

JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

New Policies Related to COVID-19 at SSA

Kate Lang, Senior Staff Attorney

April 10, 2020

JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, economic security, and the courts for older adults with limited resources.

Since 1972 we've focused our efforts primarily on fighting for people who have been marginalized and excluded from justice, such as women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.

Housekeeping

- All on mute. Use Questions function for substantive questions and for technical concerns.
- Problems with getting on to the webinar? Send an e-mail to trainings@justiceinaging.org.
- Find materials for this training and past trainings by searching the [Resource Library](https://justiceinaging.org/resource-library), justiceinaging.org/resource-library. A recording will be posted to [Justice in Aging's Vimeo page](https://www.vimeo.com/justiceinaging) at the conclusion of the presentation, [vimeo.com/justiceinaging](https://www.vimeo.com/justiceinaging).

To achieve Justice in Aging, we must:

- Acknowledge systemic racism and discrimination
- Address the enduring negative effects of racism and differential treatment
- Promote access and equity in economic security, health care, and the courts for our nation's low-income older adults
- Recruit, support, and retain a diverse staff and board, including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and presentation, sexual orientation, disability, age, economic class

Want to receive Justice in Aging trainings and materials?

Join Our Network!

Go to justiceinaging.org and hit "Subscribe."

Send an email to info@justiceinaging.org.



Open a text and text the message "4justice" to the number 51555.

Today's Webinar

- Treasury Offset Suspended
- Suspended Work/Continuing Work
- Local Offices
- Hearing Offices
- State Disability Determination
- Services (DDS)

NOT covering “recovery rebates”—April 24
webinar



Treasury Offset Suspended

Treasury Offset Suspended

- Treasury Offset Program (TOP)
 - SSA benefit payments are exempt from offset for federal student loan debt and other non-tax debts
 - March 26 – September 30, 2020
 - TOP Technical Bulletin 2020-7



Continuing/Suspended Work

Suspended Workloads

- Will not start or complete any medical Continuing Disability Reviews or age 18 redeterminations
- Will not process or collect any new overpayments
- Will not respond to third party requests for information
- Will not process FOIA requests
- Will not review representative payee accountings
 - However, P&A networks conducting monitoring reviews

General Policies

- Extending deadlines when possible for documentation or other information to be submitted
- Providing "maximum flexibility in applying good cause policy"
 - Can extend time limits for submitting appeals and taking other actions
 - 20 CFR 404.911 & 416.1411

Online Services Continue

- File claim for retirement, SSDI, or Medicare
- Apply for "Extra Help" (Medicare Part D)
- Check application status
- File appeal
- Print benefit verification letter
- Submit change of address
- Set up or change direct deposit

National 800 Number

- Scheduling phone appointment to apply for disability and survivors benefits
- Report non-receipt of benefits
- Change of address
- Change of direct deposit
- Change in representative payee
- Request to reinstate benefits
- Medicare/Medicaid applications



Local Offices

Local Offices

- Closed to public since March 17, 2020
- Providing critical services by phone, fax, mail
- Focusing on priority workloads

Local Offices (2 of 4)

- Taking survivor applications and disability applications for most severe cases
- Handling reports of non-receipt of benefits
- Taking requests for waiver or reduced repayment for overpayments
- Reinstating benefits after suspension
- Addressing other "dire need" situations, including homelessness or risk of homelessness

Local Offices (3 of 4)

- [Social Security Office Locator](https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp), by zip code (<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>)

Local Offices (4 of 4)

Social Security Office Information

Address: 1300 S TELEGRAPH RD
MONROE, MI 48161

Phone: [1-800-772-1213](tel:1-800-772-1213)

TTY: [1-800-325-0778](tel:1-800-325-0778)

Hours:

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	Closed
Friday	Closed
Saturday	12:00 AM - 12:01 AM
Sunday	Closed

[Office Closings and Emergencies](#)

Hide Additional Office Information

All local Social Security offices will be closed to the public for in-person service starting Tuesday, March 17, 2020. This decision protects the population we serve, older Americans, people with underlying medical conditions and our employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For limited service, please contact the office directly at [877-274-5416](tel:877-274-5416).

[Get Map and Directions](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

Local Agencies

[Other agencies](#) that can assist you with your welfare, housing, meal assistance and other support services.



Hearing Offices

Hearings

- No in-person or video hearings
- Holding telephone hearings whenever possible
 - Prioritizing critical cases
- Postponements granted for anyone who declines a telephone hearing
 - Hearing notices from some OHOs do not include language about ability to opt out of telephone hearing



State DDS

DDS

- Since each is state entity, a lot of variation in response
- Directives from SSA:
- March 19 – 29: flexibility in "good cause" for rescheduling CE appointments
- March 27: suspend denials for "failure to cooperate"
- March 30: suspend all CE appointments

DDS Suspensions

- Pre-hearings
- Disability hearings
- Continuing disability reviews and age 18 redeterminations
- Consultative exams

DDS Priorities

- Initial claims and reconsiderations identified as critical
- All other initial claims
- All other reconsiderations
- OHO requests for claims identified as critical



Social Security & Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

<https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus>



Questions?

Kate Lang, Senior Staff Attorney
klang@justiceinaging.org

JUSTICE IN AGING
FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW



@justiceinaging