



HB1012 Detail to House Appropriations | Human Resources

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Health & Human Services



Who we serve

The Disability Determination Services (DDS) Section delivers disability determinations to those applying for Social Security Disability Benefits

About Disability Determination Services

The Social Security disability program provides Social Security Disability Insurance (**SSDI**) and/or Supplemental Security Income (**SSI**) benefits to persons with disabilities who are unable to work

100% federally funded

Number of disability decisions is determined by Social Security Administration (SSA)

DDS team members make medical disability determinations using SSA guidelines

3 main claim levels:

- Initial claims
- Reconsideration claims
- Continuing Disability Reviews

Collaborating with Social Security, medical providers and claimants across North Dakota, using 100% federal funds

Dept of Health and Human Services

DDS team members and contracted medical consultants review claims for medical evidence to make the disability determination using SSA guidelines

Social Security Administration

- Receives and reviews disability applications for benefit eligibility, sends to DDS to make the disability determination
- Handles the notification and appeals process for claimants
- Handles payment processes for those found disabled

Medical providers

- Provide medical records for claimants to assist in the determination process
- Provide consultative examination services for those who need further medical evidence for the determination process

Claimants

Assist in the disability determination process by providing their medical source information, completing forms and attending consultative examinations

Disability Determination Services

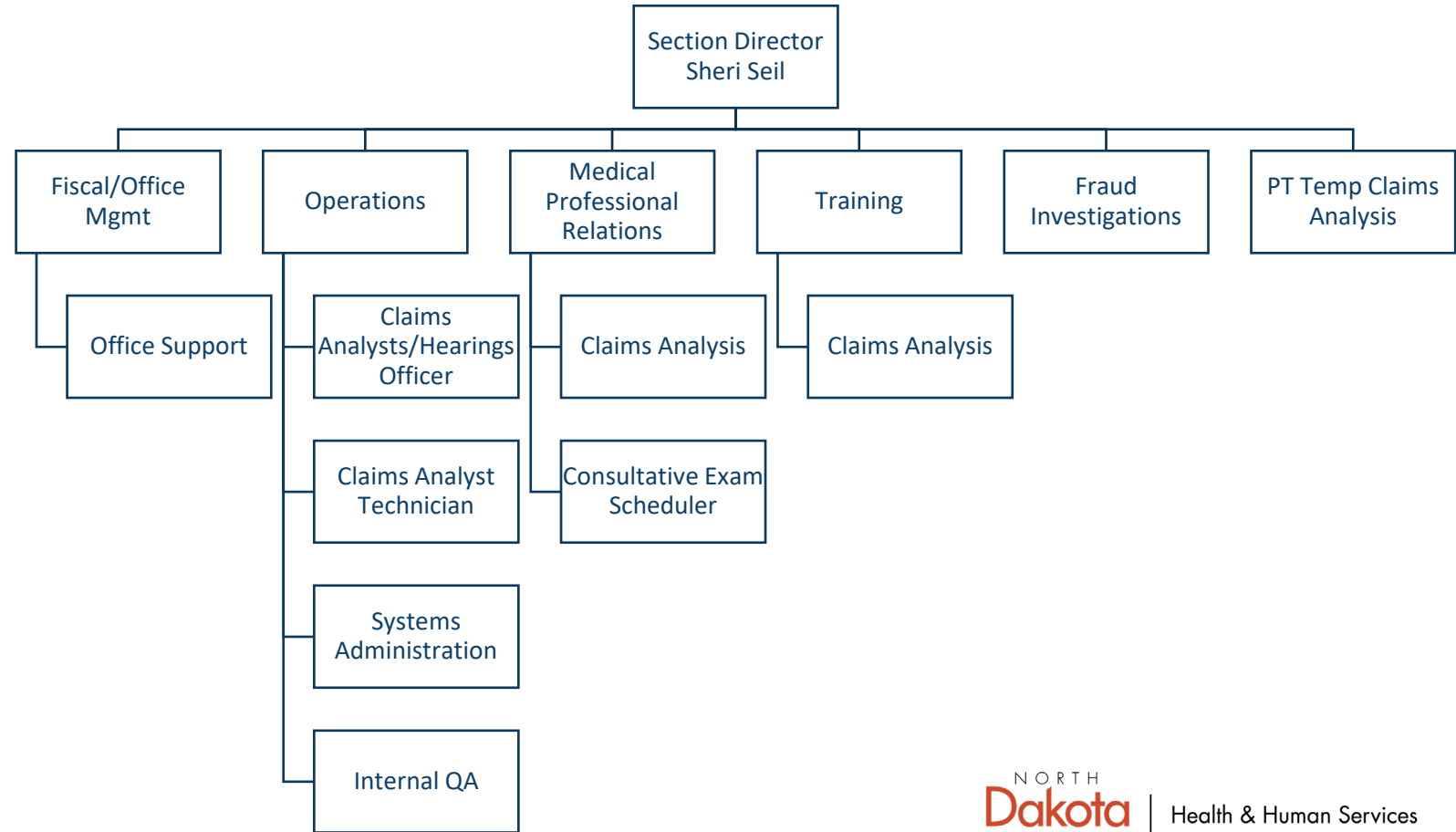
Team Structure and Function

Disability Determination Services

23-25 FTE	25-27 FTE Requested	# of Temporary	# of Vacancies
23	23	1*	3*

*numbers as of 12/1/2024

Average Age	49
Avg Years of Service	12.7
Retirement Risk	13%
Turnover 2021	9%
Turnover 2022	13%
Turnover 2023	5%
Turnover 2024	9%



Medical consultants' role in disability determinations

- DDS currently holds 5 contracts with part time medical consultants
- Provide medical expertise to claims analyst team members
- Required part of the disability determination process



Who benefits from the Social Security Disability programs?

SSI

“To be eligible for SSI, beneficiaries must have low incomes, limited assets, and either be age 65 or older or have an impaired ability to work at a substantial gainful level as a result of significant disability.”

SSDI

“Unlike SSI, there are no income or asset limits for SSDI eligibility. Instead, to qualify for SSDI, enrollees must have a sufficient work history (generally, 40 quarters) and meet the strict federal disability rules.”

