



June 17, 2026

The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chairperson
The Honorable Les Warren, Co-Chairperson
Uniform Personnel Classification and
Compensation Plan Subcommittee
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol Building, Room 315
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Senator Davis and Representative Warren:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) submits a request to change the career-path designation for the following titles established by Ark. Code Ann. §21-5-208(c)(1):

Job Series Designation Changes

<u>JOB FAMILY / JOB SERIES</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>CLASS CODE</u>	<u>JOB SERIES DESIGNATION CHANGE</u>
Information Technology/Application Support	Applications Supervisor/Expert	IST10	IAS06C	Career-Path
Program Operations/Disability	Disability Adjudicator V	SGS10	PDI05C	Career-Path

Changing the designation for the Applications Supervisor/Expert from Competitive to Career-Path is consistent with other established Supervisor/Expert titles that are designated as Career-Path. This change would also provide eligible employees with an additional career-path and promotion opportunity.

The Disability Determination for Social Security Administration (DDSSA) states that the current Competitive designation for the Disability Adjudicator V title presents operational challenges for by hindering their ability to promote an employee to this level. DDSSA promotes employees based on successfully meeting the criteria for the next level, including objective, case statistic data. The current Competitive designation limits their ability to recognize and reward highly performing employees who are eligible for the Disability Adjudicator V level.

Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.


 STATE PERSONNEL DIRECTOR


 DATE



STATE OF ARKANSAS
Disability Determination for Social Security Administration
701 S. PULASKI STREET
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201
TELEPHONE 501-682-3030

June 1, 2026

Ms. Kay Barnhill
State Personnel Director
Office of Personnel Management
Department of Shared Administrative Services
501 Woodlawn, Suite 201
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Ms. Barnhill:

On behalf of the Disability Determination for Social Security Administration (DDSSA), I am writing to formally request that the job title assignment for Disability Adjudicator V, grade SGS10, be changed from "competitive" to "career-path."

In November 2024, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provided a list of job title assignments, accompanied by a memorandum clarifying that "career-path" titles are intended for positions with career progression opportunities, while "competitive" titles are stand-alone roles not included in a career path. At that time, Disability job titles at pay grade SGS10 and below—including Disability Adjudicator V—were designated as "career-path." The memorandum also requested that agencies review the information and provide written explanations for any concerns. At the time, we were not fully aware of the implications of the "career-path" versus "competitive" designations, so no change request was submitted.

In January 2025, OPM issued a finalized list of job title assignments, indicating that job series assignments were final and that OPM would follow up with departments regarding pay plan implementation. In this finalized list, Disability job titles at SGS10, including Disability Adjudicator V, were reassigned as "competitive." However, other SGS10 titles remain assigned as "career-path." Again, not fully aware of the implications, we did not submit any concerns.

Following the recent 796 Report, which displayed several vacant Adjudicator V positions, we contacted OPM to ask if a career-path adjustment upward to Disability Adjudicator V would be permitted for a position authorized as Disability Adjudicator I-IV. The response indicated that management would not permit such an adjustment, which is a significant concern for our agency.

Historically, DDSSA has maintained a structured career path for Adjudicators, with promotions based on a combination of tenure, experience with various case types, and performance metrics such as case count, quality, and aged cases. Advancement has always required meeting specific criteria, not just tenure.

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The assignment of "career-path" and "competitive" has introduced several operational challenges for DDSSA. Previously, we could promote Adjudicators based on internal statistics. Now, we must submit these statistics to OPM for review and approval, and promotions from Adjudicator IV to V are only possible when a V position is vacant.

Additionally, the need to retain vacant Adjudicator V positions, due to the "competitive" designation, has resulted in several positions remaining unfilled for over two years, as noted in the recent 796 Report. These vacant positions also increase costs.

The current structure disrupts the established career progression for our staff and limits our ability to recognize and reward highly performing employees. More importantly, it reduces the number of cases assigned, increasing the time Arkansas citizens must wait for a decision.

Given these challenges and the longstanding career path structure within DDSSA, I respectfully request that OPM reconsider the designation of Disability Adjudicator V, grade SGS10, and reassign it as "career-path" rather than "competitive." This change would restore our ability to effectively manage promotions, retain talent, and maintain operational efficiency.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am available to provide any additional information or clarification as needed and look forward to your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



Arthur Boutiette,
DDSSA Director

AB/mt