Social Security Column

# DISAGREE WITH YOUR DISABILITY DECISION? WE WILL TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

By <Name>

Social Security <Title> in <Place>



Social Security is here to help millions of people secure their today and tomorrow by providing benefits and financial protection. We continue to protect the integrity of our disability programs by ensuring we make the correct decision on each claim. However, if you disagree with the decision on your claim, you can ask for your case to be reviewed by filing an appeal.

**How can I appeal Social Security’s decision on my claim?**

Generally, there are four appeal levels. If you are not satisfied with the decision at one level, you may appeal to the next.

The appeal levels are:

1. **Reconsideration**: A reconsideration is a complete review of your claim by someone who did not take part in the first decision. We look at all the evidence submitted in the original determination, and any new evidence.
2. **Hearing**: If you disagree with the decision at the reconsideration level, you may ask for a hearing. An administrative law judge, who had no part in the original decision or the reconsideration of your case, conducts the hearing.
3. **Appeals Council Review**: If you disagree with the hearing decision, you can request a review by Social Security’s Appeals Council. The Appeals Council looks at all requests for review. They will decide whether or not there is a reason to return your case to the judge for further review.
4. **Federal Court Review**: If you disagree with the Appeals Council’s decision, you can file a lawsuit in a federal district court as the last level in the appeals process.

Please visit our Appeal A Decision webpage for more information at [www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html](https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html).

**When should I file my appeal?**

If we denied your claim, you have 60 days from the date of the notice to file an appeal. The easiest and quickest way is to file your appeal request online at [www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html](https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html). This is where you can submit associated documents electronically. You can also call your local Social Security office or 1-800-772-1213 to obtain the forms. You can find your local office at [www.ssa.gov/locator](https://www.ssa.gov/locator).

**Do I need a representative to file an appeal?**

A representative or attorney is not required to file an appeal. Whether you choose to appoint an attorney or authorized representative is completely up to you. You may choose to have someone help you with your appeal or represent you. Your representative may be a lawyer or other qualified person familiar with you and the Social Security program. We will work with your representative just as we would work with you. They can act for you in most Social Security matters, and they will receive a copy of any decisions we make about your claim.

If you need us to review your case, please go online at [www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html](https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html) or call 1-800-772-1213. Please share this information with your family and friends.

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