

## Social Security Advocacy Services Newsletter

May/June 2024

Social Security Advocacy Services (SSAS) is dedicated to assisting Minnesotans with the Social Security disability benefits process so they can secure stable housing, live in dignity, and achieve their highest potential.

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## Grantee spotlight

This section of our newsletter spotlights a Department of Human Services-contracted Social Security Advocacy Services grantee in hopes of fostering partnerships and open communication among all grantees.



**Agency Name:** Health Without Gaps Foundation

**Contact information:** 612-562-9204

**Website:** <https://www.healthwithoutgaps.org/>

**Service provided:**

Health Without Gaps Foundation (HWG) was established in 2007 with a mission to improve access to health and social services and create healthy living communities in Minnesota. HWG's vision is to become a leading advocate for health and social welfare accessibility in Minnesota and partnering with similar organizations to bring about lasting impact and provide culturally appropriate person-centered services.

HWG's Social Security Advocacy Services program uses the SOAR model to serve people who reside in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, McLeod, Meeker, Olmsted, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Washington, and Wright counties who need help at the initial, reconsideration, and continuing disability review. In the seven-county metro area, HWG offers housing stabilization services, family training, caregiver coaching, and counseling services.

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## Contract spotlight: Accessibility

The General Duties section, found in most contracts under 2.5, states a grantee must comply with [Minnesota IT \(MN.IT\) Accessibility Standards](#). This includes any information systems, tools, content, and work products produced under the contract, including but not limited to software applications, web sites, video, learning modules, webinars, presentations, etc.



This web page provides all the information you will need to make your correspondence accessible for all individuals who may have digital barriers. There is an option on this web page to subscribe to the Minnesota IT monthly newsletter and we highly encourage you to do this.

It is very important that you are aware of all the services and deliverables within your agency's contract with the Department of Human Services. If you do not have a copy of your agency's current contract, please contact your assigned coordinator for a copy.

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## NEW Social Security rule change for past relevant work

**Effective June 22, 2024**, the Social Security Administration (SSA) is revising the definition of past relevant work. The past relevant work period will now be 5 years instead of 15 years. This rule changes how past relevant work is evaluated, [SSR 24-2p](#) and how medical-vocational profiles are applied, [SSR 24-1p](#).

Additionally, SSA will not consider past work that started and stopped in fewer than 30 calendar days to be past relevant work when determining step four and five of the sequential evaluation process. Any work that started and stopped in less than 30 days may still be considered at step one as substantial gainful activity and it could impact the onset date. If this work was performed in the past relevant period, if applicable, it should be listed on the initial application.

This regulation change applies to all disability determinations or redeterminations made on or after **June 22, 2024**.

SSA will be updating the [Disability Report Adult form \(SSA-3368\)](#), the [online disability application](#), and the [Work History form \(SSA-3699\)](#). The update will include additional instructions, explanations, examples, updating existing questions, and adding some new questions. Make sure that you are using the most current forms and we recommend that you review the updated forms prior to using them so that you are familiar with the changes.

If you have any questions about this rule change, please contact your assigned coordinator.

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## SSAS invoice approval summary

### April 2024

A total of 98 invoices submitted by 17 grantees were approved.

Initial application/reconsiderations	73
ALJ hearing level	20
Appeals Council level	2
Continuing Disability Review (CDR)	2
CDR at ALJ hearing level	1

### May 2024

A total of 115 invoices submitted by 15 grantees were approved.

Initial application/reconsiderations	87
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ALJ hearing level	27
Appeals Council level	0
Continuing Disability Review (CDR)	1
CDR at ALJ hearing level	0

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## Reporting SOAR outcomes

If you are using the SOAR model, you must report the outcome for adult and child cases for decisions made between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, to SOAR works through their [Online Application Tracking](#) (OAT) system. The deadline to report these outcomes is Friday, Aug. 2, 2024.

If you have any questions about this reporting responsibility, please contact Minnesota's state team lead, Dan Coladonato at [dcoladonato@pranic.com](mailto:dcoladonato@pranic.com) or call 518-439-7415 x5241 or you may contact one of the [Minnesota local leads](#).

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## Social Security Advocacy Services team trainings



### Technical Assistance (TA) bi-monthly sessions

On the third **THURSDAY** in odd months from 1:30 to 3 p.m., the Social Security Advocacy Services team offers trainings and opportunities for Q&A to our contracted Social Security advocates.

Our next technical assistance training will be **Thursday, July 18, 2024**. Tanya Heitzinger and Sarah Dicks from the Disability Determination Services will be presenting on *Social Security disability - completing the necessary forms*. You can register for this technical assistance session at this [link](#).

If you are interested in presenting at an upcoming TA session on any topic related to Social Security advocacy services, please contact Tony Reynero at [antonio.reynero@state.mn.us](mailto:antonio.reynero@state.mn.us).

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## Additional Social Security Advocacy training

The National Association Disability Representatives (NADR), National Organization of Social Security Claimants Representatives (NOSSCR), and SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) all offer trainings on Social Security disability. Both NADR and NOSSCR have an associated cost for their trainings and SOAR provides their trainings at no cost.



For further information visit [NADR continuing education on-demand store](#), [NOSSCR on-demand courses](#), and [SOAR online courses](#).

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## Social Security Administration updates



### Social Security video connect

With Social Security video connect option, clients may be able to meet with Social Security staff to conduct business by using Microsoft Teams on their personal device. For further information, read the article [Social Security Connect: connect to us from anywhere](#).

### Commissioner Martin O'Malley

In the first 100 days, Commissioner O'Malley has accomplished many changes within the Social Security Administration. His top three priority areas are customer wait times, average processing time for disability determination, and overpayment and underpayment injustices. For more information read the article [First 100 days accomplishments](#) and view [SecurityStat](#).

### **Full medical continuing disability reviews temporarily on hold**

Social Security announced that effective 5/21/2024 through 9/30/2024, the field offices will not send additional full medical continuing disability reviews to the Disability Determination Services. Read emergency message [EM-24021](#) for further information as there are some exceptions with this change.

### **Program Operations Manual (POMS) updates**

[GN 00250 TN 56](#), Waiver provisions for Title II and Title XVIII overpayments. Social Security has increased the administrative waiver tolerance from \$1,000 to \$2,000. In most cases if a person requests an overpayment waiver and the total amount of that person's overpayment is \$2,000 or less, Social Security will waive that recovery.

[GN 00502 TN 92](#), Determining the need for, developing, and selecting a representative payee. To help improve service and outcomes for youth in foster care, Social Security made clarifications to their foster care policy including selecting a representative payee.

[GN 03103 TN 51](#), Hearings (Title II and entitlement under Title XVIII). Social Security has updated the policy and procedure for filing and processing complaints of alleged bias or misconduct by an administrative law judge.

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## **Social Security Advocacy Services resources**

Additional resources can be found at the Minnesota Department of Human Services webpage [Social Security Advocacy Services: Policies and procedures for contracted grantees](#).

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