55). The reasons are derived from the sequential evaluation process used by decisionmakers. SSA maintains a list of impairments that are considered disabling under its regulations. An applicant can be found to be disabled if he or she:

- Has a listed impairment,
- Has a severe impairment that is equal to a listed impairment,
- Has a severe impairment when medical and vocational factors are considered, or
- Had previously established entitlement to a disability benefit.

An applicant can be denied benefits if he or she:

- Has an impairment that is not expected to last 12 months,
 - Has an impairment that is not considered severe,
 - Is able to perform his or her usual type of work,
 - Is able to perform another type of work, or
 - Has an impairment resulting from drug addiction or alcoholism, provides insufficient medical evidence, fails to cooperate, fails to follow prescribed treatment, does not want to continue development of the claim, or returns to substantial work before disability can be established.
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Outcomes of Applications for Disabled-Worker Benefits

Table 50.
Outcomes at all adjudicative levels, by year of application, 1992–2001

Year	Total	Pending final decision	Technical denials ^a	Medical decisions				Award rate ^d (percent)	Allowance rate ^e (percent)
				Denials		Allowances			
				Medical	Subsequent nonmedical ^b	Awards	Subsequent denials ^c		
1992	1,310,004	0	130,885	481,439	5,725	689,111	2,844	52.6	58.8
1993	1,384,501	0	140,314	540,998	5,626	694,915	2,648	50.2	56.2
1994	1,383,092	0	130,246	573,402	5,507	671,540	2,397	48.6	53.9
1995	1,301,472	6,156	123,651	536,589	5,052	627,788	2,236	48.5	53.9
1996	1,313,818	7,586	116,932	531,269	5,014	650,901	2,116	49.8	55.0
1997	1,164,680	8,321	106,807	443,910	4,219	599,564	1,859	51.8	57.4
1998	1,138,101	10,420	96,627	415,648	4,220	609,141	2,045	54.0	59.4
1999	1,167,664	21,287	102,203	407,277	4,040	631,067	1,790	55.0	60.7
2000	1,257,160	73,927	133,821	405,907	3,930	637,677	1,898	53.9	61.1
2001	1,388,090	239,575	167,075	415,530	3,836	560,094	1,980	48.8	57.4

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Disability Research file, 100 percent data.

NOTES: Data for the initial and reconsideration levels are current through June 2002. Data for the hearing level or above are current through July 2002.

Because a number of applications remain pending for more recent years, the award and allowance rates will change over time. Cases can be pending at the initial or appellate levels and can include either medical or technical issues.

Includes decisions for Social Security-only applications and applications for both Social Security and SSI. Does not include SSI-only applications.

- a. Applications denied for nonmedical reasons so no decision was made on severity of impairment.
- b. Applications denied for nonmedical reasons after a decision was made that applicant did not meet the medical severity criteria for disability benefits.
- c. Applications denied for nonmedical reasons after a decision was made that applicant met the medical severity criteria for disability benefits.
- d. Rate determined by dividing awards by all applications minus pending claims for that year.
- e. Rate determined by dividing medical allowances by all medical decisions for that year.

CONTACT: Clark Pickett (410) 965-9016 or di.asr@ssa.gov for further information.

Outcomes of Applications for Disabled-Worker Benefits

Table 51.
Medical decisions at the initial adjudicative level, by year of application and program, 1992–2001

Year	All decisions			Decisions on applications for Social Security only			Decisions on applications for both Social Security and SSI		
	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)
1992	1,179,119	436,715	37.0	558,741	248,385	44.5	620,378	188,330	30.4
1993	1,244,187	421,560	33.9	571,464	240,839	42.1	672,723	180,721	26.9
1994	1,252,846	390,785	31.2	591,402	233,059	39.4	661,444	157,726	23.8
1995	1,177,754	367,293	31.2	569,956	223,457	39.2	607,798	143,836	23.7
1996	1,196,824	384,167	32.1	593,986	237,474	40.0	602,838	146,693	24.3
1997	1,057,779	357,880	33.8	551,876	228,793	41.5	505,903	129,087	25.5
1998	1,041,340	374,376	36.0	550,751	238,989	43.4	490,589	135,387	27.6
1999	1,065,234	397,335	37.3	578,691	259,910	44.9	486,543	137,425	28.2
2000	1,122,536	433,188	38.6	609,243	281,585	46.2	513,293	151,603	29.5
2001	1,218,623	479,779	39.4	652,076	312,640	47.9	566,547	167,139	29.5

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Disability Research file, 100 percent data.

NOTES: Data are current through June 2002.

Because a number of applications remain pending for more recent years, the allowance rate will change over time.

Applications with a medical decision may be pending a final nonmedical decision or subsequently denied for nonmedical reasons.

a. Rate determined by dividing medical allowances by all medical decisions for that year.

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Outcomes of Applications for Disabled-Worker Benefits

Table 52.
Medical decisions at the reconsideration level, by year of application and program, 1992–2001

Year	All decisions			Decisions on applications for Social Security only			Decisions on applications for both Social Security and SSI		
	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)
1992	419,798	53,881	12.8	190,594	25,352	13.3	229,204	28,529	12.4
1993	469,151	58,275	12.4	206,606	27,306	13.2	262,545	30,969	11.8
1994	489,725	62,757	12.8	226,007	31,468	13.9	263,718	31,289	11.9
1995	458,029	60,584	13.2	218,943	31,563	14.4	239,086	29,021	12.1
1996	464,576	65,466	14.1	226,327	33,596	14.8	238,249	31,870	13.4
1997	403,192	59,978	14.9	206,115	33,373	16.2	197,077	26,605	13.5
1998	384,954	61,742	16.0	199,249	34,043	17.1	185,705	27,699	14.9
1999	385,349	57,808	15.0	203,636	33,192	16.3	181,713	24,616	13.5
2000	388,345	54,356	14.0	204,118	31,327	15.3	184,227	23,029	12.5
2001	347,863	41,015	11.8	177,859	23,677	13.3	170,004	17,338	10.2

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Disability Research file, 100 percent data.