Source: <https://ssa.gov/disability>



Improving the lives of North Dakotans

Social Security benefits provide a source of income for disabled North Dakotans

SSI

\$638

Average monthly payment

\$4.59 million

Total monthly SSI benefits to
North Dakotans

SSDI

\$1,317

Average monthly payment

\$20.47 million

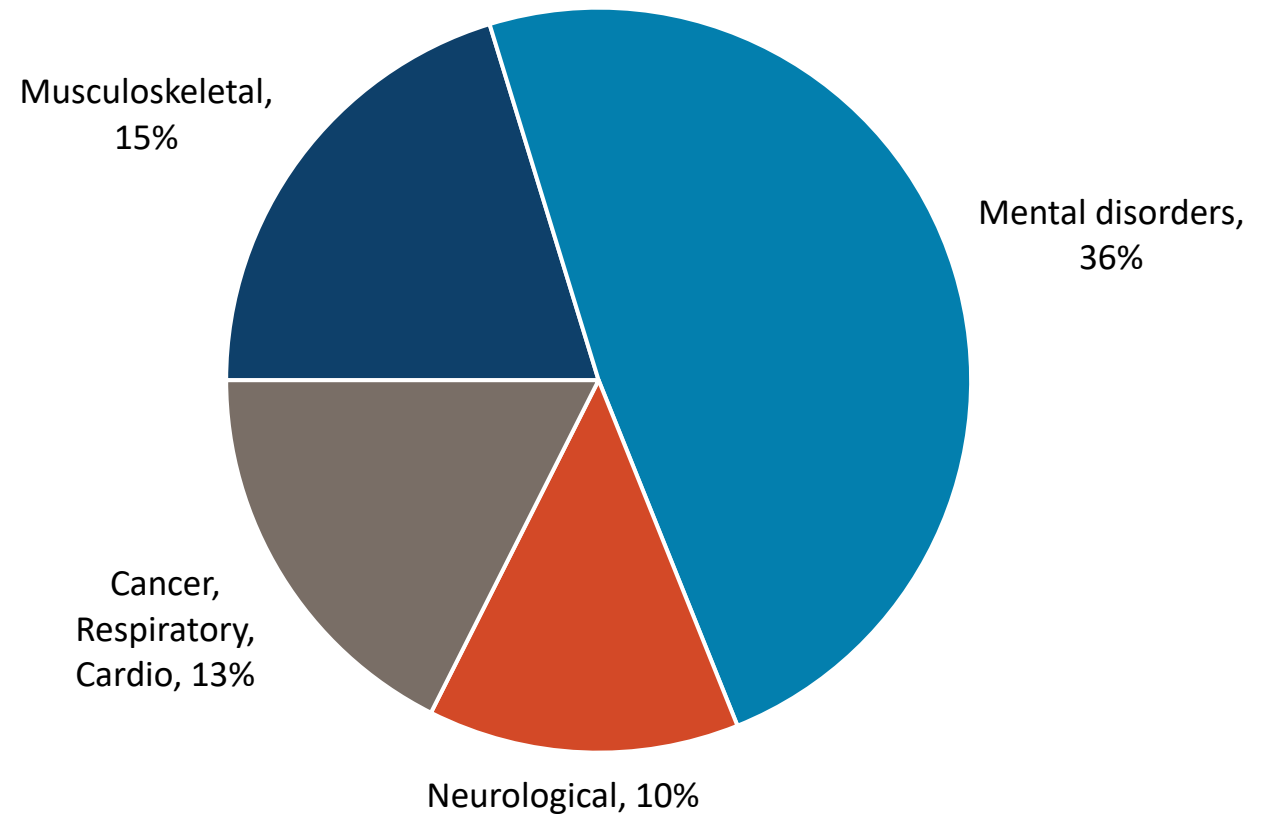
Total monthly SSDI benefits
to North Dakotans



Distribution (by body system) of beneficiaries for SSDI/SSI on initial claims

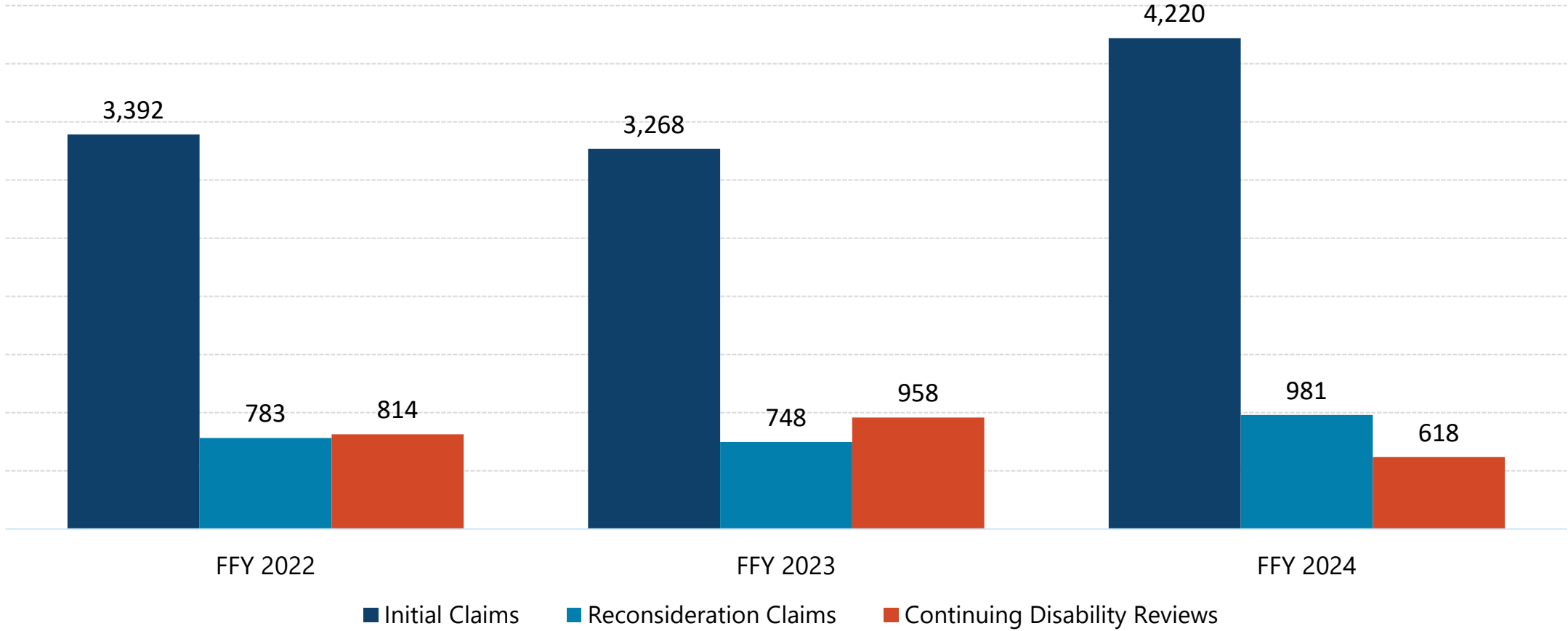
North Dakota snapshot federal fiscal year 2024

