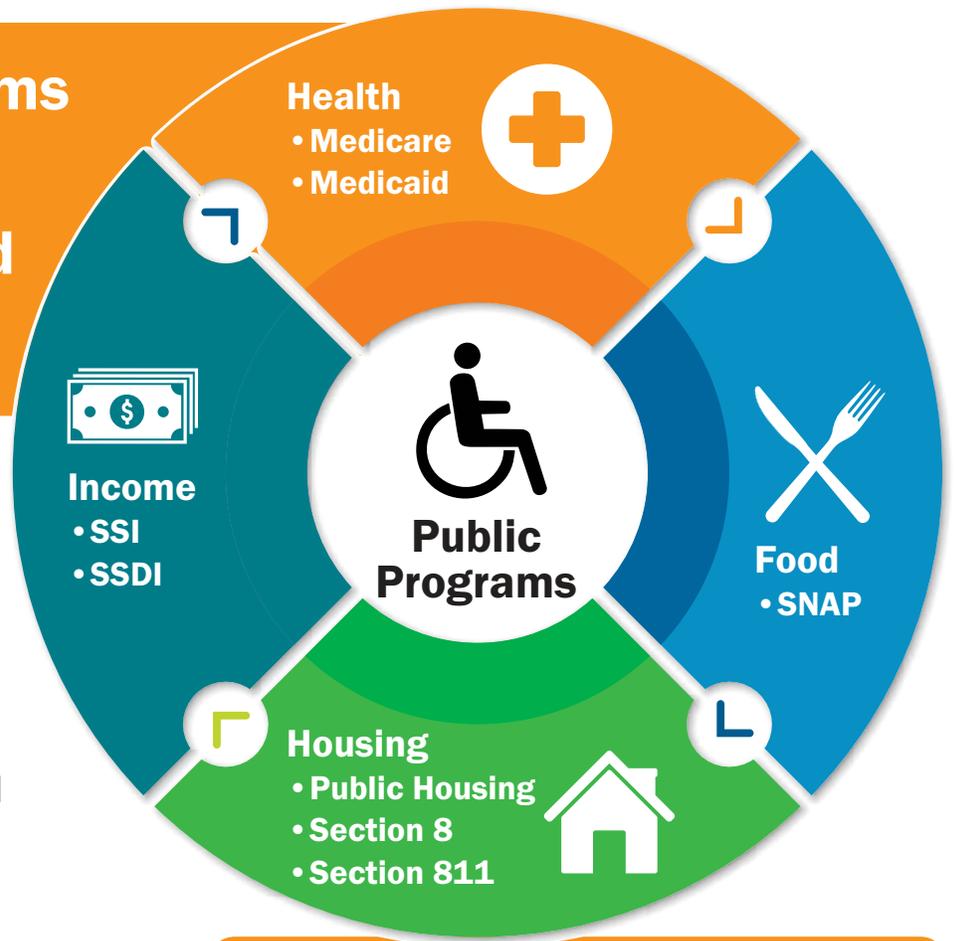


# Public benefit reforms will harm people with disabilities and their caregivers

People with disabilities may rely on multiple public programs to live in their own homes. Changes or threats to these programs can unravel supports and could result in an expensive Medicaid-funded institutional setting.



## Supplemental Security Income (SSI) & Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- **14%** (or 1,820,000 people) of SSI and SSDI beneficiaries have an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD).
- Children with I/DD make up **9%** of the children enrolled in SSI; **80%** of these kids will remain on SSI after age 18.
- More than **20%** of SSI recipients and **8%** of SSDI recipients have a primary impairment of I/DD.<sup>1</sup>

## Medicaid

- People with disabilities account for **15%** of total Medicaid enrollment.
- Medicaid covers more than **30%** of working age adults with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>
- **More than half** of Medicaid enrollees live below the federal poverty level.

## Medicare

- **4.1 million** individuals under the age of 65 are dually eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid.
- **21% of Medicare beneficiaries and 15% of Medicaid enrollees are “dual-eligibles.”** About **7%** of dual-eligible are people with I/DD.
- More than **60%** of dual eligible beneficiaries are below the poverty level.<sup>3</sup>

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- **25%** of SNAP recipients (**11 million people**) are elderly, blind, or have a disability.<sup>4</sup>
- **46%** of Wisconsin families receiving SNAP have at least one member who is elderly, blind, or has disabilities.<sup>5</sup>
- Wisconsin’s direct care providers and family caregivers who support people with disabilities to live independently are some of the top occupations with low-wage workers using FoodShare. **28%** of personal care aides and **25%** nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides depend on SNAP benefits<sup>6</sup>

## Public Housing

- **38%** of all households in a public housing program include a member who has a disability.<sup>7</sup>
- An estimated **41%** of working-age public housing tenants have a disability, and many participate in multiple public benefit programs.<sup>8</sup>
- People with disabilities make up **20%** of HUD Public Housing program recipients, **30%** of Section 8 Housing Voucher recipients, and **100% of Section 811 recipients** which focuses on affordable, accessible housing for low income people with significant disabilities.<sup>9</sup>



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Improvements Are Needed: Many parts of the Social Security and SSI disability systems need to be strengthened to better meet the needs of people with disabilities. These include: increasing the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level for people with disabilities (currently \$1,180 per month) to the level for people who are blind (currently \$1,970 per month); increasing, and indexing for inflation, the asset limits and income exclusions for SSI; eliminating marriage penalties for people with disabilities; eliminating the two-year waiting period for Medicare; improving work incentives; and addressing policy issues which have a harsh impact on people eligible for OASDI benefits as disabled adult children.**
- **Congress should reject any cuts to Social Security or SSI, including any proposals to cut benefits or limit who can qualify.**
- **Congress should request a beneficiary impact statement on any proposal to change Social Security or SSI, to look beyond budgetary issues to the impact on people's daily lives.**
- **Congress should not consider adding work requirements in the Medicaid program.**
- **Congress should reject reductions or caps to the Medicaid program and reject any effort to block grant Medicaid.**



<sup>1</sup> All data from <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v77n1/v77n1p17.html>

<sup>2</sup> Figure includes people with physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, and traumatic brain or spinal cord injuries as well as intellectual or developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome and autism; and mental illness.

<sup>3</sup> All data from <https://www.thearc.org/what-we-do/public-policy/dual-eligibles>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-provides-needed-food-assistance-to-millions-of-people-with>

<sup>5</sup> Wisconsin Department of Health Services, FoodShare at a Glance, March 2017.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbpp.org/snap-helps-workers-put-food-on-the-table#Wisconsin>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Resident Characteristics Report as of December 31, 2017 (<https://hudapps.hud.gov/public/picj2ee/Mtcsr?category=rcttp&download=false&count=0>).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/disabilities-and-public-housing-closer-look>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.thearc.org/what-we-do/public-policy/policy-issues/housing>