# **Program Operations Manual System (POMS)**

Effective Dates: 11/30/2023 - Present

TN 25 (11-23)

SI 00502.100 Basic SSI Alien Eligibility Requirements

**CITATIONS:** Public Law (P.L.) 104-193, Sections 401, 402, 403, 421, 423, 431 and 435; P.L. 104-208, Sections 501, 551 and 552; P.L. 105-33, Sections 5301, 5302, 5303, 5304, 5306, 5308, 5562, 5563, 5571, and 5573; P.L. 105-306, Section 2.

# A. Policy - Alien Eligibility Under Welfare Reform

In general, beginning 8/22/96, most aliens must meet 2 requirements to be eligible for SSI:

- The noncitizen must be in a "qualified alien" category (see SI 00502.100A.2.), and
- Meet an exception condition for qualified aliens (see SI 00502.100A.3.).

**IMPORTANT:** Wherever used in this subchapter, the term "eligible alien" refers to an individual whose alien status potentially permits receipt of SSI. To actually receive benefits, an eligible alien must also meet all other SSI factors of eligibility - for example, the alien must be aged, blind or disabled and have income and resources that are within the allowable limits.

## 1. Applicability of P.L. 104-193 and Its Amendments

The provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA, P.L. 104-193) and its subsequent amendments are applicable for most aliens applying for SSI. However, if one of the following conditions is met, then the alien is exempt from the SSI non-citizen provisions of P.L. 104-193 and its amendments:

• The individual was receiving SSI after 7/96 based on an application filed before 1/1/79 **and** there is no convincing evidence that the recipient is an alien who would be ineligible under the PRWORA (SI 00502.120); or

- The individual is an American Indian born in Canada and they are at least 50% Indian blood (SI 00502.105B.1.); or
- The individual is a noncitizen member of a federally recognized Indian tribe (SI 00502.105B.2.).

## 2. Who Is a Qualified Alien

There are seven categories of qualified aliens. Seven of the categories are based on Department of Homeland Security (DHS) immigration statuses. One category is based on a finding that an individual (the alien, the alien's child, or the alien's parent) meets certain "battery or extreme cruelty" criteria (SI 00502.116).

#### a. Qualified Aliens Based on DHS Status

A qualified alien based on DHS status is an alien who, at the time they applied for, receives, or attempt to receive a Federal public benefit, is in one of the following DHS statuses:

	Coded in SSI System with AR	POMS reference for Evidence of
DHS Status	Code	Status

DHS Status	Coded in SSI System with AR Code	POMS reference for Evidence of Status
1) Lawfully admitted for permanent residence (LAPR) in the U.S. (SI 00502.100B., SI 00502.135, and the following NOTE)  NOTE: An "Amerasian immigrant" as defined in Section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-202) is by definition LAPR and thus is a qualified alien. Amerasians who enter as nonimmigrants, (e.g., foreign students pursuing studies in the U.S.), are not qualified aliens.  IMPORTANT: Citizens of Compact of Free Association States are permanent nonimmigrants and, while lawfully permitted to permanently reside and work in the U.S., are not LAPR (see GN 00303.400B.7.), and thus are not qualified aliens. Since they are not citizens or nationals of the United States, they are not eligible for SSI.	"K," "S," or "Y"  NOTE: Enter an AR of "3" for "Amerasian immigrants"	SI 00502.130B.1.
2) Granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) as in effect prior to 4/1/80 (SI 00502.100B).	"F"	SI 00502.130B.2.

Di	dS Status	Coded in SSI System with AR Code	POMS reference for Evidence of Status
3)	Paroled into the U.S. under section 212(d) (5) of the INA for a period of at least 1 year (SI 00502.100B). <b>NOTE</b> : All immigration-related parole is granted under section 212(d)(5) of the INA.	"G"	SI 00502.130B.3.
4)	A refugee admitted to the U.S. under section 207 of the INA (SI 00502.100B.).	"F"	SI 00502.130B.4.
5)	Granted asylum under section 208 of the INA (SI 00502.100B.)	"L"	SI 00502.130B.5.
6)	An alien whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of the INA as in effect prior to 4/1/97, or whose removal has been withheld under section 241(b)(3) of the INA (SI 00502.100B).	"J"	SI 00502.130B.6.

