

SSI Ohio Project Success Story: Marcus Allen



The SSI Ohio Project helps disabled individuals who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless obtain Social Security benefits. While these individuals gain access to income, housing, and health care through the application process, they are not the only ones who benefit from the work of the Project. For *Marcus Allen, the stability he has gained from receiving benefits allows him to spend quality time and bond with his little daughter.

Marcus has attempted to work and support himself many times during his life. He lives with schizophrenia and paranoia, which hinders his ability to work with others and hold a steady job. Marcus is aware of the challenges he faces and says, “I always wanted to be on Social Security because of my mental state, just in case something happened at the job and I ended up losing the job.” When Marcus did lose employment, he “had to go to the streets.”

For many individuals who are homeless and disabled, applying for disability benefits can be challenging due to the lengthy and detailed application. Marcus attempted to apply before, but did not finish. When Marcus first met with Twanette Pinkerton, the SSI Ohio Specialist who helped him apply, he told her that, “I didn’t think this was going to happen for me.” Despite his doubts, Marcus says that, “I went ahead with the paperwork.” Two months later, he was approved.

After living on the streets and in shelters, Marcus was able to move into his own apartment with the income from SSI benefits. Now that he is in a safe, stable environment, his little girl can spend more time with her father. “My daughter visited for the past two weekends. I gave her some [candy], a couple dollars, and a birthday card.”

Marcus is appreciative of the assistance he has received from Twanette and the SSI Ohio Project. He says, "To this day, I wake up and thank God I receive my Social Security benefits." If you are interested in learning more about the SSI Ohio Project, please visit <http://www.cohhio.org/SSI-2010.php>.

*Individual's name has been changed to protect identity.