



Social Security Advocacy Services Newsletter

January/February 2025

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.



Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. ~Albert Einstein

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SSAS payment system update



Effective immediately users of the SSAS payment system are now able to create and submit invoices for clients who are age 65.

Additionally, this system update should now eliminate the need to submit paper invoices for certain cases.

If you have any questions, contact system administrator Ty Morris at ty.morris@state.mn.us.

Grantee Spotlight

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



Agency name: Elevate Patient Financial Solutions

Contact information: 866-534-6699

Website: www.elevatepfs.com

Service provided:

Elevate Patient Financial Solutions (ElevatePFS) is a national provider of a variety of revenue cycle services. Their solutions include eligibility & enrollment, including disability advocacy; complex claims solutions including third party liability, workers' compensation, Veterans Affairs, and out-of-state Medicaid eligibility; self-pay solutions; and extended business office solutions that include denials management, accounts receivable services, low balance follow up, and zero balance audit & recovery. ElevatePFS serves hospitals, health systems, and health plans across the country.

ElevatePFS has been a contracted grantee with Department of Human Services for more than 15 years, providing disability advocacy services to assist individuals that are potentially eligible for Social Security disability insurance (SSDI) and/or supplemental security income (SSI) at all levels of the Social Security disability process. Their experienced team consists of nationally qualified representatives, clinicians, former disability determination service examiners, attorneys, and former Social Security claims representatives. This combined experience uniquely positions them to more effectively secure disability benefits for the individuals they represent.

Contract spotlight: Appointed representative

Clause 2.4.1.B of your contract with DHS is about serving as an appointed representative and waiving fees. DHS is deferring to the Social Security Administrations rules of conduct and standards of responsibility for representatives as defined in [20 CFR 416.1540](#) and [20 CFR 404.1740](#). DHS expects all grantees to follow these rules and standards when helping a person apply for SSI or RSDI benefits.



Additionally, when completing the [SSA-1696](#) form, grantees must select only the following SSA fee arrangement in section 6, "I waive the right to receive a fee from the claimant, any auxiliary beneficiaries or any other individual, but a third-party entity will pay my fee". Grantees must submit an individual's completed SSA-1696 form to the appropriate SSA field office after they help an individual submit an application/claim to SSA or upon becoming an individual's appointed representative. Grantees will not receive payment when an individual is awarded SSA disability benefits if they use a different fee arrangement or have a separate fee arrangement with an individual and SSA.

SSAS grant monitoring continues

Starting next month, DHS staff will begin monitoring visits as part of our grant management responsibilities. We will review the use of public funds and the day-to-day processes of our contracted Social Security Advocacy Services grantees.

The purpose of grant monitoring is to:

- Build rapport and support effective grantee performance.
- Provide accountability and oversight.
- Ensure proper spending.
- Visit services that many need assistance.

Grant monitoring will be accomplished through the following methods:

- Desk review.
- Regular and ongoing communication with grantees.
- Technical assistance.
- On-site and assessment visits, if necessary.

Grantees selected for a monitoring visit this year will be contacted by their assigned coordinator in the coming months. We appreciate your time and cooperation in helping us meet this important contractual responsibility.

Submitting invoices to DHS

Before submitting an invoice to DHS, we ask grantees to confirm that the following requirements are met:

- The Social Security Administration has made a favorable decision; and
- The individual is eligible for and receives at least one dollar (\$1.00) of Social Security disability benefits.



Submitting invoices prematurely can cause delays or denials in payment and create unnecessary additional work for state staff to verify payment requirements. For more

information, we encourage grantees to review Clause 2.4.1 D and Clause 3.2 of their DHS contract. If you have any questions, please contact your assigned coordinator.

SSAS invoice approval summary

December 2024

A total of 102 invoices submitted by 15 grantees were approved.

Initial application/reconsiderations	81
ALJ hearing level	18
Appeals Council level	0
Continuing Disability Review (CDR)	1
CDR at ALJ hearing level	2

January 2025

A total of 109 invoices submitted by 16 grantees were approved.

Initial application/reconsiderations	87
ALJ hearing level	19
Appeals Council level	1
Continuing Disability Review (CDR)	2
CDR at ALJ hearing level	0

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, March 20, 2025**. John Petroskas from the Department of Human Services will be presenting on *Ethical Dilemmas in Homeless Work*. 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.

Social Security Administration updates



New electronic signature policy

Effective Jan. 18, 2025, Social Security has replaced EM-20022 with [EM-25010](#), which provides updated guidelines on how Social Security will process certain forms signed electronically. The new policy applies to the SSA-1696, SSA-1693, SSA-16, SSA-8000, SSA-8001, SSA-820, and SSA-821 forms.

Advocates webpage

Social Security has redesigned the [representing claimants](#) webpage to enhance customer service for appointed representatives. This new, task-oriented design aims to enhance customer service for appointed representatives and their staff by consolidating portals and services into one location.

Fiscal year 2024 waterfall charts

The Social Security Administration has released its annual waterfall charts for fiscal year 2024. These charts provide insight into trends in disability determinations at the national level. This [chart](#) shows data for disability decisions and this [chart](#) shows data for disability determinations and appeals, including continuing disability reviews.

Other recent changes

For a complete list of all POMS updates, visit Social Security's [POMS recent changes](#) webpage.

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](#).
