OCTOBER 2013: The Ins and Outs of Applying for Disability

Many thanks to Marcy Pitts and Barbara Manna, both Accredited Disability Representatives and members of the National Association of Disability Representatives, each with decades of experience counseling and representing disability applicants. Callers had the opportunity to troubleshoot on their experiences regarding different stages of the process:

**SSA.GOV:** Social Security Administration
This is the place to start. According to our experts, this is government website that got it right! This is the place for information, forms, and the way to get the application process going.

**Resources for Support:** Accredited Disability Representatives are available through either the [National Association of Disability Representatives](https://www.nadr.org) (NADR) or the [National Organization of Social Security Representatives](https://www.nosscr.org) (NOSSCR). An important distinction: NOSSCR is an association of lawyers, of varied years of experience. NADR is staffed by representatives of different disciplines and includes many retired SSA staff, including former claims examiners. One does not necessarily need a lawyer to pursue a claim.

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**
Your local OVR—and every state has one—can be an important resource for jobs that will a) not compromise your application and will b) take into account your limitations. This may be especially relevant for folks who cannot afford to stop working but are at risk for earning too much money to be considered for disability. Another advantage of using a representative who is not a lawyer is that your local rep should be a person connected to local resources. **Staying local**, by finding representatives in your own city, is important.

**Paint the whole picture**
Our experts counseled applicants to consider their entire functioning, taking into account all physical and mental health factors and how these limit you on a day-to-day basis. The work that goes into the initial application can greatly impact how it is received by the judge.