

Once a claim has been adjudicated and has left NC Disability Determination Services (DDS), the Social Security Administration (SSA) retains jurisdiction of the claim. Federal privacy law and regulations apply to any records developed or retained by the DDS for the purpose of administering SSA programs. All requests for access to records, claim files, and the Disability Determination Explanation (DDE) should be directed to a claimant's servicing SSA Field Office (FO). To locate the proper SSA FO, visit <http://www.socialsecurity.gov>, select "Contact Us", select "Find an Office", and enter the appropriate ZIP code.

Requests for access to the electronic claim file through SSA must be obtained by submitting a proper consent form. Note that SSA will not disclose a claimant's entire record and will not honor a blanket consent for "any and all" records. SSA will only disclose the information specified in the consent. A proper consent must:

- (1) contain the name, Social Security number, and date of birth of the individual
- (2) be written, signed, and dated by the individual
- (3) specifically authorize SSA to release records
- (4) specify the information to be disclosed
- (5) state the purpose for which the information is to be disclosed
- (6) specify to whom the records may be disclosed.

SSA does not require a particular release form, but the SSA standard consent form for release of records can be found on the SSA website by going to <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ssa-3288.pdf>. These can be submitted to SSA by phone, mail, or in person.

Once SSA has received and processed your request for access to the electronic claim file, the information will be given to you in the form of a CD. The FO may charge a fee for these records, but if a claim is pending or an appeal is being filed, it should be free of charge. Please allow SSA at least thirty (30) days from the receipt of the properly executed consent to comply with the request. After 30 days if nothing has been received, you may call the FO to inquire about the status of your request. Since this request could take up to 30 days to fulfill, it would be helpful to take this action as a first-step in your SOAR appeals process.

**Please note, the above instructions about requesting a copy of the electronic claim file from SSA applies to claims in the Initial and Recon stages of adjudication. Access to the [Appointed Representative Services](#) website for claims at the ALJ level and higher are done through the [Office of Hearings Operations \(OHO\)](#).*