DHS Status	Coded in SSI System with AR Code	POMS reference for Evidence of Status
7) An alien who is a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" under 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 or in a status that is to be treated as a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" for SSI purposes. (SI 00502.100B and SI 00502.108B).	"X"	SI 00502.130B.7.

See MSOM MSSICS 008.016 for instructions on completing the Alien Data (AALN) screen, and SM 01005.630 for completion of the AR field when the 450SI is transmitted.

## b. Deemed Qualified Alien Based on Battery or Extreme Cruelty

Under certain circumstances, an alien who has been subjected to battery or extreme cruelty, or whose child or parent has been subjected to battery or extreme cruelty, can be treated as a qualified alien based on those circumstances.

Instructions concerning deemed qualified alien status based on battery or extreme cruelty by a family member are contained in SI 00502.116.

## 3. When A Qualified Alien Can Be Eligible for SSI

Qualified alien status (or deemed qualified alien status for certain battered aliens) in and of itself is not sufficient to establish eligibility for SSI. In addition to being a "qualified alien," the individual must meet one of the following additional requirements in order to be found eligible:

- a. Was receiving SSI on 8/22/96 and is lawfully residing in the U.S. (grandfathered qualified alien) (SI 00502.150); or
- b. LAPR with 40 Qualifying Quarters (QQs) of earnings. **(NOTE:** There is a 5-year bar to eligibility for individuals who entered the United States on 8/22/96 or later unless certain exceptions apply. See SI 00502.135); or

- c. Veteran or active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces, a spouse of veteran/active duty, or a dependent child of veteran/active duty (SI 00502.140); or
- d. Lawfully residing in the United States on 8/22/96 **and** is blind or disabled (SI 00502.142); or

- e. Alien is in one of five designated alien status classifications, and the status was granted within 7 years of the date they filed for SSI (SI 00502.106). The 5 classifications are:
  - Refugee under section 207 of the INA.
  - Asylee under section 208 of the INA.
  - Alien whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of the INA or whose removal has been withheld under section 241(b)(3) of the INA.
  - Cuban/Haitian entrant under one of the categories in Section 501(e) of the Refugee Education and Assistance Act of 1980 or alien in a status that is to be treated as a Cuban/Haitian entrant for SSI purposes (see SI 00502.108B.)
  - "Amerasian immigrant" under section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1988. "Amerasian immigrants" are by definition LAPR, thus they are qualified aliens. If an individual is an "Amerasian immigrant," and meets no other condition permitting eligibility, then they are potentially eligible for 7 years beginning with the date "Amerasian immigrant" status was granted. Amerasians who enter as nonimmigrants, (e.g., foreign students pursuing studies in the U.S.), cannot be qualified aliens.

**IMPORTANT:** A qualified alien in one of these 5 classifications may be eligible for SSI for 7 years beginning with the date the status was acquired. However, if a qualified alien in one of these 5 classifications meets one of the other conditions for eligibility in SI 00502.100A.3.a. through SI 00502.100A.3.d., then the 7-year time limitation on eligibility does not apply.

See SI 00502.106C.3. for when an aged alien appeals the loss of SSI under the 7-year rule by alleging that they are currently blind/disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96. Continued benefits under <u>Goldberg-Kelly</u> may be payable in this situation.

## 4. Aliens Who Filed for SSI Prior to 8/22/96

For the pre-8/22/96 period in the life of an SSI application, an alien is subject to the alien eligibility rules that were in effect **prior to 8/22/96** (the date of enactment of P.L.

104-193, the 1996 welfare reform law) and we apply the alien eligibility policy in SI 00501.400 and GN 00303.001.

As described in SI 00501.400 and GN 00303.001, for periods prior to 8/22/96, an individual who was lawfully admitted for permanent residence (LAPR) or who was permanently residing in the U.S. under color of law (PRUCOL) was potentially SSI-eligible based solely on those statuses. Such aliens who are determined to be eligible for SSI benefits for the pre-8/22/96 period would be "receiving" benefits on 8/22/96 and, therefore, will have their alien eligibility "grandfathered." SI 00502.150B.1. contains the criteria for determining whether an individual was "receiving" SSI benefits on 8/22/96.

#### **EXAMPLE 1**

An LAPR alien filed for SSI on 6/4/96. On 10/6/96, the field office (FO) determines that the claimant meets all SSI eligibility criteria.

