



Have you ever wished you had “done it right the first time”? For individuals who experience a work-disrupting illness or disability, applying for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is one of those times.

About 38 million Americans live with severe disabilities, and they are more likely to experience persistent poverty and unemployment. SSDI is often a lifeline for former workers, providing a monthly income and access to Medicare. SSDI benefits keep 3 million Americans out of poverty and reduce the depth of poverty for another 1.9 million people.¹

How Project Empower Helps

Project Empower provides immediate assistance to individuals who need to determine their eligibility for SSDI and return to work benefits, and helps eligible individuals complete the application process.

In a 2016 survey:

- 86% of Vincentians said they regularly assist people who have a chronic or mental illness/disability.
- 57% said they sometimes/often receive questions about disability benefits.
- 27% said they often/sometimes get questions about returning to work.

However, despite this need:

- 74% said they did not have a good understanding of the SSDI process.
- 72% said they were not confident in their ability to identify individuals who are eligible for SSDI.
- 93% said they did not have a good understanding of Social Security’s Ticket to Work program.

What You Can Do

- Include Project Empower, and the website **SVDP.Allsup.com** in conference/parish resource lists.
- View and share the Project Empower training video at **bit.ly/ProjectEmpower**.
- Refer individuals who are not working due to a disability to **SVDP.Allsup.com**.

Help Others Do It Right The First Time

Most individuals who apply for SSDI do it themselves, and approximately 67% are denied. They then join over a million other Americans in the SSDI backlog, where they must wait an average 564 days for a hearing.

Getting expert help from Allsup at the beginning of the SSDI application process ensures they do it right the first time. Connecting them with Allsup increases their chances of avoiding the backlog and of being approved at the initial application level by 50%! Receiving benefits quickly helps avoid the negative consequences of little or no income for an extended amount of time.

Please contact me with questions or to coordinate a training session for your council/conferences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tai Prohaska'.

Tai Prohaska, MPH
Allsup manager of Strategic Alliances
t.prohaska@allsupinc.com

¹Social Security Disability Insurance: A Lifeline for Millions of American Workers and Their Families (2015), WhiteHouse.gov.

