

DISABILITY DETERMINATION SPECIALIST II

Employees in this class are responsible for evaluating claims at the reconsideration level of the appeals process and determining continuing entitlement to social security benefits. Work in this class may involve performing post-adjudicative reviews on cases where medical evidence is received after the case has been closed, or arranging for medical examinations and securing evidence as requested by the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Work involves processing Reconsideration and Continuing Disability Investigation cases. Employees review cases to determine if previous decisions were correct; obtain pertinent medical clarification or evidence through contact with claimant or other sources; evaluate all case data to determine disability; and prepare rationale explaining the decision.

Intricacy - Work at this level requires that the case be examined in detail to assure that all required elements are present and all pertinent allegations have been properly documented and verified; and that additional evidence or information be secured if material in case is found to be insufficient, conflicting, susceptible to different conclusions, subject to questionable assumptions, or if development is incomplete in any way before making a decision as to whether the claimant is now disabled or continues to be disabled.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires a complete knowledge of medical terminology and the body systems, as well as the Social Security laws and regulations which govern the disability program. Work also requires knowledge of the vocational criteria which impacts on the disability program.

Guidelines - Initially, employees receive training in the Disability Insurance State Manual, vocational factors, medical terminology, and the body systems. Program Operations Manual, Agency Office Procedures, Program Coordination Memos, and various other medical and vocational manuals, and SSA guidelines and regulations are used as guides in determining disability.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Employees receive verbal and written instructions from supervisors with regard to changes in policy and/or procedures. Supervisor is available for consultation when necessary. Vocational specialists and medical consultants are also available for consultation.

Nature of Review - Cases are reviewed while in progress on a selected basis, and through authorization by supervisor or assistant supervisor for consultative exam. All cases are reviewed by supervisor or assistant supervisor before leaving unit. All cases receive a 100% technical review, and a random sample review of cases is made by the Quality Assurance Unit for decision accuracy and documentation.

Scope of Decisions - Employees determine the disability, capacity to work, and the vocational rehabilitative potential of claimants in North Carolina for disability insurance benefits.

Consequence of Decisions - Employees' decisions will result in the awarding of social security cash benefits, or denial, with subsequent notification of appeal procedures, or cessation of previously awarded benefits with due-process notification.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Work requires more frequent contact with claimants; employers; Federal, State, and local agency representatives; medical treatment facilities; lawyers, legal aid societies, and congressional offices.

Nature and Purpose - Employees discuss cases with a variety of sources such as physicians, rehabilitation counselors, and claimants in order to gather and clarify medical, vocational, and background information necessary to reach a decision in a case.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Employees are constantly under stress of production quotas due to the requirement for balancing productivity with quality decision-making.

Hazards - Employees work in private or semi-private office settings.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - General knowledge of medical and vocational treatment facilities available in specific geographic areas, both public and private. Complete knowledge of medical terminology and body systems, and skills in applying this knowledge in a variety of case situations. Complete knowledge of regulations and procedures of the Federal Social Security Act. Ability to express oneself clearly and concisely in oral and written form. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the general public; State, Federal, and local agencies; and a variety of professional disciplines and co-workers. Ability to make accurate decisions in a production oriented setting.

Minimum Education and Experience - Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university and two years of experience as a Disability Determination Specialist; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Special Note: This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions, but may not be applicable to all positions.