- “The Listing of Impairments describes, for each major body system, impairments considered severe enough to prevent an individual from doing any gainful activity (or in the case of children under age 18 applying for SSI, severe enough to cause marked and severe functional limitations).
- “Most of the listed impairments are permanent or expected to result in death, or the listing includes a specific statement of duration.
- “For all other listings, the evidence must show that the impairment has lasted or is expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months.



Source: <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/listing-impairments.htm>

Disability determinations by the numbers



DDS Quality reviews

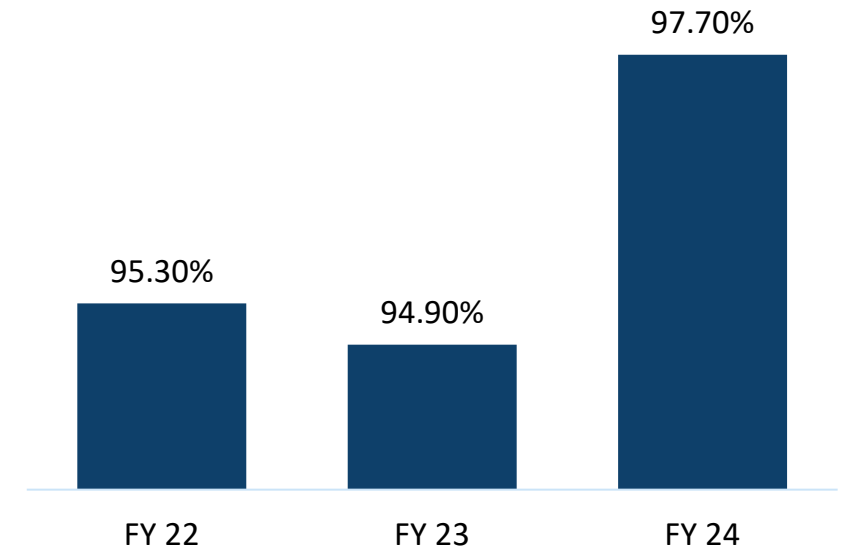
Federally mandated reviews of disability determinations are conducted by the SSA Office of Quality Review (OQR)

- The quality assurance review of initial DDS disability determinations is mandated by the Regulations (20 CFR 404.1640 – 404.1670). The results of this review are used to measure state agency performance accuracy.
- Performance Accuracy based on calendar quarters (Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-June, July-Sept) per Reg 404.1645; Rolling 3-month reports published monthly
- 70 allowances and 70 denials per quarter per state

Initial Performance Accuracy

OQR categorizes deficiencies according to their impact, or potential impact, on the disability determination. OQR further categorizes as either decisional or documentation deficiencies.

