

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Disability Claims Specialist

Class Code: 010534
Pay Grade: GI

A. Purpose:

Implements and participates in disability claims quality assurance reviews, case consultations, mentorship and training, professional relations outreach, disability claims processing, and evidentiary hearings to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services within established rules and regulations.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The Disability Claims Specialist monitors and completes quality assurance reviews, case consulting, mentorship and training of new Disability Claims Analysts, and other special projects to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services within established rules and regulations. This position frequently reviews work of Disability Claims Analysts and medical consultants. The Disability Claims Program Supervisor supervises a work unit of Disability Claims Analysts and Disability Claims Specialists that carry out the adjudicative claims process for the Social Security Administration (SSA) disability program to ensure the program operates within federal rules and regulations.

The Disability Claims Analyst determines medical eligibility for all claim types. This is done by reviewing disability claims applications and obtaining information to continue and make or terminate disability determinations. This position does not supervise, but may act as a mentor in the support and development of new claims analyst staff. Incumbents will complete a training and mentorship program to develop knowledge and proficiency in order to determine medical eligibility for all claims types.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Monitors and completes the quality assurance reviews to guarantee consistency, validity, and quality control of claims decisions.
 - a. Reviews random samples of analyst determinations and contracted medical consultant assessments.
 - b. Conducts 100% quality reviews during new analyst training for reconsideration, child, and continuing disability review claims.
 - c. Provides recommendations in a written narrative for improvement citing federal policy recommendations for correction.
 - d. Reviews, analyzes, and reports patterns and trends on internal and external quality reviews and provides guidance and support in request for program consultation.
2. Adjudicates all claim types through timely and accurate review, appraisal, analysis, and a summary of evidence to determine sufficiency, consistency, and validity.
 - a. Reviews medical information and writes residual functional capacity assessments based on the sufficient evidence.
 - b. Makes referrals to medical consultants to sign off on the functional assessments or to assist with problems in interpreting the severity of medical or psychological conditions.

- c. Reviews vocational information and determines the employability factor of the claimant based on their age, education, and work experience
 - d. Interprets and explains program criteria and the basis for the determination to claimants, their representatives, and public officials.
 - e. Writes rationales to explain the reasoning for decisions made in processing the claim based upon an analysis of medical, psychological, vocational records, and federal policies, rules and regulations.
 - f. Determines the need for future reviews based upon knowledge of the impairment and the potential for changes in claimant status and sets the review dates.
 - g. Provides back-up adjudicative assistance to absent analysts.
3. Provides work direction, mentorship, and training to Disability Claims Analysts regarding policy and program procedures and claims processing to ensure law, rules, policies, and procedures are followed.
 - a. Evaluates and interprets policy and program procedures and determines the best method to apply the policy in a practical manner for the disability process.
 - b. Serves as a disability policy expert for disability claims and answers analyst questions regarding disability claims policy.
 - c. Mentors analysts in proper caseload management techniques.
 - d. Answers questions from agencies, public and claimants.
 - e. Prepares and conducts training for reconsideration, child, and continuing disability review claims using the Social Security training manuals and personally prepared presentations and handouts.
 - f. Conducts special studies to evaluate performance of analysts through the training process and provides guidance to improve performance through successful completion of the training.
 4. Performs and serves as a subject-matter expert for special assigned projects to ensure federal law, rules and procedures are followed and efficient and effective delivery of services.
 - a. Conducts evidentiary hearings to obtain valid testimony needed for proper disability hearing determinations.
 - b. Directs the medical consultant workflow, sets priorities, expedites claims reviews, and works with internal and external consultants to ensure consultant reviews are completed efficiently.
 - c. Conducts reviews of claims requiring vocational analysis to determine whether a claimant has the ability to return to work.
 - d. Provides professional relations by working with healthcare professionals and facilities to ensure timely return of medical evidence, conducts on site reviews of healthcare facilities to verify compliance with federal policy, and provides presentations to educate healthcare or other professionals on the disability process.
 - e. Assists in providing computer support to ensure staff have network connectivity and software/hardware technical support.
 5. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

This position does typically not supervise other staff, but does review analyst determinations for accuracy, validity, and consistency.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include maintaining up-to-date knowledge of federal regulations and policies relative to Social Security disability and applying that knowledge to individual claims; reviewing and analyzing a random selection of analyst decisions to maintain a high level of quality assurance, consistency, and validity; maintaining the specialized knowledge and level of oversight of the wide-range of special projects requires self-study, the ability to multi-task and reprioritize to meet the needs of the agency; providing constructive advice and assistance to analysts and medical consultant staff; and conducting evidentiary hearings, obtaining and appraising testimony, and preparing written decisions.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include-final authority on the vocational issues, medical determinations, and disability hearing claims decisions; evaluating disability claims for proper adjudication; identifying correct locations to obtain the required evidence; locating and establishing contacts with claimants; approving appropriate expenditure funds; and directing analysts and medical consultant staff to ensure compliance.

Decisions referred include when clarification is needed to assist with complex medical situations and how to evaluate them using the correct federal laws, rules, and procedures; and when additional training is needed.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with medical sources to discuss or obtain medical information. Frequent contact with judges, attorneys, and claimants or their representatives to secure or provide information regarding the claims process, and with Social Security field offices and other state agencies to develop good working relations and to obtain documentation of claims information.

H. Working Conditions:

The incumbent works in a typical office environment. Travel throughout the state may be required.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- applicable laws, rules, and regulations of the Social Security Administration's disability program;
- disability adjudication, hearing officer, vocational, and professional relations policies and procedures;
- in-depth understanding of medical, psychological, and legal issues relating to disability;
- medical and psychological terminology;
- impairments, diseases, treatments, and responses;
- understanding the physiological and psychological limitations on an individuals functionality;
- effective interpersonal communication, training, case management, interview, collection, and analysis techniques
- concepts related to client's rights, confidentiality, and professional ethics.

Ability to:

- communicate effectively;
- work successfully as a team, one-one-one, and independently;
- manage multiple priorities;
- establish effective public relations with physicians, medical personnel, and medical facilities;
- train, coach, and motivate analysts and medical consultants on specialized duties;
- provide exemplary customer service;
- work with others in a manner which shows sensitivity and professionalism;
- tactfully handle disagreements;
- organize, evaluate and disseminate information in a clear and concise manner;
- critically analyze large amounts of information and be able to clearly write the thought processes used in reaching a decision while providing clarification to others;
- comprehend information communicated and apply the new information to the adjudication process;
- research, interpret and implement federal and state rules, regulations, policy and business procedures;
- exercise sound judgment in the performance of assigned responsibilities;
- accept and provide direction;
- show initiative and make decisions;
- provide thorough guidance, analysis, rationales to others on subject matters such as vocation, Social Security disability policy, case management practices, and business processes.