

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS & BEYOND

Q1 NEWSLETTER 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

Social Security to Expand Field
Office Hours Nationwide

Social Security: Dedicated
To Serving Veterans Every Day
Of The Year

Letter from Jan Dils

Office Inbox
Stay Plugged into the Practice

It's Time To...

Peanut Butter Pie

Some "refreshing" facts
about COLA

How To Replace A Medicare Card

What influences Social Security
Disability Waiting Times?



Social Security to Expand Field Office Hours Nationwide

Social Security recently announced that, as a result of Congress' approval of the fiscal year 2015 budget, the agency will expand its hours nationwide and offices will be open to the public for an additional hour on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, effective March 16, 2015.

A field office that is usually open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. will remain open until 4:00 p.m. Offices will continue to close to the public at noon every Wednesday so employees have time to complete current work and reduce backlogs.

"This expansion of office hours reaffirms our commitment to providing the people we serve the option of top-notch, face-to-face assistance in field offices even as we work to expand online services for those who prefer that flexibility," said Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security. "The public expects and deserves world-class customer service and thanks to approved funding, I am pleased we will continue our tradition of exceptional service."

In recent years, Social Security reduced public office hours due to congressional budget cuts, growing backlogs and staffing losses. The agency began recovery in fiscal year 2014 by replacing some field office staffing losses and providing overtime support to process critical work. With

the commitment of resources in fiscal year 2015, the agency is now able to restore some service hours to the public.

Most Social Security business does not require a visit to a local field office. Many services, including applying for retirement, disability and Medicare benefits, creating a my Social Security account,

replacing a Medicare card, or reporting a change of address or telephone number are conveniently available anytime at www.socialsecurity.gov. Social Security also offers assistance via a toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213 (Voice) and 1-800-325-0778 (TTY). Representatives are available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

"This expansion of office hours reaffirms our commitment to providing the people we serve the option of top-notch, face-to-face assistance in field offices"

Source: www.socialsecurity.gov/news/#1/post/1-2015-1

Social Security: Dedicated To Serving Veterans Every Day Of The Year.

Social Security has made a commitment to honor our nation's Veterans not only on Veterans Day, but every day of the year. In fact, military service members who became disabled during active duty on or after October 1, 2001 get expedited processing of their Social Security disability applications, regardless of where the injury or disability occurred. It's also available to Veterans with a compensation rating of 100 percent permanent and total disability. In some situations, family members may be able to receive benefits too, including dependent children and spouses. If you, or someone you know, became disabled while on active duty in the military, you can find out more about what Social Security can do for you by visiting their website dedicated to Wounded Warriors: www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors.

Source: www.socialsecurity.gov/news/press/psa/2014/1114/veterans-60sec.html



A LETTER
FROM JAN

I'm so excited to welcome you to our first Social Security Disability Newsletter for 2015! I hope you will agree that we are starting the new year off on a great note, with a lot of useful and interesting information about Social Security benefits for everyone, at every stage in the process of applying for benefits. I'm happy to report that we have a lot of good news to share, including a cost of living increase that resulted in increased benefits payments starting this January, and expanded office hours for Social Security field offices thanks to approval of a healthier budget for 2015.

We have also outlined the steps you'll need to take to replace a lost Medicare card, and what you can do if you need proof of coverage while you are waiting for your new card to arrive. There's a post from our blog about the factors that influence your wait time in receiving a decision after you've applied for your benefits, and we have included an article especially for our Veterans. Of course, we have also shared a delicious and easy recipe from the kitchen of one of our team members, and a few surprises "just for fun".

I also want to start 2015 with a reminder that we are here to help, and we're always happy to hear from you. I encourage you to call or email us through our website at JanDils.com with any questions you may have, or suggestions for topics you'd like to learn more about in our upcoming newsletters. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely, 



JAN DILS brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. Her knowledge encompasses vital areas for Social Security disability benefits and related appeals and claims. With a practice that focuses on the people, Jan Dils ensures you get answers and the right results.

SOME "REFRESHING" FACTS ABOUT COLA.

This year, nearly **64 MILLION AMERICANS** who receive Social Security or Supplemental Security Income can expect a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase of **1.7 PERCENT TO THEIR MONTHLY BENEFIT PAYMENTS.**

OTHER SOCIAL SECURITY CHANGES IN 2015 ARE ALSO WORTH NOTING. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security payroll tax will increase to \$118,500. A worker will earn one Social Security credit after paying taxes on \$1,220 in earnings in 2015. Eligibility for retirement benefits still takes 40 credits (or 10 years of work).

The average monthly Social Security benefit for a **retired worker in 2015 is \$1,328** and the average monthly Social Security benefit for a **disabled worker in 2015 is \$1,165.**

For people who receive SSI, the new maximum federal payment amount is \$733.

And the Apple Goes To...

Sponsored by Jan Dils, Attorney's at Law, the Golden Apple Award recognizes one area teacher per month for their outstanding contributions in the classroom. "Dedication" is just one of the words a co-worker used to describe **Mr. Brown** in his nomination form. He always finds a way to make his classroom fun, and strives to make a positive impression upon each student.

In an interview after receiving the reward, Brown said that the students are the reasons for his motivation. "Their smiling faces. Any time they come in and smile and say, 'hey Mr. Brown', it's a special thing. Their excitement keeps me excited about teaching."

