BENEFITS & BEYOND
Social Security Disability

THE JAN DILS FOUNDATION

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Denied for Disability? Why Appeals Are Where Cases Are Won

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It is a common myth that everyone gets denied the first time they apply for disability benefits. While this is only partially true, a large number of claims are indeed denied upfront. However, receiving a denial does not mean you should simply give up or try again from scratch. Instead, you have a strict 60-day window to file an appeal and correct any errors made on your initial attempt.

Why Was My Claim Denied?

Most of the time, claims are rejected simply because the applicant did not provide enough documentation, or the medical records provided did not fully support the claim. To be approved, your condition must meet a very strict definition of "disability". Specifically, your doctor must clearly explain that your impairment is expected to last—without improvement—for at least 12 months. In many of these situations, a "denial" is actually just the agency's way of requesting better, more detailed information.

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How Do I Fix the Mistake?

Without proper guidance, many applicants make critical mistakes after a denial:

- Some simply give up, hoping the SSA will somehow fix the issue on their own.
- Others wait too long and completely miss their crucial 60-day deadline.
- Some mistakenly believe they must start the entire process over again, which unfortunately places their application right back at the bottom of the pile.

The key to moving forward is found in the denial letter itself, which explains exactly what was missing from your original application. You must review this letter carefully to understand what needs to be fixed the second time around.

Get Good Legal Advice

Navigating an appeal can be incredibly complex. If your income is too high or your condition is only expected to be short-term, a good

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Letter From Jan

Spring is a season of renewal, making April a great time to refresh your perspective—especially when it comes to the Social Security disability process.

If you recently received a denial, do not lose hope. As we explain in this issue, a denial is often just a request for better information. You have a 60-day window to appeal your claim and correct any errors, which is exactly where most cases are won. We also break down how reaching age 50 changes how the SSA evaluates your case. Thanks to the "Medical-Vocational Grid Rules," older disabled workers are often given more leniency.

Beyond legal updates, this issue is full of community spirit. We were so grateful for the opportunity to give back by donating to the wonderful residents and staff at Marietta Heights Post Acute. We are also celebrating our MVP of the Month, Evan Tianero, whose unwavering positivity and team-first mindset keep our firm moving forward.

Finally, to celebrate the bright days ahead, be sure to try Emily Frost's Blueberry Lemon Dutch Baby recipe for your next weekend brunch!

Thank you for trusting us to be your advocates.

Warmly,

Jan Dils

Community Corner

Marietta Heights Post Acute Donation

Thank you for the kind words! We're grateful for the opportunity to give back to such a wonderful group of residents & staff. Thank you for everything you do for our community each day!

"Huge shout out to Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law and Kelly Guice for your wonderful donation to our residents!! They will all be sporting new T-Shirts, glasses, water bottles and some fresh lips and clean hands. We appreciate all our local businesses and what they do for our residents and staff!"





EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Evan Tianero

At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we know that our success relies on team members who are willing to go the extra mile. That is why we are absolutely thrilled to celebrate Evan Tianero as our MVP of the Month!

Evan consistently goes above and beyond for both the clients we serve, and for our entire staff. In a fast-paced legal environment, his team-first mindset truly shines. He is always the first to step in and assist our case managers, bringing a positive, upbeat attitude that makes a tremendous difference, even during the busiest and most stressful of moments.



Why Evan is our MVP:

- Unwavering Support: He is always ready and willing to lend a helping hand to his colleagues whenever they need it most.
- Contagious Positivity: His upbeat energy keeps the team motivated, focused, and smiling.
- Client Dedication: His hard work and commitment ensure that our clients receive the excellence and care they deserve.

Evan, thank you for the incredible energy, support, and dedication you bring to the firm every single day. Your hard work certainly does not go unnoticed, and this recognition is incredibly well deserved.

Why Age 50+ Changes Everything in Disability Cases



NO MATTER HOW YOU FEEL about celebrating your 50th birthday, reaching this milestone can significantly shift how the Social Security Administration (SSA) views your disability claim. The SSA understands that older individuals may have a harder time adapting to new industries or transferring their skills to new fields, especially if their health limits them to light or sedentary work.

Because of this, the SSA uses a special set of guidelines known as the "Medical-Vocational Grid Rules", which generally offer older disabled workers more leniency when it comes to approving their claims.

