

## Do I Need a Social Security Lawyer to Appeal?

Q: Will hiring a social security lawyer decrease the chances that my disability claim will be denied?

A: Having a social security lawyer on your side does not assure that you will be awarded social security disability benefits. A social security lawyer, however, can assure that your claim will be correctly filed. Only a small percentage of disability claims are awarded after that initial and reconsideration review processes. You should file an appeal, if your case is not approved. Hiring a social security lawyer to help your case through the appeal and hearing processes is advisable. An experienced lawyer knows the appeals process well and brings expertise that will be invaluable during an appeal. Additionally, if your claim is approved, a social security lawyer can help you with any issues regarding the date of onset and any back payments to which you might be entitled. You can certainly choose to represent your claim yourself. Most people, however, seek an attorney to help them through the process to assure that everything is completed fairly and correctly.

Q: What happens if you miss the hearing date for your social security disability claim?

A: Being absent from a scheduled hearing is not recommended. If you were unable to attend the hearing for a good reason, it is likely that another hearing date can be scheduled. Legitimate reasons are those that were not expected and emergencies. For example, you had a medical issue, were ill, had a family emergency or were unable to physically get to the location of the hearing. Some people are not even aware that a hearing had been scheduled. It is important that your claims representative at Social Security has all your current contact information, so that mailed notifications will be sent to your correct address. A social security lawyer would have assured that you knew about your scheduled hearing. A notice of hearing date is sent to your lawyer and you. If you knew about your scheduled hearing and missed it on purpose, your claim is in jeopardy of being dismissed. You will then have to reapply for disability, if that occurs. If you do not yet have a social security lawyer, it would be wise to hire one to help you through rescheduling and the subsequent hearing.

Q: Are SSDI and SSI the same thing?

A: Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income are two different programs. Individuals who have contributed to Social Security via their paychecks and, consequently, earned enough work credits are eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance. Supplemental Security Income is awarded to individuals who have limited income and financial resources. SSI can be awarded to individuals, regardless of their contributions while part of the workforce.

## About the Author

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