QA-determined Accuracy of Initial Decisions



Successes in the last year

- DDS has been working to address and decrease the number of initial claims in our backlog and continues to maintain average processing time (68 days on average) once the claim is assigned
- Presumptive disability is applied on SSI claims (when possible) to provide the best customer service for claimants while waiting their disability decision
- Attrition in recent years has decreased after several years of significant turnover
- Analyst team members continue to expand their knowledge/skills which leads to increased production



A close-up photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a bright green, long-sleeved shirt. The laptop is silver and sits on a light-colored wooden desk. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Challenges for DDS

- Last 2 FFYs have seen increases in initial claim receipts which has created increased processing time/wait time
- Team member attrition and lack of hiring authority from SSA due to budget constraints

Strategies driving budget

DDS budget is derived from the number of disability determinations SSA requires us to make each year and the cost to do so

The DDS section is 100% federally funded by SSA



Comparison of budgets and funding

By Major Expense

Description	2023-25 Budget Base		Increase/ (Decrease)		2025-27 Executive Budget Recommendation
Salaries and Benefits	\$	4,786,632	\$	432,260	\$ 5,218,892
Operating		1,518,860		(2,442)	1,516,418
IT Services		55,957		(55,957)	-
Grants		1,650,000		250,000	1,900,000
Total	\$	8,011,449	\$	623,861	\$ 8,635,310

General Fund	\$	-	\$	-	\$ -
Federal Funds		8,011,449		623,861	8,635,310
Other Funds		-		-	-
Total Funds	\$	8,011,449	\$	623,861	\$ 8,635,310

Decision Package Detail

By Ongoing, One-Time and Funding Source

Not Applicable

Comparison of budgets and funding

By Budget Account Code

Description	2023-25 Budget Base		Increase/ (Decrease)		2025-27 Executive Budget Recommendation
511x Salaries - Regular	\$	3,036,665	\$	245,782	\$ 3,282,447
513x Salaries Temp		90,816		9,123	99,939
514x Salaries Overtime		64,590		64,590	129,180
516x Salaries Benefits		1,594,561		112,765	1,707,326
Total Salaries & Benefits	\$	4,786,632	\$	432,260	\$ 5,218,892
52x Travel		28,000		-	28,000
53x Supply		8,380		(380)	8,000
54x Postage & Printing		80,000		6,700	86,700
55x Equipment under \$5,000		17,000		(500)	16,500
58x Rent/Leases - Bldg/Equip		364,853		16,370	381,223
59x Repairs		600		-	600
61x Professional Development		900		300	1,200
62x Fees - Operating & Professional		1,019,127		(24,932)	994,195
53x Supplies		3,500		(3,500)	-
60x IT Expenses		52,457		(52,457)	-
71x Grants, Benefits, & Claims		1,650,000		250,000	1,900,000
Total Operating	\$	3,224,817	\$	191,601	\$ 3,416,418
Total	\$	8,011,449	\$	623,861	\$ 8,635,310

Operating Schedule

DESCRIPTION	2023-25 BIENNIUM		2025-2027	
	AMOUNT	EXECUTIVE BUDGET	RECOMMENDATION	INCREASE/ (DECREASE)
Interpreters, Mailing, Other Fees	\$ 72,777	\$ 13,395	\$ (59,382)	
CDI Unit Services	558,000	580,800	22,800	
Provider Contracts	388,350	400,000	11,650	

GENERAL FUND	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
FEDERAL FUND	1,019,127	994,195	(24,932)	
OTHER FUND	-	-	-	
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 1,019,127	\$ 994,195	\$ (24,932)	

Grants Schedule

DESCRIPTION	2023-25 BIENNIUM AMOUNT	2025-2027 EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATION	INCREASE/ (DECREASE)
Medical Costs/Applicant Travel	\$ 1,650,000	\$ 1,900,000	\$ 250,000

GENERAL FUND	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FEDERAL FUND	1,650,000	1,900,000	250,000
OTHER FUND	-	-	-
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 1,650,000	\$ 1,900,000	\$ 250,000

Contact Information

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