

## APPLYING FOR SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

**An Important Point :** applying for Social Security Disability & Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is not a quick process. The Social Security Administration estimates that it will take a 3 - 6 months to process your application. Also, by applying for disability you are saying you are not able to work for at least a year. Because of that, you cannot work or receive services from Vocational Rehabilitation while applying for disability.

**First step** = call the local office (282-7360) & let them know you are interested in applying for Social Security Disability. They will get your name, phone number, etc. and schedule a phone interview (a specific day & time to call you back & begin the process).

**Second step** = write down the day & time of the phone interview & make sure you are there to take the call. The worker will ask you questions about when your illness / condition first started bothering you, when you stopped working, etc. He / she will put this information into the computer & mail you a print out of the answers you gave them.

**Third step** = Call your consultant when you receive the paperwork so that you can schedule an appointment. Also, before you meet with your consultant, to make things easier, you can start working on a couple of lists

- 1) Make a list of the doctor(s) you have seen, hospitals you have been to, etc. for your illness. You will need to write down when you first saw the doctor, when you last saw the doctor & when your next appointment is. You will also need their addresses & phone numbers. Start with the doctor you have seen the longest, or the one who has the most recent records.
- 2) Make a list of the jobs you have had in the last 15 years. You will need to write down the position you held, the type of business, dates of employment & how much you were paid. Start with your most recent job & work backwards.

**Fourth step** = Keep your appointment with your consultant. Remember to bring the forms Social Security mailed to you & the lists you made. You will probably work on the forms for an hour, maybe longer. You can ask your consultant to split the work into 2 meetings or ask if you can stay longer if you want to finish in one meeting. After finishing the application, your consultant should make a copy to keep in your file & then you can drop it in the mail.

**Fifth step** = Call your consultant when you get any letters or more forms to work on. It is very important that you let your consultant know when you are assigned a disability examiner. Your disability examiner is the person in charge of getting your records from the doctors, hospitals, etc. Your consultant will want to contact your disability examiner to check on the status of your application.

**Sixth step** = Social Security may ask you to see one of their doctors. You will not have to pay for that exam. It's very important that you keep the appointment if they schedule one for you.

**Seventh step** = Once you have completed all the paperwork (& may have gone to see another doctor) all you can do is wait. You can ask your consultant to check on the status of your application. However, we don't want to bother your disability examiner too much either. Usually we'll call once every 3 - 4 weeks. Remember that you can also call yourself but it's important to let your consultant know if you're also calling.

*If you have questions, please call your consultant from the Mental Health Assoc. at 431-1077.*