

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY PRACTICE

By

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Of the North Carolina Bar

Updated since 2023 by

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2026 EDITION



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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

2026 Edition

Social Security Disability Practice is a practical work which aims to provide attorneys and others with the gritty details on representing disability claimants. The statutes and regulations are only the most basic framework. This book is where to find information about Rulings and manuals, as well as the unwritten policies and practices, that are important in the practice of Social Security disability law.

The book contains updates for all references to the Hearing, Appeals, Litigation, and Law Manual (HALLEX) reflecting the manual's revised numbering system. The book also contains minor updates about electronic signatures and whether notice is required when cases are flagged for fraud investigation at the Request for Hearing level. As for the major announcement in 2024 that the attorney fee cap would be tied to the cost-of-living-adjustment schedule, the book deals with the quiet change in plans. There is also a plan to change the way Continuing Disability Reviews will be conducted, taking this duty away from Disability Determination Services, and moving it to a new unit called the Disability Case Review Team.

What's New in the 2026 Edition:

- § 1:2 Minor revision
- § 1:3 Minor revision
- § 1:5 Minor revision
- § 1:10 Major revision announcing the Disability Case Review team
- § 1:7 Minor revision
- § 1:13 Minor revision
- § 1:18 Minor revision
- § 1:19 Minor revision
- § 1:24 Minor revision; Updated instruction for electronic signature
- § 1:41 Minor revision
- § 1:46 Updated form
- § 1:51 Updated form
- § 2:3 Updated notice to attorney and claimant when case flagged for fraud at the Request for Hearing level
- § 2:5 Minor revision
- § 2:7 Minor revision
- § 2:12 Minor revision
- § 2:14 Minor revision
- § 2:16 Minor revision; Update on critical case designation for "delayed cases"
- § 2:25 Update of earnings that trigger trial work period
- § 2:30 Update of HIT MER partner providers
- § 2:38 Update of military record locations
- § 2:43 Minor revision
- § 2:49 Minor revision
- § 2:54 Minor revision
- § 2:63 Updated form

- § 2:71 Minor revision
- § 3:2 Minor revision
- § 3:3 Minor revision
- § 3:5 Minor revision
- § 3:6 Minor revision
- § 3:16 Minor revision
- § 3:17 Minor revision
- § 3:22 Minor revision
- § 3:31 Minor revision
- § 3:39 Update of SGA level earnings
- § 3:42 Minor revision
- § 3:43 Minor revision
- § 3:44 Minor revision
- § 3:45 Minor revision
- § 3:46 Minor revision
- §§ 3:48 to 3:50 Minor revisions
- § 4:3 Minor revision
- § 4:4 Minor revisions
- § 4:16 Minor revision
- § 4:19 Update of filing fee in the United States Courts of Appeals
- § 5:6 Update of Presumed Maximum Value (PMV) for SSI benefit calculation
- § 5:19 Update on the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's impact on disability benefit taxation
- § 5:20 Minor revisions
- § 6:2 Update on SSA's plan to tie fee cap increase to annual COLA
- § 6:3 Updated amount of the attorney user fee
- § 6:7 Minor revision
- §§ 6:18 to 6:20 Minor revisions
- § 6:22 Updated office jurisdiction for fee petitions filed
- §§ 6:26 to 6:29 Minor revisions
- § 6:43 Minor revisions
- § 6:51 Minor revision
- § 6:58 Minor revision
- § 6:61 Minor revision
- § 6:86 Minor revision
- § 7:1 Minor revision; Information regarding Compassionate Allowance List
- § 7:21 Minor revision
- § 7:35 Minor revision
- Appendix E – Minor revisions
- Appendix N – Minor revisions

Crystal G. Rouse
August 2026

The Authors

Charles T. Hall has more than 40 years of private practice experience handling disability claims before the Social Security Administration and the federal courts. He received his B.A. from Duke University, and his J.D. from the University of North Carolina. He is a former President of the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR). Prior to private practice, Mr. Hall was a staff attorney with the Social Security Administration.

Crystal G. Rouse has practiced Social Security disability law since 2010. In 2019, she became partner at Charles T. Hall Law Firm and they continue to practice together as Hall and Rouse. Ms. Rouse received her B.A. from Barton College and her J.D. from North Carolina Central University evening program. She is a former president of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice Disability Advocacy Section. Prior to law school, Ms. Rouse worked for eight years with the Social Security Administration's Disability Determination Services. She is a board certified specialist in Social Security Disability Law.



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