

Position Information – Contact Representative (Information Case Technician/Receptionist OA), GS-0962-5/6/7

This position is located in the Hearing Offices of the Office of Disability and Adjudication Review (ODAR), Social Security Administration (SSA). At the full performance level, the incumbent would be expected to provide a full range of assistance to beneficiaries and inquirers in person, by telephone or by correspondence regarding rights and/or claims for entitlement to retirement and survivors insurance, disability insurance and/or supplemental security income benefits filed under Titles II, XVI and XVIII of the Social Security Act, as amended. The incumbent is responsible for dispensing information, explaining the legal provisions, regulations and procedural requirements for obtaining benefits under the Social Security program as they relate to a specific case and/or explaining the application of regulatory provisions and the basis for the Agency's determinations in individual cases. The incumbent also assists individuals in determining their appellate rights and subsequent action and performs other case processing and clerical support activities. ***If hired below the full performance level, the incumbent will perform in a trainee capacity, with assignments leading to being able to perform the full range of duties described below.***

Duties:

- Responds to a broad range of inquiries from claimants, attorneys, medical and vocational experts, etc., relating to the judicial processing of hearings. Advises claimants of the legal provisions, regulations and related administrative practices and decorum for judicial hearings and their right to representation during the judicial process. Provides information regarding the basic legal process, documentary evidence required of claimants, attorneys, medical and vocational experts and other Federal and State agency personnel, status of pending claims, etc.
- Answers a wide range of routine and recurrent inquiries concerning general responsibilities, SSA benefit programs, case processing functions, program activities, personnel, etc. Tactfully interviews visitors and/or callers to determine exact nature of the inquiry, follows through to resolve inquiries that are indefinite, uncertain or vague in order to determine appropriate response and/or referral needed. Uses discretion, tact and diplomacy in dispensing information.
- Receives visitors and telephone inquiries and independently determines the purpose of the visit and/or call and makes referral to the appropriate party. In instances where the purpose of the visit or call is not related to ODAR, makes referral to other private or governmental organization as appropriate.
- Maintains records of visitors, inquiries and directories for other Agencies, particularly those having similar or related functions.
- Prepares necessary correspondence and narrative report of contact, as appropriate.
- As requested, ensures that aged, terminally ill and dire need cases are given priority and all steps of the process are handled in an expeditious manner.
- As requested, reviews and analyzes a wide variety of medical and legal documentation to ensure that OHA case files are received and developed in accordance with legal and regulatory authorities. Performs a wide range of actions in support of pre- and post-hearing case development, including composing correspondence to request medical reports from physicians, hospitals, claimants and their representatives, etc., and to prepare responses to written inquiries on cases. Requests consultative examinations and medical records through the Disability Determination Services and maintains a follow-up system to ensure receipt of such records. Uses Email, telephones, faxes and other appropriate medium to communicate with SSA and other ODAR field offices regarding the status and needed case development.
- Communicates with claimants or their representatives who request to photocopy files or obtain a copy of the electronic file. Ensures that the files are ready for the representative and, when photocopying has been completed, returns the file to the proper location or prepares CDs for viewing in the hearing office or by sending the CD to the claimant or representative. As requested, coordinates the scheduling of cases for hearing. Assigns hearing rooms in the hearing office and hearing dates in remote sites for Administrative Law Judges (ALJs). Ensures proper rotation of expert witnesses among ALJs in accordance with legal and regulatory authority.
- Notifies supervisor and other appropriate personnel of no shows for hearings.
- As requested, retrieves invoices from medical experts, vocational experts, interpreters, verbatim hearing recorders (VHR), or other contractual providers. Reviews and analyzes invoices against a central itinerary and CPMS records for payment accuracy to contractors. Distributes payment invoices to the Administrative Assistant for payment certification referral to the Hearing Office Director providing timely authorized payments for all contracted services

- Uses word processing software to produce a variety of reports and other documents. Types decisions, dismissals and other correspondence into final form, with responsibility for proper format, correct spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation. Terminology typed is primarily legal in nature.
- Maintains, reviews, updates and utilizes a variety of data systems (NS Elite, CPMS, Excel spreadsheets, Document Generation System, etc.) to ensure timely case processing, transmission of Congressional concern codes onto the CPMS database, proper case flow, proper payment of expert services, to provide information to inquiries received from claimants and their legal representatives, etc.
- Reviews, analyzes and sorts a wide variety of incoming mail checking against CPMS database and distributes accordingly to appropriate case locations. Identifies Appeals Council and court remanded cases for appropriate handling and routing using local procedures. Prepares outgoing mail, including metering envelopes and taking mail to distribution points.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Complexity:

The work consists of a wide variety of duties, which involve a wide variety of processes and activities depending upon the task. The incumbent analyzes each situation and/or case to determine the course of action. Decisions regarding what needs to be done involve various choices. The incumbent selects alternatives as appropriate. The work involves elements, which need identification since meticulous attention to detail is required. The incumbent must have the ability to adjust priorities and recognize situations that require considerable judgment and tact. Decisions are based on knowledge of the procedural requirements of the work coupled with an awareness of specific functions and staff assignments. The incumbent must be able to adjust priorities on a daily basis and recognize personal contact (face-to-face and telephone) situations that require considerable judgment and tact.

Responsibility:

The purpose of the work is to effectively communicate ODAR policy and procedural matters to a wide range of individuals, including claimants, attorneys, medical and vocational experts, Congressional Office staff, medical treating sources, Federal and State agency personnel in a courteous, tactful and professional manner. The incumbent provides and shares knowledge of legal and judicial procedures relating to the processing of hearings for entitlement of benefits under Titles II, XVI and XVIII of the Social Security Act, as amended. The incumbent also performs work processing functions, completes reports and correspondence, using software to provide information to inquiring claimants and their legal representatives. The work affects the accuracy and reliability of further processes. The work comprises part of the case processing and affects the timeliness; accuracy and acceptability of the Agency's work products. The work of the incumbent impacts the ability of claimants to receive benefits under the Social Security Act.

Personal Contacts:

Contacts are with a wide range of individuals who have varying degrees of understanding of the Social Security program; ranging from individuals who are semi-literate and confused about what SSA offers or needs to professional people who are highly knowledgeable and/or provide professional services to the agency. Some individuals may have difficulty in presenting their problems and understanding explanations due to age, physical disability, limited knowledge of the English language, emotional stress, etc., that impede effective communications, therefore, the incumbent must be adaptable and highly skilled in oral communications to overcome such obstacles. Other contacts include SSA and ODAR field office personnel, Program Service Centers, Teleservice Centers, Federal and State agency personnel, Congressional liaison staff, attorneys, lay representatives, medical treating sources, medical and vocational experts. Contacts are made to explain certain legal provisions, regulations and related administrative practices and procedures involving the legal processing of a case, and to provide information regarding Titles II, XVI and XVIII of the Social Security Act, as amended. Contacts may include providing explanations of why a claimant was not awarded benefits and how to appeal that action; as well as, obtaining, clarifying or giving facts or information regarding ODAR work processes.

Physical Demands & Work Environment:

The work is primarily sedentary. While the incumbent may sit comfortably to do the work, some walking, bending, standing and carrying of light items may be required. The work is performed in an office or receptionist area, which may have a security enclosure. The work environment involves everyday risks and/or discomforts that require normal safety precautions.