

Social Security's 5 steps of disability:

- Step 1. Is the claimant engaging in substantial gainful activity now? If yes, claimant is not disabled: if no, proceed to step 2.
- Step 2. Does the claimant have a non- severe (incredibly minor) medical impairment? If yes, claimant is not disabled: if no, proceed to step 3.
- Step 3. Does the claimant have a medical condition so severe that it is found in the Listing of Impairments for automatic payments of benefits without further inquiry? If yes, pay the benefits: if no, proceed to step 4.
- Step 4. Can the claimant return to any type of work that claimant has done in the past 15 years? If yes, deny claim. If no, proceed to step 5.
- Step 5. Given the claimant's Residual Functional Capacity, and **considering the claimant's age**, education, prior work experience and transferable skills, is there any alternative work that the claimant can do on a full time basis? If yes, deny; if no, pay the benefits.

To clarify SSA's standards and procedures for the adjudication of titles II and XVI of the Social Security Act (the Act) disability and blindness claims for individuals aged 65 or older. In particular, this Ruling explains that:

In general, the regulations and procedures for determining disability for adults who are under age 65 are used when determining whether an individual aged 65 or older is disabled. Adjudicators are required to consider any impairment(s) the individual has, including those that are often found in older individuals. **If an individual aged 72 or older has a medically determinable impairment, that impairment will be considered to be ``severe.''**

If the individual's impairment(s) prevents the performance of his or her past relevant work (PRW), or if the individual does not have PRW, the adjudicator must consider two special medical vocational profiles showing an inability to make an adjustment to other work before referring to appendix 2 to subpart P of 20 CFR part 404.

Generally, adjudicators should use the rules for individuals aged 60-64 when determining whether an individual aged 65 or older can adjust to other work. Some individuals aged 65 or older may not understand, or be able to comply with, our requests to submit evidence or attend a consultative examination (CE). Therefore, adjudicators must make special efforts in situations in which it appears that an individual aged 65 or older may not be cooperating.