

tells what an application is, who may sign it, where and when it must be signed and filed, the period of time it is in effect and how it may be withdrawn. This subpart also explains when a written statement, request, or notice will be considered filed. Since the application form and procedures for filing a claim under this subpart are the same as those used to establish entitlement to Medicare benefits under 42 CFR part 405, persons who wish to become entitled to Medicare benefits should refer to the provisions of this subpart. Requirements concerning applications for the black lung benefits program are contained in part 410. Requirements concerning applications for the supplemental security income program are contained in part 416. Part 422 contains the requirements for applying for a social security number.

**§ 404.602 Definitions.**

For the purpose of this subpart—

*Applicant* means the person who files an application for benefits for himself or herself or for someone else. A person who files for himself or herself is both the *applicant* and the *claimant*.

*Application* refers only to an application on a form described in § 404.611.

*Benefits* means any old-age, disability, dependents', and survivors' insurance benefits described in subpart D, including a period of disability.

*Claimant* means the person who files an application for benefits for himself or herself or the person for whom an application is filed.

*We, us, or our* means the Social Security Administration (SSA).

*You or your* means, as appropriate, the person who applies for benefits, the person for whom an application is filed, or the person who may consider applying for benefits.

**§ 404.603 You must file an application to receive benefits.**

In addition to meeting other requirements, you must file an application to become entitled to benefits. If you believe you may be entitled to benefits, you should file an application. Filing an application will—

(a) Permit a formal decision to be made on your entitlement to benefits;

(b) Protect your entitlement to any benefits that may be payable for as many as 6 months or 12 months (depending on the type of benefit, as explained in § 404.621) before the application was filed; and

(c) Give you the right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the decision.

[44 FR 37209, June 26, 1979, as amended at 46 FR 47444, Sept. 28, 1981]

APPLICATIONS

**§ 404.610 What makes an application a claim for benefits?**

We will consider your application a claim for benefits if it generally meets all of the following conditions:

(a) You must file on a prescribed form, as stated in § 404.611. See § 422.505(a) of this chapter for the types of prescribed applications you can file.

(b) You must complete and file the application with us as stated in §§ 404.611 and 404.614.

(c) You, or someone described in § 404.612 who may sign an application for you, must sign the application.

(d) You must be alive at the time you file (unless one of the limited exceptions in § 404.615 applies).

[69 FR 498, Jan. 6, 2004]

**§ 404.611 How do I file an application for Social Security benefits?**

(a) *General rule.* You must apply for benefits on an application that we prescribe. See § 422.505(a) of this chapter for the types of applications we will accept. See § 404.614 for places where you can file your application for benefits.

(b) *What if I file a claim with the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB)?* If you file an application with the RRB on one of its forms for an annuity under section 2 of the Railroad Retirement Act, as amended, we will consider this an application for title II Social Security benefits, which you may be entitled to, unless you tell us otherwise.

(c) *What if I file a claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)?* If you file an application with the DVA on one of its forms for survivors' dependency and indemnity compensation (see section 3005 of title 38 U.S.C.), we

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will consider this an application for Social Security survivors' benefits, except for the lump sum death payment. [69 FR 498, Jan. 6, 2004]

### § 404.612 Who may sign an application.

We will determine who may sign an application according to the following rules:

(a) A claimant who is 18 years old or over, mentally competent, and physically able to do so, must sign his or her own application. If the claim is for child's benefits for a person who is not yet 22 years old, the application may be signed by a parent or a person standing in place of the parent.

(b) A claimant who is between 16 and 18 years old may sign his or her own application if he or she is mentally competent, has no court appointed representative, and is not in the care of any person.

(c) If the claimant is under age 18, or mentally incompetent, or physically unable to sign, the application may be signed by a court appointed representative or a person who is responsible for the care of the claimant, including a relative. If the claimant is in the care of an institution, the manager or principal officer of the institution may sign the application.

(d) If a person who could receive disability benefits or who could have a period of disability established dies before filing, an application for disability benefits or for a period of disability may be signed by a person who would be qualified to receive any benefits due the deceased.

(e) If a written statement showing an intent to claim benefits is filed with us, but the person for whom the benefits are claimed dies before an application is filed, an application may be filed as explained in § 404.630(d).

(f) If a person who could receive benefits on the basis of a "deemed" filing date of an application under § 404.633 (b)(1)(i) or (b)(2)(i) dies before an application for the benefits is filed, the application may be signed by a person who would be qualified to receive any benefits due the deceased person as explained in § 404.633 (b)(1)(ii) and (b)(2)(ii).

(g) If it is necessary to protect a claimant from losing benefits and

there is good cause for the claimant not signing the application, we may accept an application signed by some one other than a person described in this section.

*Example:* Mr. Smith comes to a social security office a few days before the end of a month to file an application for old-age benefits for his neighbor, Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones, a 63 year old widower, just suffered a heart attack and is in the hospital. He asked Mr. Smith to file the application for him. We will accept an application signed by Mr. Smith since it would not be possible to have Mr. Jones sign and file the application until the next calendar month and a loss of one month's benefits would result.

[44 FR 37209, June 26, 1979, as amended at 59 FR 44923, Aug. 31, 1994; 61 FR 41330, Aug. 8, 1996]

### § 404.613 Evidence of authority to sign an application for another.

(a) A person who signs an application for someone else will be required to provide evidence of his or her authority to sign the application for the person claiming benefits under the following rules:

(1) If the person who signs is a court appointed representative, he or she must submit a certificate issued by the court showing authority to act for the claimant.

(2) If the person who signs is not a court appointed representative, he or she must submit a statement describing his or her relationship to the claimant. The statement must also describe the extent to which the person is responsible for the care of the claimant. This latter information will not be requested if the application is signed by a parent for a child with whom he or she is living.

(3) If the person who signs is the manager or principal officer of an institution which is responsible for the care of the claimant, he or she must submit a statement indicating the person's position of responsibility at the institution.

(b) We may, at any time, require additional evidence to establish the authority of a person to sign an application for someone else.