NOTES: Data are current through June 2002.

Because a number of applications remain pending for more recent years, the allowance rate will change over time.

Applications with a medical decision may be pending a final nonmedical decision or subsequently denied for nonmedical reasons.

A revised process was introduced on October 1, 1999, in 10 states, under which initial denials could be appealed directly to the hearing level without a reconsideration.

a. Rate determined by dividing medical allowances by all medical decisions for that year.

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Outcomes of Applications for Disabled-Worker Benefits

Table 53.
Medical decisions at the hearing level or above, by year of application and program, 1992–2001

Year	All decisions			Decisions on applications for Social Security only			Decisions on applications for both Social Security and SSI		
	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)	Total	Allowances	Allowance rate ^a (percent)
1992	275,863	201,359	73.0	131,624	105,371	80.1	144,239	95,988	66.5
1993	310,655	217,724	70.1	143,997	112,561	78.2	166,658	105,163	63.1
1994	323,601	220,394	68.1	156,452	119,251	76.2	167,149	101,143	60.5
1995	295,811	202,147	68.3	148,614	113,512	76.4	147,197	88,635	60.2
1996	298,700	203,384	68.1	154,758	115,671	74.7	143,942	87,713	60.9
1997	259,010	183,565	70.9	137,317	106,259	77.4	121,693	77,306	63.5
1998	241,121	175,068	72.6	130,092	102,764	79.0	111,029	72,304	65.1
1999	238,480	177,714	74.5	131,091	105,509	80.5	107,389	72,205	67.2
2000	202,880	152,031	74.9	113,620	91,817	80.8	89,260	60,214	67.5
2001	53,555	41,280	77.1	31,333	25,817	82.4	22,222	15,463	69.6

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Disability Research file, 100 percent data.

NOTES: Data are current through July 2002.

Because a number of applications remain pending for more recent years, the allowance rate will change over time.

Applications with a medical decision may be pending a final nonmedical decision or subsequently denied for nonmedical reasons.

A revised process was introduced on October 1, 1999, in 10 states, under which initial denials could be appealed directly to the hearing level without a reconsideration.

a. Rate determined by dividing medical allowances by all medical decisions for that year.

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Outcomes of Applications for Disabled-Worker Benefits

Table 54.
Percentage distribution of final medical allowances, by year of application and reason for allowance, 1992–2001

Year	Total		Meets level of severity of listings	Equals level of severity of listings	Medical and vocational factors considered	Other ^a
	Number	Percent				
1992	689,111	100.0	34.3	11.1	24.3	30.3
1993	694,915	100.0	34.3	8.7	23.6	33.4
1994	671,540	100.0	34.5	6.9	25.6	32.9
1995	627,788	100.0	34.5	6.8	26.9	31.9
1996	650,901	100.0	34.2	7.0	27.5	31.3
1997	599,564	100.0	35.1	7.6	26.5	30.8
1998	609,141	100.0	35.7	6.6	27.1	30.5
1999	631,067	100.0	34.1	6.3	28.7	30.9
2000	637,677	100.0	34.4	7.1	33.2	25.3
2001	560,094	100.0	40.4	8.4	40.9	10.3

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Disability Research file, 100 percent data.

NOTES: Data for the initial and reconsideration levels are current through June 2002. Data for the hearing level or above are current through July 2002.

Because a number of applications remain pending for more recent years, the numbers and percentages will change over time.

Applications with a medical decision may be pending a final nonmedical decision or subsequently denied for nonmedical reasons.

Includes decisions for Social Security-only applications and applications for both Social Security and SSI. Does not include SSI-only claims.

a. Includes applications for which the disability was previously established and those for which the basis for the determination is not available.

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Outcomes of Applications for Disabled-Worker Benefits

Table 55.
Percentage distribution of final medical denials, by year of application and reason for denial, 1992–2001

Year	Total		Impairment did not or is not expected to last 12 months	Impairment is not severe	Able to do usual past work	Able to do other type of work	Other ^a
	Number	Percent					
1992	487,164	100.0	10.7	22.9	28.4	29.6	8.4
1993	546,624	100.0	10.4	22.7	27.6	29.8	9.5
1994	578,909	100.0	10.2	21.5	25.9	28.8	13.6
1995	541,641	100.0	10.7	20.9	25.5	29.6	13.4
1996	536,283	100.0	10.3	19.8	24.9	30.8	14.2
1997	448,129	100.0	10.7	18.6	25.8	30.6	14.2
1998	419,868	100.0	10.9	18.3	27.7	30.7	12.4
1999	411,317	100.0	10.8	17.4	29.2	29.8	12.8
2000	409,837	100.0	10.8	16.7	29.1	29.1	14.3
2001	419,366	100.0	10.3	15.9	28.9	29.4	15.6

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Disability Research file, 100 percent data.

NOTES: Data for the initial and reconsideration levels are current through June 2002. Data for the hearing level or above are current through July 2002.

Because a number of applications remain pending for more recent years, the numbers and percentages will change over time.

Applications with a medical decision may be pending a final nonmedical decision or subsequently denied for nonmedical reasons.

Includes decisions for Social Security-only applications and applications for both Social Security and SSI. Does not include SSI-only claims.

a. Applicant has an impairment resulting from drug addiction or alcoholism, provided insufficient medical evidence, failed to cooperate, failed to follow prescribed treatment, did not want to continue development of the claim, or returned to substantial work before disability could be established.

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