

The Importance of Picking the Right Attorney to Represent You for Social Security Disability Benefits:

Things to find out:

- (1) Is the individual who you were referred to really an attorney, or is the person a non-attorney paid by a long-term disability insurance company who will represent you to try and save the disability company money?
- (2) Representatives who are referred to you or advertise their representation may not be able to follow through and appeal your entire case if you have an unfair result since they are not attorneys.
- (3) Is the attorney you choose a NOSSCR member? Attorneys who belong to this organization (National Organization of Social Security Claimants Representatives) usually have a wide breadth of knowledge in the social security disability area because they pay for extra training, obtain important manuals and network with each other concerning important facets of the Social Security Disability Act.
- (4) Can you meet with and discuss your case personally with the attorney, or can you only communicate by phone since the attorney is not located within your local area?
- (5) Be careful. Many individuals who advertise with 800 numbers will only show up in person at the day of the hearing or at the last minute withdraw from your case if they don't want to travel. That's why it is necessary to have an attorney within a realistic distance who can meet with you in person.
- (6) Is your attorney registered electronically with the Social Security Administration so he or she can download your entire file and determine what medical information will be necessary to prove your case. It is surprising that many claimants are not aware that they have the right to obtain their file before the hearing to make sure everything important is on the record. Usually it is too late to rectify the problem after a hearing when there is a decision that denies you benefits.
- (7) If your attorney is experienced in doing disability cases, he or she should probably have experience litigating the particular physical or mental impairments that you are claiming as disabling. There are some diseases that are very rare and uncommon; however, an experienced attorney knows how to find medical information and who the experts in the medical field are prior to bringing your case forward through the appeal process.

In summary, make sure your representative can represent you through the entire stage of your disability case from the initial denial through federal court if necessary.

If your attorney is a member of NOSSCR, you will have the more knowledgeable and experienced attorney than one who is not.

You should have the ability to meet with your attorney in person on multiple occasions prior to the actual hearing. If this is not possible, you should demand an attorney who will or request the attorney or law firm or lay representative to withdraw as your representative.

Ask to see a summary of your medical file within two or three months of your hearing date to ensure that all of the information that's important is on file.

Although it is possible to apply more than once if denied, it becomes more difficult as times goes on, especially if you lose a case that was heard by an administrative law judge. Don't take that chance. Make sure the person who represents you is the most knowledgeable and experienced that you can find in your area.

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