

**STATE OF WISCONSIN  
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION**

**DISABILITY CLAIMS SPECIALIST**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority [under Wis. Admin. Code ER 2.04] for making classification decisions relative to present and future professional positions located within the Department of Health Services (DHS), Division of Health Care Access and Accountability, Disability Determination Bureau (DDB). Positions allocated to this classification (1) perform specialized high level and complex decision making processes related to disability determinations, (2) conduct special projects requiring wide and diverse knowledge base of Social Security Administration (SSA) policy and procedures under unique circumstances, (3) provides training and mentoring to other disability examiners and to others external to the DDB, (4) perform quality assurance sampling work and education, and (5) conduct administrative hearings for disability determinations. This classification specification will not specifically identify every eventuality or combination of duties and responsibilities of positions that currently exist, or those that result from changing program emphasis in the future. Rather, it is designed to serve as a framework for classification decision-making in this occupational area.

Classification decisions must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (i.e., more than 50% of the work assigned to and performed by the position when compared to the class concepts and definition of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusions

This classification includes professional positions located in DDB. Positions allocated into this classification are allocated to one of following specializations: (1) high level and complex decision making cases; (2) specialized projects; (3) training or mentoring specialist; (4) quality assurance; and (5) hearing officers. Positions which perform high level and complex decision making deal with the most difficult SSA disability determination cases such as the military casualty, homeless and vocational assessment/work assessment cases. Specialized project positions must have a wide and diverse knowledge base of SSA policy and procedures and deal with unique circumstances as they are presented to the DDB such as Katie Beckett claims and waivers, MAPP claims, federal assistance requests, investigation of special cases such as consultative exam providers, etc. Positions that provide training or mentoring focus on providing SSA disability knowledge transfer and education to new trainees, provide expertise to examiners who need assistance or advice with their cases, and provide information and training to others external to the DDB such as benefit specialists. Positions in quality assurance perform analysis of claim cases to ensure that they were properly adjudicated according to SSA policy and procedures and provide education and recommendations for improvement or change to the process or method

process or method of cases handling prior to the cases being closed. Positions conducting administrative hearings are responsible for the entire hearing process including preparation, enabling the claimant to review their file (usually electronically), conducting the formal hearing and follow-up including issuing the decision and ensuring the decision is implemented.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification are the following types of positions:

1. Positions which meet the statutory definitions of supervisor and/or management as defined in Wis. Stats. 111.81(19) and (13) as interpreted and administered by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.
2. Positions which make determinations of eligibility for disability benefits under the Social Security Act a majority of the time and are more appropriately classified as a Disability Determination Specialist.
3. Positions which adjudicate any combination of initial, continuance/cessation, reconsideration cases and disability remand a majority of the time and are more appropriately classified as a Disability Claims Reviewer.
4. Positions which are not located within the DHS, Division of Health Care Access and Accountability, Disability Determination Bureau.
9. All other positions which are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance Into This Classification

Employees enter positions within this classification by reclassification (logical and gradual gain of knowledge and expertise through on-the-job activities) or by competition.

## II. DEFINITIONS

### DISABILITY CLAIMS SPECIALIST

Positions in this classification: (1) perform specialized high level and complex decision making processes related to disability determinations, work in either the Quality and Special Programs or Disability Appeals Review Units, (2) conduct special projects requiring a wide and diverse knowledge base of Social Security Administration policy and procedures under unique circumstances, work in the Quality and Special Programs Unit, (3) provide training and mentoring to other disability examiners and to others external to the DDB, work either in Quality and Special Programs Unit or the Examiner Training Unit, (4) perform specialized professional quality assurance work in the Quality and Special Programs Unit, OR, (5) perform hearing officer functions in the Disability Hearings Unit.

Claims Specialists report to a Disability Determination Supervisor in either the Quality and Special Projects Unit or the Disability Appeals Review Unit and complete review and determination of cases such as military casualty, homeless, vocational assessment/work assessment cases, continuance – cessation reconsideration, case determination and appeal evidence under Titles II and XVI or the Social Security Act. Specialized projects: Reports to a Disability Determination Supervisor in the Quality and Special Projects Unit and completes reviews, determinations, or special activities as assigned as they are presented to DDB, not limited to Katie Beckett claims and waivers, MAPP claims, federal assistance requests,

requests, investigation of special cases, etc. Trainers and mentors: the training coordinator reports to the Quality and Program Development Section Chief. The mentors report to the Disability Determination Supervisor of either the Quality and Special Projects Unit or the Examiner Training Unit. The training coordinator and training staff ensure that new trainees and medical consultants are provided the tools and guidance to ensure that they are successful in rendering disability determinations. This is completed through classroom education, one-on-one counseling, development and update of training materials, and feedback. Mentors provide ongoing education and feedback to existing examiners. Mentors update business process guidance and are available on a schedule for examiners to use to seek advice on their case(s). The training coordinator works with the Section Chief to coordinate training to outside (DDB) resources such as benefit specialists or DOC psychologists on DDB policies, procedures, and business processes to ensure that their constituents are better served.

Quality assurance specialists function as program assurance analysts and perform case reviews on all types and levels of disability claims determinations to assure that cases are both technically and substantively correct; conduct special system, procedures, and related studies; develop and revise performance standards and procedures; and analyze operational policies and procedures to improve the quantity and quality of case decisions. Hearings specialists conduct administrative hearings of appeals related to disability determinations of title II and Title XVI disability cases on behalf of the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration in appeals of medical cessation disability cases and adverse reopening disability cases. Hearing specialist responsibilities include pre-hearing work-up of cases and development of evidence; conducting post-hearing development as determined necessary; and preparing and issuing a comprehensive written final determination. The work is performed under general supervision.

#### **Representative Positions:**

Quality Assurance Specialist: Reports to a Disability Determination Supervisor in the Quality and Special Programs Unit and reviews and analyzes initial, continuance-cessation and reconsideration case determinations and appeal evidence under Titles II, XVI, and XIX of the Social Security Act, in order to provide information regarding the quality and effectiveness of individual, unit, and agency performance. Prepares periodic reports on various aspects of disability claims adjudication and claims processing to be used in determining how effectively the bureau is operating and what changes should be made; prepares special reports and studies which are designed to analyze a specific operational or adjudicative problem or training need; analyzes and prepares case processing procedures; and acts as a consultant and resource person to other agency personnel on adjudicative issues.

Hearing Specialist: Reports to the Section Chief of the Disability Appeals and Integrity Section. Conducts pre-hearing work-up of cases to assure the case is adequately documented and scheduled in a timely manner, that the claimant and his/her attorney or representative receive adequate notice of the hearing and are informed of the disability hearing process; conducts administrative hearings in accordance with the due process standards of law to assure that claimant has a fair opportunity to be heard; conducts post-hearing activities including securing additional evidence as needed, reviewing hearing testimony and evidence, and preparing and issuing a final written decision.

### **III. QUALIFICATIONS**

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work, or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired.

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

This classification was created effective October 16, 1994 in Bulletin CC/SC-28 as a result of the Professional Social Services Personnel Management Survey. The classification was modified effective October 11, 2009 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0251-MRS/SC to accommodate the change of the name of the agency from the Department of Health & Family Services to the Department of Health Services and of the Divisions and Bureaus, and to update the duties and responsibilities of the positions.

ILW  
CC/PLW  
49270