With respect to alien eligibility, the claimant is eligible for the period prior to 8/22/96 based on their LAPR status. Since the individual will be receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96, their alien eligibility is "grandfathered" beginning 8/22/96. (See SI 00502.150 for the grandfathering rules that apply to qualified aliens who were receiving SSI on 8/22/96.)

#### **EXAMPLE 2**

An alien filed for SSI on 7/3/96 as a disabled individual. The FO determines that they entered the U.S. prior to 1/1/72 and have continuously resided in the U.S. Consequently, the claimant meets the PRUCOL alien eligibility criteria (SI 00501.420 and SI 00501.425). However, the State Disability Determination Service (DDS) medically denies the case. In 12/97, the medical denial is reversed at the hearing level.

With respect to alien eligibility, the claimant is eligible for the period prior to 8/22/96 based on their PRUCOL status. Since the individual is considered to be receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96, their alien eligibility is "grandfathered" beginning 8/22/96. (See SI 00502.153 for the grandfathering rules that apply to nonqualified aliens who were receiving SSI on 8/22/96.)

## 5. Aliens Who File for SSI On or After 8/22/96

1996-1998 welfare and immigration reform law changed the alien eligibility requirements for individuals who file for SSI on or after 8/22/96. For claims filed on or after 8/22/96, only the following individuals may be eligible for SSI:

- Citizens or nationals of the U.S.;
- Certain American Indians born outside the U.S. (SI 00502.105);
- Qualified aliens, but only under certain circumstances (SI 00502.100A.3. and SI 00502.150); and
- Certain nonqualified aliens who were receiving SSI on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.153).

**IMPORTANT:** For claims filed on or after 8/22/96, qualified alien status in and of itself does **not** permit SSI eligibility. For each category of qualified alien (see SI 00502.100A.2.), one of certain conditions must be met in order for the alien to be SSI-eligible. Those conditions are described in SI 00502.100A.3. and are summarized in the chart in SI 00502.100B.

## 6. When Qualified Aliens Lose SSI Alien Eligibility

## a. Effect of Change in Alien Status

#### General

DHS can rescind an alien's status, not renew a status that was granted for a finite period of time, or adjust the alien's status to a different status. A previously eligible qualified alien who ceases to meet the alien eligibility criteria loses SSI eligibility effective with the month following the month in which the change in alien eligibility occurs.

## Change in Immigration Status for 7-Year Time Limited Aliens

If a qualified alien whose eligibility is limited to 7 years obtains LAPR or other qualified alien status during the 7-year period, the alien does **not** lose SSI eligibility before the applicable 7-year eligibility period ends. This applies to qualified aliens who were originally determined to be eligible for 7 years based on status as refugees, asylees, aliens with deportation or removal withheld, and Cuban/Haitian entrants who later obtain LAPR status or another qualified alien status during the 7-year period. (See SI 00502.106).

**NOTE**: Amerasian Immigrants as defined in Section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-202) are already LAPR by definition. Therefore it is unlikely that they would change to another qualified alien status.

## b. Loss of Eligibility Related to the "Veteran/Active Duty" Provision (SI 00502.140)

## Change in Active Duty/Veteran Status

A qualified alien who is eligible based on the veteran/active duty provision (including the spouse or dependent child of an active duty member/veteran) loses SSI eligibility the month after the month the active duty member separates from the Armed Forces with a discharge that is not characterized as honorable or that is based on alienage.

## Spouse of Veteran/Active Duty Member

Eligibility as a spouse of a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces ends with the month after the month any of the following occur:

- Remarriage after the veteran's or service member's death; or
- Divorce or annulment of the marriage; or
- A determination that a marital relationship does not exist for Title II eligibility purposes and no "holding-out" relationship exists for SSI purposes; or
- Separation of the individual and the "holding-out" spouse, which results in the individual not being considered a member of a couple for SSI purposes; or
- The active duty member separates from the Armed Forces with a discharge that is not characterized as honorable or that is based on alienage

## Unmarried Dependent Child of Veteran/Active Duty Member

Eligibility as an unmarried dependent child of a veteran or active duty member ends

with the month after the month any of the following occur:

- Marriage of the child; or
- Loss of dependent status (SI 00502.140E.2.c.); or
- The active duty member separates from the Armed Forces with a discharge that is not characterized as honorable or that is based on alienage; or
- Legal adoption by someone other than the veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces or their spouse; or
- Any of the four marital events listed in SI 00502.100A.6.b., second bullet, for "spouse of a veteran or active duty member," and the veteran or active duty member is the child's stepparent.

