



Engrossed House Bill 1012 – Disability Determination Services

Senate Appropriations Committee | HR Division

Senator Dick Dever, Chairman

March 21, 2025 | Sheri Seil | Director, Disability Determination Services Section



Health & Human Services



About Disability Determination Services

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

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

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 notification & appeals for claimants
- Handles payment 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



Currently ND DDS has 5 contracts with part-time medical consultants

- Provide medical expertise during claims review to DDS claims analyst team members.
- Required part of the disability determination process to concur with the decision and sign off on the disability determination

Team Structure and Function

Disability Determination Services

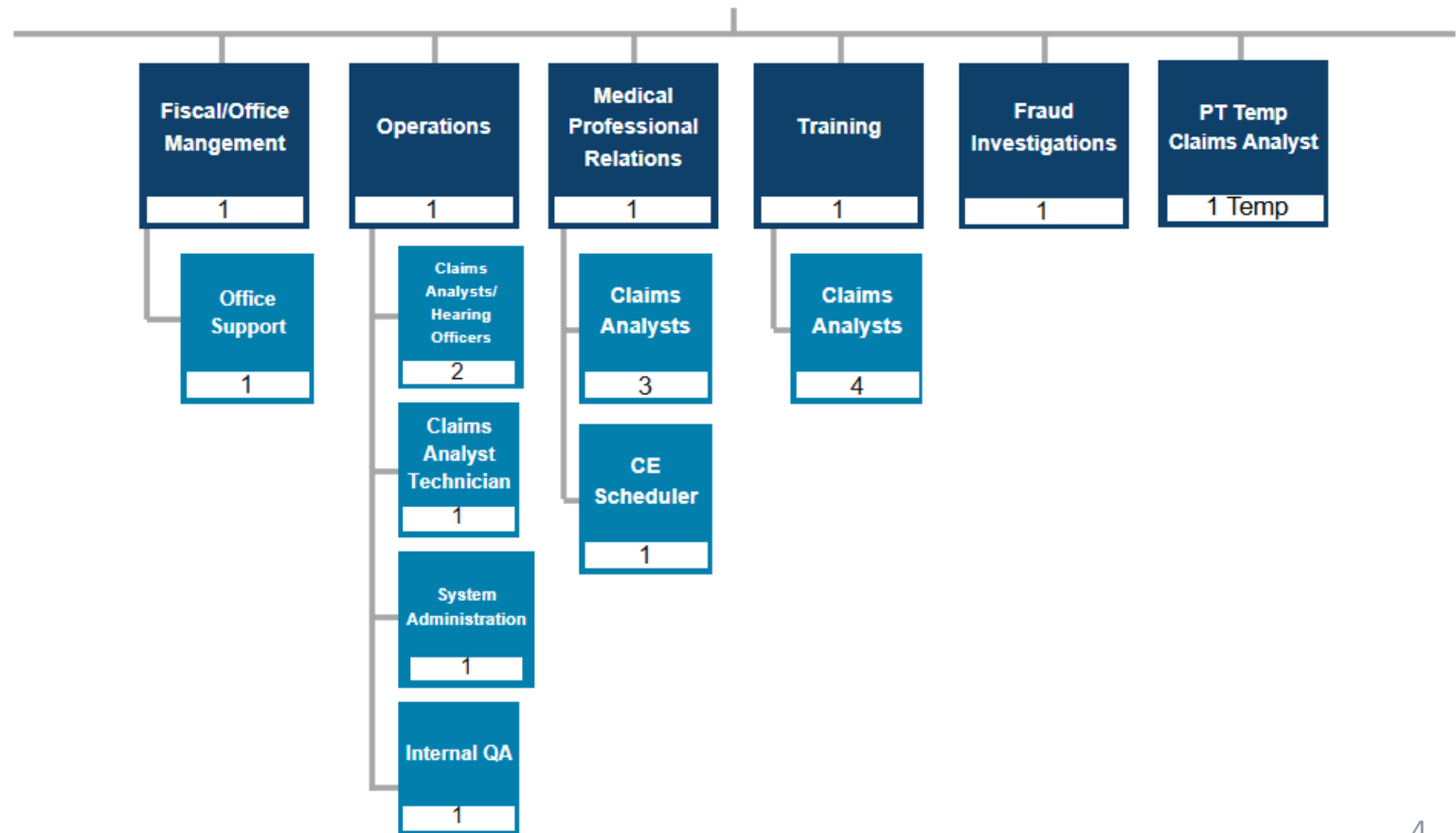
Disability Determination Services

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%

Disability Determination Services Director Sheri Seil



Who benefits from the Social Security Disability programs?

