

# THE 4 LEVELS

## OF APPEAL FOR SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS

Around 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of people who apply for Social Security Disability benefits get denied on the first try. If you apply, that means you'll most likely need to appeal. And appeals are a multi-part process...

### 1 RECONSIDERATION:

You get a new review by someone at the Social Security Administration other than the official who turned you down. You can submit new evidence.



### 2 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE (ALJ) HEARING:

If you received a denial on reconsideration, you can take your case to a Social Security judge. This could be your only chance to argue for your benefits in person. It's one of your best chances to win.



### 3 APPEALS COUNCIL:

If the judge turns you down, you can ask the Social Security Administration's Appeals Council to review your case. The council could agree with the judge, or send your case back for another hearing. This is the last step within Social Security's legal system.



### 4 FEDERAL COURT:

If you're unhappy with the council's decision, you can file a lawsuit in federal court. You must file within **60 days** of your council denial. The federal judge could deny your benefits, approve your benefits or send your case back to Social Security with more instructions.



**MATHIS & MATHIS**  
**DISABILITY ADVOCATES**

Appealing a Social Security Disability benefits denial gets complicated. A professional representative can make the process easier for you and, according to Social Security's own numbers, improve your chances of winning benefits.

**LEARN MORE:**

**800-462-8447**

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