## c. Loss of Eligibility Related to the "Battery/Extreme Cruelty" Provision

See SI 00502.116K. for posteligibility events that result in the loss of qualified alien status based on battery or extreme cruelty.

## d. Loss of Eligibility After 7 Years in a Time-Limited Status

See SI 00502.106C. for loss of eligibility under the 7-year rule.

Refer to SI 00502.106C.3. for when an aged alien appeals the loss of SSI under the 7-year rule by alleging that they are currently blind/disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142B.2.). Continued benefits under <u>Goldberg-Kelly</u> may be payable in this situation.

## 7. Nonqualified Aliens

Aliens who are not qualified aliens are referred to as "nonqualified aliens."

The following categories of individuals (who were previously considered "PRUCOL" for SSI purposes) are **nonqualified** aliens under current law:

	Coded in SSI System with
DHS Status	AR Code

DHS Status	Coded in SSI System with AR Code
<i>«Silva vs. Levi</i> " Alien	"H"
Deferred Action Status Alien	"J"
Alien Who Entered U.S. Prior to 1/1/72 and Has Continuously Resided in U.S.	"P"
Lawful Temporary Resident Status Pursuant to Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986	"R"
Alien Granted Voluntary Departure	"T"
Alien Granted Stay of Deportation	"W"

See MSOM MSSICS 008.016 for instructions on completing the Alien Data (AALN) screen, and SM 01005.630 for completion of the AR field when the 450SI is transmitted.

**IMPORTANT:** P.L. 105-306, the Noncitizen Benefit Clarification and Other Technical Amendments Act of 1998, grandfathered the alien eligibility of nonqualified aliens who were receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.153). See SI 00502.150B.1. for individuals considered to have been receiving benefits on 8/22/96.

# B. Policy - Summary Guide: Individuals Who Are Potentially Eligible for SSI

The following is a **simplified guide** that shows the categories of individuals **potentially eligible** for SSI under current law.

**IMPORTANT:** Do not use this summary guide in lieu of the other instructions contained in this subchapter. For detailed instructions concerning each eligibility category, see the references listed in SI 00502.100C.

If the individual is	Then they are
U.S. citizen or national	Always potentially eligible.
(See GN 00303.001B.2. and GN 00303.120A.7. for who is a "national of the U.S.")	

Then they are
Always potentially eligible.
Always potentially eligible if criteria in SI 00502.120 are met.
Always potentially eligible if PRUCOL status continues.
Potentially eligible only if the individual:  • Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or  • Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or  Under certain circumstances, can be credited with 40 qualifying quarters (QQ).  IMPORTANT: An LAPR alien who enters the U.S. on or after 8/22/96 cannot be eligible based on having 40 QQs for a 5-year period beginning on the LAPR alien's date of entry into the U.S. as a qualified alien unless certain exceptions apply. See (SI 00502.135); or

If the individual is	Then they are
	Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140); or
	If none of these conditions is met, the LAPR may be eligible for a maximum of 7 years beginning with the date one of the following occurred (see SI 00502.106):
	Entered the U.S. as refugee within the last 7 years; or
	Was granted asylee status within last 7 years; or
	Had deportation withheld under section 243(h) of the INA, or removal withheld under section 241(b)(3) of the INA, within the last 7 years; or
	Entered the U.S. as Amerasian immigrant within the last 7 years; or
	NOTE: Amerasians who enter the U.S. as nonimmigrants, (e.g., foreign students pursuing studies in the U.S.) are not qualified aliens.

If the individual is	Then they are
	Became a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" within the last 7 years;
	NOTE: A national of Cuba or Haiti who adjusts to LAPR status under the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) or the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act (HRIFA) is considered to be a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" by virtue of such adjustment. (See SI 00502.108B.5.). Also, a national of Cuba or Haiti who adjusts to LAPR status under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 (CAA66) is to be treated as a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" for SSI purposes. (See SI 00502.108B.)
Refugee (sec. 207 of the INA)	Potentially eligible only if the individual:  • Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or  • Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or

If the individual is	Then they are
	Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140); or
	If none of these conditions apply, entered the U.S. as a refugee within the last 7 years, then eligibility limited to a maximum of 7 years from the date of status. (See SI 00502.106.)
Asylee (sec. 208 of the (INA)	Potentially eligible only if the individual:  • Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or  • Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or  • Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140); or

