

Social Security Administration

§ 404.1717

the person does not meet the requirements in this section. We will notify you and the person you attempted to appoint as your representative if we do not recognize the person as a representative.

[45 FR 52090, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 76 FR 80245, Dec. 23, 2011]

§ 404.1706 Notification of options for obtaining attorney representation.

If you are not represented by an attorney and we make a determination or decision that is subject to the administrative review process provided under subpart J of this part and it does not grant all of the benefits or other relief you requested or it adversely affects any entitlement to benefits that we have established or may establish for you, we will include with the notice of that determination or decision information about your options for obtaining an attorney to represent you in dealing with us. We will also tell you that a legal services organization may provide you with legal representation free of charge if you satisfy the qualifying requirements applicable to that organization.

[58 FR 64886, Dec. 10, 1993]

§ 404.1707 Appointing a representative.

We will recognize a person as your representative if the following things are done:

(a) You sign a written notice stating that you want the person to be your representative in dealings with us.

(b) That person signs the notice, agreeing to be your representative, if the person is not an attorney. An attorney does not have to sign a notice of appointment.

(c) The notice is filed at one of our offices if you have initially filed a claim or have requested reconsideration; with an administrative law judge if you requested a hearing; or with the Appeals Council if you have requested a review of the administrative law judge's decision.

§ 404.1710 Authority of a representative.

(a) *What a representative may do.* Your representative may, on your behalf—

(1) Obtain information about your claim to the same extent that you are able to do;

(2) Submit evidence;

(3) Make statements about facts and law; and

(4) Make any request or give any notice about the proceedings before us.

(b) *What a representative may not do.* A representative may not sign an application on behalf of a claimant for rights or benefits under title II of the Act unless authorized to do so under § 404.612.

§ 404.1713 Mandatory use of electronic services.

A representative must conduct business with us electronically at the times and in the manner we prescribe on matters for which the representative requests direct fee payment. (See § 404.1740(b)(4)).

[76 FR 56109, Sept. 12, 2011]

§ 404.1715 Notice or request to a representative.

(a) We shall send your representative—

(1) Notice and a copy of any administrative action, determination, or decision; and

(2) Requests for information or evidence.

(b) A notice or request sent to your representative, will have the same force and effect as if it had been sent to you.

§ 404.1717 Direct payment of fees to eligible non-attorney representatives.

(a) *Criteria for eligibility.* An individual who is a licensed attorney or who is suspended or disbarred from the practice of law in any jurisdiction may not be an eligible non-attorney. A non-attorney representative is eligible to receive direct payment of his or her fee out of your past-due benefits if he or she:

(1) Completes and submits to us an application as described in paragraph (b) of this section;

(2) Pays the application fee as described in paragraph (c) of this section;

(3) Demonstrates that he or she possesses:

§ 404.1717

20 CFR Ch. III (4-1-13 Edition)

(i) A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning; or

(ii) At least four years of relevant professional experience and either a high school diploma or a General Educational Development certificate;

(4) Passes our criminal background investigation (including checks of our administrative records), and attests under penalty of perjury that he or she:

(i) Has not been suspended or disqualified from practice before us and is not suspended or disbarred from the practice of law in any jurisdiction;

(ii) Has not had a judgment or lien assessed against him or her by a civil court for malpractice or fraud;

(iii) Has not had a felony conviction; and

(iv) Has not misrepresented information provided on his or her application or supporting materials for the application;

(5) Takes and passes a written examination we administer;

(6) Provides proof of and maintains continuous liability insurance coverage in an amount we prescribe; and

(7) Completes and provides proof that he or she has completed all continuing education courses that we prescribe by the deadline we prescribe.

(b) *Application.* An applicant must timely submit his or her completed application form during an application period that we prescribe. The application must be postmarked by the last day of the application period. If an applicant timely submits the application fee and a defective application, we will give the applicant 10 calendar days after the date we notify him or her of the defect to correct the application.

(c) *Application fee.* An applicant must timely submit his or her application fee during the application period. We will set the fee annually.

(1) We will refund the fee if:

(i) We do not administer an examination, and an applicant was unable to take the rescheduled examination; or

(ii) Circumstances beyond the applicant's control that could not have been reasonably anticipated and planned for prevent an applicant from taking a scheduled examination.