In January, personal attention and compassion for each student earned a teacher from Wood County Christian School the first Jan Dils Golden Apple Award of the new year. The school erupted in cheers as **Ginger Postlewait** was presented with the award by the Jan Dils team. Ms. Postlewait said, "I was just shocked, I really was. I had no idea that I would have been picked for this."

Parents say she is always providing feedback and understanding to each situation. Ms. Postlewait says her love for the job comes from the desire to work hard, and to help each child reach their own individual success. "I do try to help the students achieve at the level they are," Postlewait said.

Please join us in thanking Mr. Brown and Ms. Postlewait for their hard work that makes such a difference in the lives of our community's children!

**COMMONYMS:
TAKE THE CHALLENGE**

What's a commonym you ask? A commonyms is group of words that have a common trait in the three words/items listed. For example: the words; A car - A tree - An elephant... they all have trunks. These will make you think!

1. Your Hand - Your Voice - Your Children
2. Chop - Yard - Pogo
3. Lawn - Rocking - Wheel
4. Sheep - Watch - Seeing-Eye
5. Lilac - Plum - Violet
6. Tug - Sail - Steam
7. Turkey - Teddy Bear - Christmas Stocking
8. Sea - Taco - Turtle
9. Sand - Juke - Toy
10. Time - Stink - Atomic

This issue's solution: 1. things you raise 2. sticks 3. chairs 4. dogs 5. purples 6. boats 7. things are stuffed 8. shells 9. boxes 10. bombs

IT'S TIME TO...

- Look out for Cupid's arrows. **February 14th is Valentine's Day.**
- Bring Rover a special doggie bag. **February 20th is Love Your Pet Day.**
- Chop down a cherry tree? Don't lie... **February 22nd is George Washington's Birthday.**
- Don't forget to floss! **March 6th is Dentist's Day.**
- Count your pennies. **March 10th is Money Day.**
- Order more cookies. **March 15th is the birthday of Girl Scouting.**
- Wear something green or find yourself "in a pinch". **March 17th is St. Patrick's Day.**
- Celebrate celery? Cheer for cheese? **March 26th is Make Your Own Holiday Day.**
- Remember that "apple a day". **March 30th is Doctor's Day.**

JAN DILS BLOG

What influences Social Security Disability Waiting Times?

We've made it no secret that the Social Security Disability application process can be complicated and lengthy. So what factors influence your waiting time?

Some factors include whether you're undergoing the initial application part of the process or an appeal, how long it takes your particular state to review claims, how seamless it is to obtain relevant medical records or if you have a severe disability that may qualify for the Compassionate Allowances program and reduce your waiting time.

One of the most common deterrents in an applicant's process is the denial of the initial claim, particularly if he or she is again denied at the appeal stage and must face an administrative law judge. Waiting for a judge's review can take up to an additional year or more.

Complicated diagnoses, mystery ailments and missing or incomplete medical records can also significantly delay a case. This is why it's helpful to have experienced legal representation to give your case its best chance for success so you can receive the benefits you deserve as quickly as possible.

At the law firm of Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we have extensive experience with every stage of the Social Security Disability application process. To schedule a free first meeting, call us toll-free at 1.877.526.3457.



PEANUT BUTTER PIE

THIS RECIPE FOR PEANUT BUTTER PIE IS THE PERFECT ENDING TO ANY MEAL!

This month's recipe comes from Medical Fee/Invoice Specialist Amanda Nolan. Try it once and you'll "crave" this delicious pie.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup peanut butter, plus 2 Tablespoons, divided
- 1- 8oz. package cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup sugar
- 1- 12 oz. container thawed whipped topping
- 1 prepared chocolate pie crust
- 1 jar hot fudge

DIRECTIONS

Beat the peanut butter, cream cheese and sugar in a large bowl until well combined. Gently mix 3 cups of the whipped topping into mixture until combined. Spoon this mixture into the pie shell. Smooth the mixture to the edges of the pie.

Put 2 Tablespoons of hot fudge into the corner of a resealable food storage bag and set aside. Microwave remaining topping on high for 1 minute and stir. Pour and spread over pie, covering the entire peanut butter layer. Refrigerate until set.

Once set, spread remaining whipped topping over the hot fudge layer. Place the remaining peanut butter into resealable food storage bag. Cut the corner of the bag for both the hot fudge and the peanut butter and squeeze the bag to drizzle toppings over pie. Serve and enjoy!





1-877-JANDILS
JANDILS.COM

Q1 NEWSLETTER



We Won't Take **NO** For An Answer[®]

Want to keep up with all of the latest news or to get to know us better? Like us on Facebook!



HOW TO REPLACE A MEDICARE CARD.

Your Medicare card is important because it provides proof that you have Medicare health insurance.

If your Medicare card is lost, stolen or damaged, you can ask for a new one at www.socialsecurity.gov.

You can use the application on www.socialsecurity.gov only to request a Medicare card. If you need a Medicaid card, contact your state's Medicaid office.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Your new Medicare card will arrive in the mail in about 30 days.
- It will be mailed to the address Social Security has on file for you.
- If you need proof that you have Medicare sooner than 30 days, you also can request a letter which you will receive in about 10 days.
- If you need proof immediately for your doctor or for a prescription, visit your nearest Social Security office.
- For security reasons, there is a 30-minute time limit to complete each page. You will be given notice when you are about to time out and can get more time to finish.

IF YOU HAVE MOVED:

- If you have moved and have not reported this to Social Security, you will need to report this change before your request can be processed.