If the individual is	Then they are
	Was granted asylum within the last 7 years, then eligibility limited to a maximum of 7 years from the date of status. (See SI 00502.106.)
Deportation withheld (sec. 243(h) of the INA as in effect prior to 4/1/97), or removal withheld (sec. 241(b)(3))	Potentially eligible only if the individual:
(300. 241(0)(3))	Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or
	Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or
	Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140); or
	If none of these conditions apply:
	Was granted "withholding of deportation" or "withholding of removal" within the last 7 years, then eligibility limited to a maximum of 7 years from the date of status. (See SI 00502.106.)

If the individual is	Then they are
Conditional entrant (sec. 203(a)(7) of the INA as in effect prior to 4/1/80)	Potentially eligible only if the individual:
	Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or
	• Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or
	• Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140).
"Cuban/Haitian entrant" under section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 or in a status that is to be treated as a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" for SSI purposes. (SI 00502.108B.)	Potentially eligible only if the individual:  • Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on
	8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or
	• Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or
	Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140); or
	If none of these conditions apply:

If the individual is	Then they are
	Became a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" or was granted a status that is to be treated as a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" (see SI 00502.108B.) within the last 7 years, then eligibility limited to a maximum of 7 years from the date of status. (See SI 00502.106)
Parolee (sec. 212(d)(5) of the INA) for a period of at least 1 year	Potentially eligible only if the individual:
	Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or
	• Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or
	Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140); or
	If none of these conditions apply:

If the individual is	Then they are
	Became a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" or was granted a status that is to be treated as a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" (see SI 00502.108B.) within the last 7 years, then eligibility limited to a maximum of 7 years from the date of status. (See SI 00502.106)
Battered alien, or alien whose child or parent is battered (SI 00502.116)	Potentially eligible only if the individual:
	Is blind or disabled and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.142); or
	Is lawfully residing in the U.S. and was receiving SSI benefits on 8/22/96 (SI 00502.150); or
	Is a veteran or active duty member of the Armed Forces; or is the spouse or dependent child of a veteran or active duty member (SI 00502.140).
Citizens of the Compact of Free Association	Ineligible.
States	Citizens of the Compact of Free Association States are permanent nonimmigrants and, while lawfully permitted to permanently reside and work in the U.S., are not LAPR (GN 00303.400B.7.). As such, they are not qualified aliens for SSI

If the individual is	Then they are
	eligibility purposes. Further, since they are not citizens or nationals of the U.S., they are ineligible for SSI. (See GN 00303.001B.2. and GN 00303.120A.7. for who is a "national of the U.S.")
Other Status	Ineligible.

## C. References

- Exemption from Alien Provisions for Certain Noncitizen Indians, SI 00502.105
- Time-Limited Eligibility for Certain Aliens, SI 00502.106
- SSI Eligibility For Cuban/Haitian Entrants, SI 00502.108
- General Alien Development, SI 00502.110
- Verification of Alien Status, SI 00502.115
- Deemed Qualified Alien Status Based on Battery or Extreme Cruelty By a Family Member, SI 00502.116
- Eligibility on the Basis of Receiving SSI Benefits on an Application Filed Before January 1, 1979, SI 00502.120
- LAPR with 40 Qualifying Quarters of Earnings, SI 00502.135
- Veteran or Active Duty Member of the Armed Forces, a Spouse, or a Dependent Child, SI 00502.140

- Qualified Aliens Who are Blind or Disabled and Lawfully Residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96, SI 00502.142
- Development of Marital Relationships for Certain Qualified Aliens, SI 00502.145
- Qualified Aliens Receiving Benefits on 8/22/96, SI 00502.150
- Readjudication of N13 Denials that Were Based on Alien Eligibility Law in Effect Prior to 8/5/97, SI 00502.152
- SSI Eligibility for Nonqualified Aliens Who Were Receiving SSI on 8/22/96, SI 00502.153
- Individuals Who Received Informal Denials Based on Alien Eligibility Law in Effect Prior to 8/5/97, SI 00502.158
- Alien Systems Input Instructions, MSOM MSSICS 008.016 for instructions on completing the Alien Data (AALN) screen, and SM 01005.630 for completion of the AR field when the 450SI is transmitted

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Batch run: 11/30/2023

Rev:11/30/2023