SSI

Supplemental Security Income

“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

Social Security Disability Insurance

“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

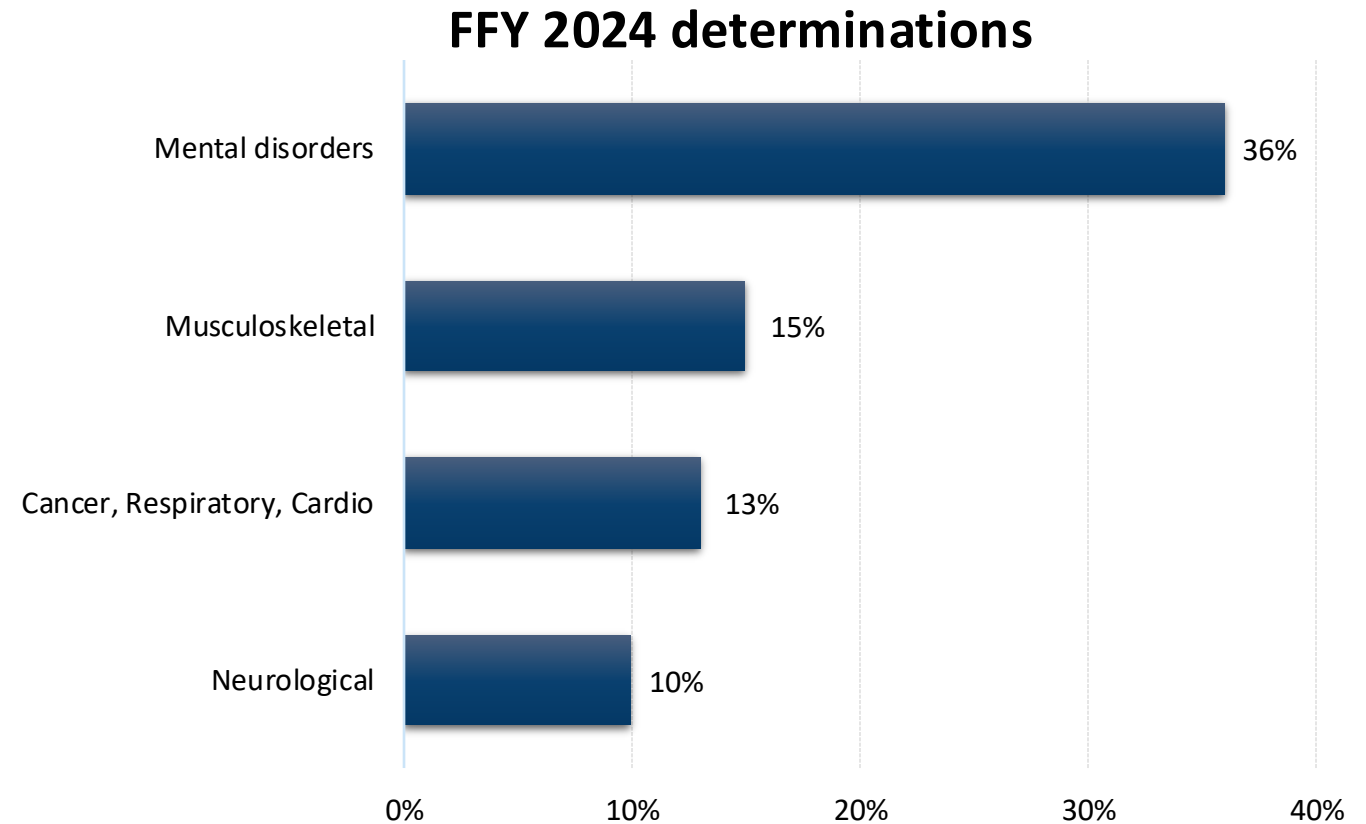


Distribution (by body system) of beneficiaries for SSDI/SSI on initial claims

North Dakota snapshot federal fiscal year 2024

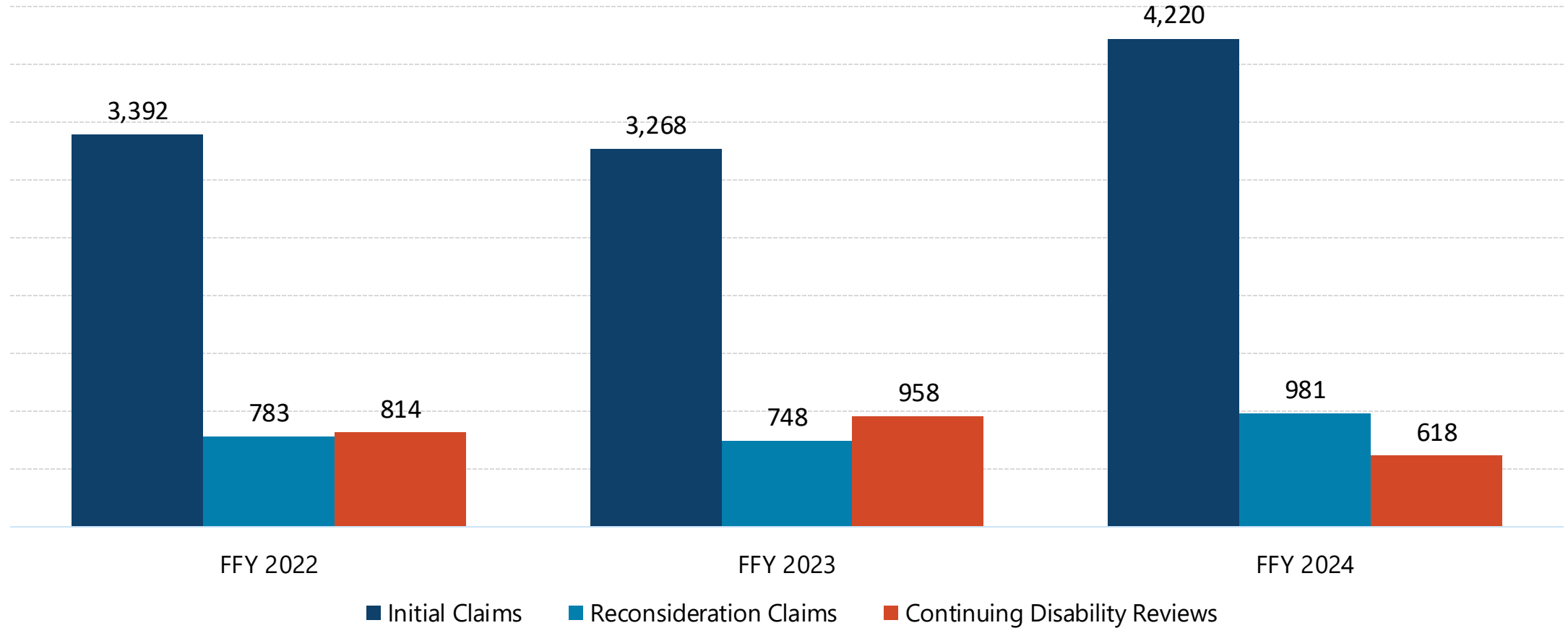
- “The Listing of Impairments describes, for each major body system, impairments considered severe enough to prevent an individual from doing any gainful activity (or in the case of children under age 18 applying for SSI, severe enough to cause marked and severe functional limitations).
- “Most of the 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

