

You should also take your prescribed medicine. If you don't follow the instructions of the doctor, it can affect your case and Social Security may conclude that you feel better and that you can now go back to work. You should promptly complete the forms for Social Security. Ideally, you should get a representative to help fill them out. There are often things that are written in error because the question was read wrong or you did not understand it. If you do not understand a question on the form, you should indicate that instead of trying to answer. If you have a doctor who believes in you, you should ask him to write a statement/note about how your disabilities or diseases and how they affect your ability to work. The more specific the doctor can be, the better for your case. Always keep a copy of any record or document that you submit to Social Security. Also keep a record of when you submitted the paper.

About Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida (CLSMF)

The mission of CLSMF is to provide access to justice through high quality legal assistance to low-income persons.

CLSMF is a nonprofit legal aid organization which provides free legal assistance to low-income people with civil legal problems in twelve counties across Central Florida. Since 1966, dedicated CLSMF lawyers, paralegals, legal assistants and advocates have worked diligently to solve civil legal problems for people facing life-changing situations, such as domestic violence, unlawful eviction, or the loss of veterans' health or public benefits. We are committed to delivering the highest quality legal aid, with dignity and respect, for those who are seeking access to justice.

**We do not provide legal assistance in criminal or traffic matters*



***BREVARD:** 1-866-469-7444

CITRUS & SUMTER

106 N. Osceola Avenue, Inverness, FL 34450

CITRUS: (352) 726-6592

SUMTER: 1-800-984-2918

FLAGLER: 1-800-405-1417

HERNANDO: 1-866-801-5566

LAKE: (352) 343-6351

226 West Main Street, Tavares, FL 32778

MARION: (352) 629-6257

1610 SE 36th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471

***ORANGE** (407) 841-7777

122 E. Colonial Drive, Suite 200, Orlando, FL 32801

OSCEOLA: (407) 933-1791

800 North Main Street, Kissimmee, FL 34744

PUTNAM: (386) 385-0928

216 S. 6th Street, Palatka, FL 32177

***SEMINOLE:** (407) 322-6673

315 Magnolia Ave., Sanford, FL 32771

VOLUSIA : (386) 258-5600

128 Orange Avenue, Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Client toll-free number: 1-800-363-2357

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE: (386)523-9181

**Certain legal services not offered*

info@clsmf.org

Apply for help online at:

www.clsmf.org



SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY



What is the difference between disability benefits and social security benefits?

Social Security Disability is the benefit you accumulated thru contributions to Social Security. You must contribute to the program for five years to qualify for this benefit and the amount of this benefit depends on how much you contributed. You may obtain benefits for you and your dependents (for their minor children while you are incapacitated). After five years of failing to pay Social Security taxes or not pay enough to qualify, you will not be insured for this benefit.

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays benefits for to people who have not worked or have not worked enough to earn in excess of the limit, currently \$710 per month. SSI currently pays \$6710per month. In some States, they add additional benefits to income supplemental insurance, but Florida is not one of these States. The date on which you called or submitted your application for benefits (which happens first) will be the date of the onset of your incapacity. This is important because when you receive your benefits, you will be paid the benefits from this date even if you were incapacitated months earlier.

What do I do to begin claiming SSI benefits?

- The initial request: the process requires that you submit an application for benefits in the local Social Security Office or online at www.ssa.gov
- Submit an Appeal: once you receive the denial of your application, you have only sixty (60) days to submit an appeal.

This can also be filed in the Social Security Office or on the internet. It is recommended that you submit this as soon as possible and do not take risks that the date expires. Keep a copy of your appeal for your records. Social Security may take months to deny its reconsideration. Remember that you have only sixty (60) days to appeal.

Request a hearing before an administrative law judge: Once you receive your denial of reconsideration, you have sixty (60) days to request a hearing before administrative law judge. You must keep a copy of this request for your records. From the day you submit your order, you can expect to wait up to a year or more for a response to your request. You have the right of representation the hearing; However, Social Security does not provide you with a lawyer.

- If the administrative law judge gives an unfavorable decision, you may apply for a review of the decision/order. You have sixty (60) days to submit an appeal for the review of the decision/order. This form is available in the local Social Security Office or www.ssa.gov. This will be sent to the Appeals Council in Falls Church, Virginia. The Appeals Council can take a year or two to make a determination.
- If the Appeals Council denies your appeal, you can submit the trial in the Federal District Court against the Commissioner of Social Security. This should be made within sixty (60) days of the decision by the Appeals Council.

How Do I Obtain Legal Representation?

It is recommended that you get legal representation as soon as possible in the process. Once you receive your initial denial, a lawyer can help you. Private lawyers represent cases benefits of the social security disability and supplemental income security for contin-gency. This means that you only pay if his lawyer wins his case, and only 25% of the total received in retroactive benefits which begin on the date of the commencement of the disability until the date of the decision in your favor. You can contact the national organization of representatives of applicants against the Social Security (NOSSCR for its acronym in English) for the name and num-ber of qualified counsel. The toll-free number is 1-800-431-2804.

What Should I Do To Prepare My Case?

You should seek medical attention for your disabilities. Often people cannot get treatment because they cannot afford a doctor. The lack of treatment allows Social Security to ignore their disabilities. You must be try and access all available medical services, including clinics and emergency rooms. When you have a doctor who treats you, be sure to complain to your doctor about all your problems once you see them and that the doctor makes notes about your condition (for example: January - complained of back pain; February - respiratory infection; March—the improvement of respiratory infection; April - back pain, it hurts to sit) This allows Social Security to conclude that your back should have improved in February and March so it is important that you always complain to the doctor.