



1

Agenda

- CBEST Overview
- Disability Benefits Review
- CBEST Structure, Steps, Timeline
- CBEST Referrals and Points of Contact

2

CBEST Overview

- CBEST is a program of the Department of Health Services comprised of benefit advocates, clinicians, and legal partners that assist individuals with applying for the following disability benefits programs:
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
 - Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants
 - Early/Full Retirement
 - Veteran's Benefits
 - Survivor's Benefits
- We also offer appeals support for SSI/SSDI cases

3

Benefits Overview

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (federal)

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (federal)

Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) (state)

Federal disability benefits are administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA).

4

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Means-tested safety net program
 - Limit on assets/resources (<\$2000)
- Benefit for disabled, elderly (65+), & blind individuals
- Must be citizen or documented/qualified immigrant
- Benefit amount is the **Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)-\$794**, plus available **state supplement- \$160.72** (\$954.72* total)
 - Total is slightly higher for blind individuals (\$1,011.23)
- Living arrangement may affect benefit amount/eligibility
- Medi-cal coverage awarded upon approval

5

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- Provides benefits to blind or disabled individuals who are "**insured**" based on contributions paid into Social Security Trust Fund (FICA)
 - "Insured": person has worked and paid FICA taxes in specified number of the past 10 years; Number of years depends on the age at which the person became disabled
- Benefit amount is based on FICA contribution
- No assets/resources limitations; Living arrangement has no impact on benefit amount

6

Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)

- California state SSI program equivalent (adheres to same SSI eligibility criteria)
- Program is intended for qualified immigrants with some sort of residency status that arrived after 8/23/1996
- Undocumented individuals are not eligible
- Must apply and be denied (deemed ineligible due to immigration status) for SSI
- Administered by the Department of Public Social Services

7

SSA Eligibility Assessment Process

- Two-pronged:
 - Non-medical eligibility – completed by SSA
 - Income/Assets
 - Residency/Citizenship
 - Medical eligibility (as applicable) – completed by SSA state-contracted Disability Determination Services (DDS)
 - Review of medical evidence and determination that applicant does/does not meet SSA disability criteria thresholds

8

CBEST Structure

- CBEST is multi-team program that includes partners from Community Based Organizations (also known as BAS agencies), legal partners, Los Angeles County departments, and the Social Security Administration.



9

Eligibility Criteria

CBEST

- Reside in Los Angeles county
- Be low income (Medi-cal eligibility/receipt as a proxy)
- **Disability** allegation that is preventing you from working
- Be a US Citizen or documented/qualified immigrant
- Homeless or At Risk* of Homelessness

**CBEST seeks to view disability allegations through the lens of SSA's definition of disability.*

SSA (defining disability*)

- **Diagnosis** of medical conditions
- Evidence in the medical records illustrating **functional impairments** associated with diagnoses (ex. Ability to independently ambulate, shower/bathe, feed themselves)
- Impairments must be so severe as the **prevent the individual from being able to work** a full-time job for at least 12-months

10

CBEST Steps and Timeline

| Step | Team | Content | Timeline |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Step 1 | Outreach & Referrals Team | Client engagement and intake completion | 1-day to 4-weeks |
| Step 2 | Centralized Assessment Team | Screening clients for eligibility, linkage to care plan/housing/immigration services, referring for medical prescreen or legal services | 2-days to 18-months |
| Step 3 | CARES Team | Medical screening for eligibility, records retrieval and assessment, greenlight or red light | 1-week to 2-months |
| Step 4 | Applications Team | Interviewing client, drafting application, review by Apps Team supervisor and ICLC | 4 to 8-weeks |
| Step 5 | Applications Team/SSA | Filing and following up on claim until disposition is issued | 2 to 6-months |
| Step 6 | Reconsiderations & Appeals Team/SSA | Legal services and referrals to legal services vendors for appeals cases | 2 to 24-months |

11

Our Collaborative Partnership

Your Role as a Referrer

- Submit CBEST referrals
- Support in client engagement
 - Facilitating appointments to complete CBEST paperwork
- Spread the word!

Our Role as a Program

- Support client in moving through the CBEST steps
- Keep you aware of progress on client cases
- Connect client to CBEST resources
- File applications for federal disability benefits

12

Referrals to CBEST

- Complete CBEST Referral form and submit via email or fax to:

cbestreferral@dhs.lacounty.gov

Fax: 213-482-3395

- For case updates, clients can call the CBEST Hotline at:

323-374-3777

Points of Contact

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