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How to Prepare for Your Social Security Disability Hearing

Attending a Social Security disability hearing can be nerve-racking. The following tips will help you be prepared.

Arrive Early

Plan to arrive early; hearings tend to start on time. Your attorney may advise you to arrive early so that you'll have enough time to review pertinent issues regarding your case and discuss questions the judge will ask.

Dress Accordingly

Casual attire is appropriate for the hearing.

Don't Discuss Your Disability Case with Other People

Don't provide details about your medical condition or discuss the status of your case with strangers.

Be Honest in Your Answers

It's important to make a good impression with the judge. The best way to do this is to be honest and forthright, and don't exaggerate your impairment.

Two Biggest Mistakes Claimants Make

Refusing to Receive Medical Treatment

Not receiving medical attention can seriously jeopardize your disability case. Medical documents that show you have continued to receive treatment on a consistent basis help to validate the severity of your condition.

Failing to Appeal a Denied Claim for Disability Benefits

The majority of applicants who are initially denied disability benefits don't file an appeal. Even though the original claim was denied, there is the possibility of getting approved for benefits during the appellate process. You really have nothing to lose in trying.

It is important to remember that strict deadlines and legal procedures apply for appeals.



An attorney will be able to analyze your initial claim and help you build a stronger case.

Facing the Administrative Law Judge at Your Hearing

An administrative law judge presides over the hearing and decides if you should receive disability benefits based on the evidence presented. The hearing is informal, but be prepared to answer some tough questions.

Duties of the Administrative Law Judge

The judge renders an independent decision regarding whether you are entitled to obtain disability benefits. The judge carefully reviews the case to determine if you successfully fulfill the "disability" criteria. Previous denials of your claim don't influence the judge's decision.

How to Handle the Judge's Questions

The judge should be treated with courtesy and respect during the hearing. You will either be asked questions or given the chance to share any information that is pertinent to the case. The judge won't cross-examine you, but will ask questions in order to find out facts about the case.

Your case is important to us. If we can't help you, we'll do our best to refer you to someone who can.

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