Vocational Adaptability and Trainability

A major hurdle in any SSA assessment is proving whether or not a claimant can perform other types of work. For example, the SSA might argue that a disabled truck driver could transition into a role as a dispatcher. The agency must determine if an applicant has transferable skills or the ability to easily learn new ones before making a decision.

However, once an applicant turns 50, the SSA categorizes them as "less trainable". This changes the burden of proof: instead of needing to prove that you cannot perform any job in the national economy, you often only need to prove that you cannot return to your previous job.

The Grid Rules: How Age, Education, and Work Combine

The SSA "grids" are essentially a series of charts that lay out various alternatives based on your specific age, education level, and types of past work. An agent will line up these three factors to decide whether you are classified as disabled.

Beyond just your age, the SSA looks closely at:

- **Education Level:** Having a limited education, such as a high school diploma or less.
- **Work History:** A background primarily in unskilled labor or having non-transferable skills.
- **Physical Limitations:** A disability that strictly limits you to sedentary or light work.

How these factors combine on the grid makes all the difference. For instance, a 50-year-old unskilled worker with no formal education who develops a disabling condition will typically be approved for disability. Conversely, according to the grid rules, a 60-year-old worker with the exact same physical condition might not be considered disabled if they have at least a high school education and a strong history of skilled employment.

Important Age Milestones

- **Age 55:** Workers over 55 who lack transferable skills and are physically limited to light work have a much better chance of their claim being accepted under the grid rules.
- **Age 60:** Workers over 60 are considered to be approaching retirement age. At this stage, they may be considered disabled even if they possess a high school education or transferable skills.

Get Legal Help for Your Disability Claim

Depending on your specific condition and employment history, obtaining disability benefits after age 50 can be either easier or more difficult to navigate. You don't have to figure out the SSA's medical-vocational grids on your own.

If you need more information about how these rules might affect your case, call Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law at **877.JanDils** or contact us online at **JanDils.com**.

What's Cooking? BLUEBERRY LEMON DUTCH BABY



From the Kitchen of **Emily Frost**, SS Case Development Support, shares her show-stopping breakfast that is surprisingly easy to make?

INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp salted butter (divided)
4 large eggs (at room temperature)
⅔ cup whole milk (at room temperature)
⅔ cup all-purpose flour
½ tsp kosher salt
1 tbsp vanilla extract
2–3 tsp lemon zest
2–3 tbsp blueberry jam
¼ cup fresh or frozen blueberries

DIRECTIONS: 1. Prep the Oven: Preheat your oven to 450°F.
2. Blend the Batter: In a blender, combine the eggs, milk, flour, salt, vanilla, and 2 tablespoons of melted butter. Blend for about 1 minute until completely smooth, ensuring no large clumps of flour remain. Gently mix in the lemon zest, and then swirl the blueberry jam directly into the batter.
3. Brown the Butter & Berries: In a 10-to-12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter. Add the blueberries and let the butter brown around them for about 3 minutes.
4. Bake: Pour the blended batter into the hot skillet, making sure to scrape out all the delicious jam swirls. Quickly place the skillet in the center of the oven and bake for 15 minutes, or until the pancake is fully puffed and golden brown on top.
• Pro Tip: DO NOT open the oven door during the first 15 minutes of baking, or your Dutch baby might deflate!
5. Serve Warm: As soon as the Dutch baby comes out of the oven, top it with a few pats of butter, drizzle generously with maple syrup, and enjoy immediately!

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PERSONAL INJURY / VETERANS DISABILITY / SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

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attorney can explain if you might qualify for other types of disability benefits.

For SSDI claims, you must provide exactly what the SSA wants to see: definitive proof that your disabling condition will prevent you from working for more than 12 months. A skilled attorney can help you communicate with your doctor about exactly what their description must say to convince the claims investigator that you cannot work. They can also help define the specific medical tests necessary and how to properly word the explanation so your claim will be accepted during the appeal.

At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we know that receiving a disability denial is frustrating and can be frightening when you desperately need your claim accepted. If you receive a denial, do not wait. Call us at **877.JanDils** or contact us online at **JanDils.com** as soon as you get your letter so we can begin working on your appeal immediately.