Type of claims processed by ND DDS by federal fiscal year | 2022 - 2024



DDS Quality reviews

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

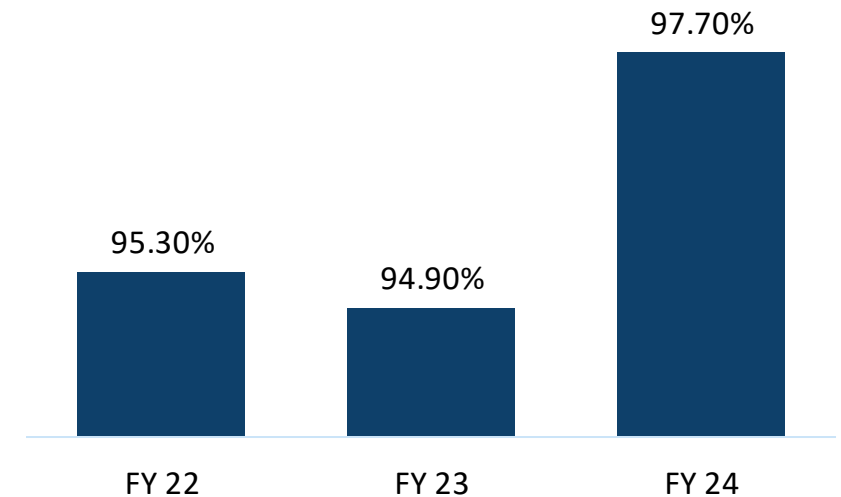
- The quality assurance review of initial DDS disability determinations is mandated by the Regulations (20 CFR 404.1640 – 404.1670)
- The results of this review are used to measure state agency performance accuracy
- Performance Accuracy is based on calendar quarters for the fiscal year, rolling 3-month 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.

Accuracy of Initial Decisions

Federal benchmark: 90.6%



Successes in the last year

- DDS has been working to decrease the initial claims 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 has decreased after previous years of turnover
- Analyst team members continue to expand their knowledge/skills which leads to increased production

Challenges for DDS

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



Comparison of budget expenditures and projections

By Program

PROGRAMS	2023-25 LEGISLATIVE BASE	ONE-TIME / CARRYOVER	2023-25 EXPENSES THROUGH DECEMBER	2023-25 PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	2025-27 EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATION	INCREASE / (DECREASE)	ENGROSSED HB 1012	GENERAL	FEDERAL	OTHER
DISABILITY DETERMINATION SRVCS	\$ 7,958,992	\$ -	\$ 5,625,188	\$ 7,534,501	\$ 8,635,310	\$ -	\$ 8,635,310	\$ -	\$ 8,635,310	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 7,958,992	\$ -	\$ 5,625,188	\$ 7,534,501	\$ 8,635,310	\$ -	\$ 8,635,310	\$ -	\$8,635,310	\$ -

Comparison of budgets and funding

By Major Expense

DESCRIPTION	2023-25 LEGISLATIVE BASE	INCREASE / (DECREASE)	2025-27 EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATION	INCREASE / (DECREASE)	ENGROSSED HB 1012
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 4,786,632	\$ 432,259	\$ 5,218,891	\$ -	\$ 5,218,891
Operating	1,518,861	(2,442)	1,516,419	-	1,516,419
IT Services	3,500	(3,500)	-	-	-
Grants	1,650,000	250,000	1,900,000	-	1,900,000
Total	\$ 7,958,993	\$ 676,317	\$ 8,635,310	\$ -	\$ 8,635,310
General Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Funds	7,958,993	676,317	8,635,310	-	8,635,310
Other Funds	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funds	\$ 7,958,993	\$ 676,317	\$ 8,635,310	\$ -	\$ 8,635,310

Disability Determination Services

Budget as % of HHS Budget

- 0.1%

Budget by Funding Source

- 0% General
- 100% Federal
- 0% Other

Contact Information

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