



February 23, 2021

The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chairperson  
The Honorable Jim Wooten, Co-Chairperson  
Uniform Personnel Classification and  
Compensation Plan Subcommittee  
Joint Budget Committee  
State Capitol Building, Room 315  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Senator Davis and Representative Wooten:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) submits a request from the Disability Determination for the Social Security Administration (DDSSA).

DDSSA is requesting seventy (70) positions from the OPM central growth pool established by Ark. Code Ann. §21-5-225. The classifications requested are listed below:

**CLASSIFICATIONS REQUESTED**

<b><u>TITLE</u></b>	<b><u># OF POSITIONS</u></b>	<b><u>CODE</u></b>	<b><u>GRADE</u></b>	<b><u>RANGE</u></b>
DDSSA Adjudicator V	68	X207C	GS10	\$56,039-\$81,257
DDSSA Medical Specialist	2	L024N	MP07	\$125,200-\$187,800

DDSSA has received approval from the U.S. Social Security Administration to add seventy (70) positions to help address a national backlog of federal disability claims. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this backlog grow in other states, and the U.S. Social Security Administration wants to send more of these claims to Arkansas based on DDSSA's established track record of speed and accuracy regarding the processing of claims.

Fifty (50) DDSSA Adjudicator V positions have already been added to DDSSA's appropriation bill for Fiscal Year 21-22. Recently, DDSSA was approached by the U.S. Social Security Administration to see if the department could add twenty (20) additional positions for claims processing. Furthermore, DDSSA has received authorization from the federal government to hire all 70 positions as soon as possible. A governor's letter has been requested to add the twenty (20) additional positions to DDSSA's upcoming appropriation; this request would allow all 70 positions to be established and filled for the remainder of the current fiscal year. If approved, the cost of this action is \$4,061,052 if filled at the entry level; the positions are 100% federally funded.

The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chairperson  
The Honorable Jim Wooten, Co-Chairperson  
February 23, 2021  
Page 2.

The Office of Personnel Management has reviewed this request and **recommends** the approval of DDSSA's growth pool request.

Sincerely,



Kay Barnhill, Director  
Office of Personnel Management



---

**SECRETARY OF TRANSFORMATION & SHARED  
SERVICES**

2/24/21  
**DATE**

KB/cb 1-2



ASA HUTCHINSON  
Governor

February 1, 2021

Ms. Kay Barnhill, Director  
Department of Transformation and Shared Services  
Office of Personnel Management  
501 Woodlane, Suite 201  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Ms. Barnhill,

In July 2020, the Social Security Administration (SSA) addressed the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on creating a significant, national backlog of federal disability cases, as well as the need for Disability Determination Services (DDS) to maintain a steadfast commitment to serving the American public through these unprecedented times. To help address the backlog, SSA authorized the hiring and training of new employees. As a result of the Arkansas' continued leadership and quality of work, SSA asked the Arkansas DDS to onboard 120 hires by September 25, 2020, followed by an additional 50 hires around June 2021.

In order to fulfill SSA's request to onboard 120 new hires, the Arkansas DDS requested and received government and legislature approval for 92 new pool positions, which were added to the agency's position control report in July 2020. In order for the Arkansas DDS to complete the second phase of the hiring initiative, DDSSA requested and received government and legislature approval for 50 additional new pool positions, which were added to the agency's position control report in November 2020.

Last week, SSA reached out to ask if the Arkansas DDS could increase their number of upcoming hires. While preparing this request to add an additional 20 new pool positions for Fiscal Year 2021, we discovered that the November 17, 2020 letter presented to the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee, which added the 50 additional positions in November 2020, only mentioned Fiscal Year 2022; yet, DDSSA's request was to have these positions for Fiscal Year 2021.

Nonetheless, in order for DDSSA to hire additional staff at the request of SSA, we are requesting to have an additional 20 new pool positions added simultaneously with the 50 positions requested, with all 70 positions authorized for Fiscal Year 2021; however, these 20 positions

"AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER"

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
*Disability Determination for Social Security Administration*

701 SOUTH PULASKI STREET  
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201  
TELEPHONE 501-682-3030

ARTHUR BOUTIETTE  
Director

would be the ONLY ones that would need to be amended into the bill, as the November 17, 2020 date already was inclusive of the 50.

These additional positions will be fully-funded by SSA, as are all DDSSA positions. We ask that you move our request forward to the legislature as we ask for their approval and blessings, so we can proceed with our commitment to serving the citizens of Arkansas in Fiscal Year 2021.

If you need anything else from us, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Arthur Boutiette  
DDSSA Director

Attachment

cc: Tony Robinson, Administrator, Personnel Review, Bureau of Legislative Research  
cc: Jeffrey Stearns, DDSSA Finance Director  
cc: Melissa Thomas, DDSSA Human Resources Manager



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSFORMATION AND SHARED SERVICES  
**Office of Personnel Management**  
**Request for Pool Position**

Business Area	Agency/Institution	Date
0311	Disability Determination for SSA (DDSSA)	02/01/21

**Position(s) to be Surrendered**

Position/Item Number	Classification Title	Pay Grade	Class Code

**Classification(s) Requested**

N/A	Classification Title	Pay Grade	Class Code
18 positions	DDSSA Adjudicator V	GS10	X207C
2 positions	DDSSA Medical Specialist	MP07	L024N

I Hereby Certify / Understand That:

- A. The position requested is critical to the operation of this Agency/Institution and a detailed justification for this request is attached. (Justification should be detailed and not less than one typed page in length.)
- B. Sufficient funds are available to fund this position at the requested grade.
- C. This is a full time position that will not be used for any other purpose than that which is outlined in the attached narrative.
- D. The position to be surrendered is the highest grade position available and the loss of this position will not adversely affect the operation of this Agency/Institution.
- E. No current employee will be displaced by this action.

Agency Personnel Rep	Date
Melissa Thomas	02/01/21

Agency Director	Date
	