

**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
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**Social Security Column
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SOCIAL SECURITY HELPS THE HOMELESS

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More than half a million Americans experience homelessness on any given night. Nearly 20 percent of them are “chronically homeless,” meaning they are on the streets regularly. Social Security has several programs that pay benefits to qualified individuals, including those who are homeless. These programs include retirement, disability, and survivors benefits, as well as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is a needs-based program for people who are blind, disabled, or age 65 or older. If you know someone who is homeless, and you want to learn more about how Social Security might help, a good place to get information is at www.socialsecurity.gov/homelessness.

That page includes a link to the Spotlight on Homelessness — a website designed to help the homeless apply for SSI. It’s available at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-homeless.htm.

The homelessness page also includes links to information on health care for the homeless, institutionalization, advocacy groups, reports on homeless outreach, and even links to other websites like the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and HUD. You’ll find other information helpful to the homeless on www.socialsecurity.gov. For example, there is a link to our Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool, or BEST. Based on answers to various questions, this tool helps determine the benefits someone might be eligible for and gives information about how to qualify and apply. Go directly to www.socialsecurity.gov/best.

Tell anyone you know who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to use the Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool and to check out the different types of benefits and assistance they may be eligible to receive. Spread the word about the help available to the homeless. Visit www.socialsecurity.gov/homelessness to learn more.