



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

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May 14, 2014

Senator Uvalde Lindsey, Co-Chairperson
Representative Andrea Lea, Co-Chairperson
Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation
Plan Subcommittee
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol Building, Room 315
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Co-Chairs:

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

DDSSA has requested the establishment of a new title, DDSSA Adjudicative Specialist, at a grade C114.

Social Security disability cases have increased over 41% in the past seven years for the State of Arkansas alone, although DDSSA also works on numerous and ever-increasing caseloads for other states as well. In addition to this increase, DDSSA has also had a significant increase in Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR's), from 2,414 cases in 2007 to over 18,000 cases in 2014 despite being on a Federal hiring freeze.

In order to reduce the burden of the increased workload on Adjudicators and Physicians, the DDSSA requests a new classification: DDSSA Adjudicative Specialist, C114. These specialists would undergo the same training as an adjudicator, but work to reduce the volume of CDR's placed on adjudicators by filling out forms and requests, scheduling appointments and examinations, processing any changes in claims, verifying documents, obtaining information from claimants, and serving as the contact representative for physicians, attorneys, local Federal Social Security offices, and claimants.

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DDSSA has a similar career path for DDSSA Adjudicative Assistants, C049C, C113, that has successfully helped DDSSA in attracting and retaining more qualified adjudicators for case review and career progression. The agency is hoping that this new title will provide the same response. There will be a total of 10 positions allocated to the DDSSA Adjudicative Specialist title. These positions will come from existing positions that will be crossgraded and no new positions will be requested at this time.

After review and analysis, OPM **recommends** the establishment of the DDSSA Adjudicative Specialist, C114, classification.

Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Kay B. Terry
State Personnel Administrator



Chief Fiscal Officer of the State

MAY - 6 2014

Date

KBT/sd:1-2



STATE OF ARKANSAS
Disability Determination for Social Security Administration

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LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201-9750
TELEPHONE 501-682-3030

MIKE BEEBE
Governor

March 28, 2014

Kay Terry
Office of Personnel Management
1509 W. 7th Street, Suite 201
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RECEIVED

ARTHUR BOUTIETTE
Director

APR 03 2014

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MGMT
CLASS & COMP

Dear Mrs. Terry:

I write this letter to provide some history and background for Social Security Disability's request to establish a DDSSA Adjudicative Specialist classification.


As you know, our main function is to adjudicate Social Security Disability cases. It is an extremely complicated, federally mandated process that is executed by approximately 280 Adjudicators and 57 in-house Physicians. The number of people that filed for disability, as well as the caseload we have received, has increased dramatically over the past decade. We are in a position where we continue to give Adjudicators and Physicians more cases, the federal guidelines continue to change, and more steps are added to the sequential process. Now that we are in a paperless environment at Social Security Disability, many Adjudicators seem unable to be caught up, especially now that claimant evidence is more readily available.

For each of the past seven years, we have had an increase of cases over the previous year. During that period, our cases have increased by nearly 41%, to over 82,500 Arkansas claims. Of that number, CDRs (Continuing Disability Reviews) have increased from 2,414 cases in 2007 to 18,000 cases this year despite being on a Federal hiring freeze. Neither of these figures includes the claims DDSSA is working on for other states.

We seek the help of OPM and the Legislature in coming up with ways to help reduce the burden of the increased workload placed on our Adjudicators and Physicians. One way to help would be to create an Adjudicative Specialist position. This would reduce the time that the Adjudicators and Physicians have to spend on each case by reallocating some of their time consuming responsibilities to a new class of workers. These workers would be highly trained to assume those responsibilities. This DDSSA Adjudicative Specialists would come from the existing Adjudicative assistants. Although I believe the agency will still have to find additional creative ways to meet these new challenges, this would certainly be a significant step in that direction.

Your positive review and that of the Legislature would be greatly appreciated. If I can answer any further questions, I am at yours and the committee's disposal to do so.

Respectfully,


Arthur Boutiette