(2) We will not refund the fee if:

(i) An applicant took and failed the examination; or

(ii) An applicant failed to arrive on time for the examination because of circumstances within the applicant's control that could have been anticipated and planned for.

(d) *Protest procedures.* (1) We may find that a non-attorney representative is ineligible to receive direct fee payment at any time because he or she fails to meet any of the criteria in paragraph (a) of this section. A non-attorney representative whom we find to be ineligible for direct fee payment may protest our finding only if we based it on the representative's failure to:

(i) Attest on the application or provide sufficient documentation that he or she possesses the required education or equivalent qualifications, as described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section;

(ii) Meet at all times the criminal background investigation criteria, as described in paragraph (a)(4) of this section

(iii) Provide proof that he or she has maintained continuous liability insurance coverage, as described in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, after we previously determined the representative was eligible to receive direct fee payment; or

(iv) Complete continuing education courses or provide documentation of the required continuing education courses, as described in paragraph (a)(7) of this section.

(2) A non-attorney representative who wants to protest our finding under paragraph (d)(1) of this section must file a protest in writing and provide all relevant supporting documentation to us within 10 calendar days after the date we notify him or her of our finding.

(3) A representative may not file a protest for reasons other than those listed in paragraph (d)(1) of this section. If a representative files a protest for reasons other than those listed in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, we will not process the protest and will implement our finding as if no protest had been filed. Our finding in response to the protest is final and not subject to further review.

(e) *Ineligibility and suspension.* (1) If an applicant does not protest, in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section, our finding about the criteria in paragraphs (a)(3) or (a)(4) of this section, the applicant will be either ineligible to take the written examination for which he or she applied or ineligible to receive direct fee payment if the applicant already took and passed the examination prior to our finding. If an applicant protests in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section and we uphold our finding, the applicant will be either ineligible to take the written examination for which he or she applied or ineligible to receive direct fee payment if the applicant already took and passed the examination prior to our finding.

(2) If an eligible non-attorney representative does not protest, in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section, our finding about the criteria in paragraphs (a)(3) or (a)(4) of this section, the non-attorney representative will be ineligible to receive direct fee payment beginning with the month after the month the protest period ends. If the eligible non-attorney representative protests in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section and we uphold our finding, the non-attorney representative will be ineligible to receive direct fee payment beginning with the month after the month we uphold our finding.

(3) If an eligible non-attorney representative does not protest, in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section, our finding about the criteria in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, the non-attorney representative will be ineligible to receive direct fee payment for 6 full calendar months beginning with the month after the month the protest period ends. If the eligible non-attorney representative protests in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section and we uphold our finding, the non-attorney representative will be ineligible to receive direct fee payment for 6 full calendar months beginning with the month after the month we uphold our finding. In either case, the non-attorney representative may provide us with documentation that he or she has acquired and maintains the required liability insurance coverage de-

scribed in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, no earlier than the sixth month of the ineligibility. The non-attorney representative will again be eligible to receive direct fee payment beginning in the first month after the month we find that we have received sufficient documentation that the non-attorney representative meets the requirements of paragraph (a)(6) of this section.

(4) If an eligible non-attorney representative does not protest, in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section, our finding about the criteria in paragraph (a)(7) of this section, the non-attorney representative will be ineligible to receive direct fee payment for 6 full calendar months beginning with the month after the month the protest period ends. If the eligible non-attorney representative protests in accordance with paragraph (d)(2) of this section and we uphold our finding, the non-attorney representative will be ineligible to receive direct fee payment for 6 full calendar months beginning with the month after the month we uphold our finding. In either case, the non-attorney representative may provide us with documentation that he or she has satisfied the criteria in paragraph (a)(7) of this section at any time. The non-attorney representative will again be eligible to receive direct fee payment beginning in the first month after the month we find that we have received sufficient documentation, but not earlier than the month following the end of the 6 month ineligibility period.

(f) *Reapplying.* A representative may reapply to become eligible to receive direct fee payment under paragraph (a) of this section during any subsequent application period if he or she:

(1) Did not meet the initial criteria for eligibility in paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3), or (a)(5) of this section in a prior application period; or

(2) Failed to timely correct a defective application in a prior application period, as described in paragraph (b) of this section.

[76 FR 45192, July 28, 2011]

§ 404.1720 Fee for a representative's services.

(a) *General.* A representative may charge and receive a fee for his or her services as a representative only as