

Approved January 8, 2018

**NOTICE TO PLAINTIFFS WITHOUT LAWYERS (*Pro Se*)
IN SOCIAL SECURITY CASES REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL**

The purpose of this notice is to inform plaintiffs in social security cases who are representing themselves, known as proceeding “*pro se*,” that the Court has established a panel of volunteer attorneys willing to represent *pro se* plaintiffs in social security actions by court appointment. If you are proceeding without a lawyer (*pro se*) and cannot afford a lawyer or are unable to hire a lawyer, you may request appointment of counsel from the panel by filing a motion for appointment of counsel. A copy of the form for requesting counsel is included with this notice, and is also available at the Office of the Clerk of Court and on the Court’s website.

If you would like the Court to place your case on the panel, you must complete and submit the Court’s form Motion for Appointment of Attorney in Social Security Cases, which requires you to agree to allow the Court to give attorneys on the panel electronic access to the documents filed in your case, including documents and records that contain personal identifying information. If you do not agree, the Court cannot place your case on the panel. Please note that the attorneys who are members of the panel are not permitted to use your personal information for any purpose other than reviewing the case and deciding whether to represent you.

It is the decision of the Judge assigned to your case whether to grant your request for counsel. If your request is granted, your case will be placed on a password-protected extranet site that can be viewed electronically by attorneys who are members of the panel. Placement of your case on the panel does not guarantee that your case will be accepted by an attorney. Unless or until an attorney files a notice of appearance officially notifying the Judge and other parties that he or she is your counsel of record, you are responsible for your own case. If an attorney does not volunteer to represent you, you must represent yourself unless you are able to hire an attorney.

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If an attorney on the panel is interested in your case, he or she will contact you about representing you. You will be required to sign a retention agreement and cooperate with the attorney throughout the case. Once an attorney from the panel has entered his or her appearance as your attorney, Court approval will be required to terminate the attorney's representation. If you prevail in your case, the Equal Access to Justice Act allows the attorney to recover reasonable fees without diminishing the amount of benefits you recover.

Please remember to keep your address current with the Court throughout your case so that you receive Court orders, and so that attorneys from the panel can contact you if your case is placed on the panel for appointment. The Court's local rules require you to update your address within two weeks of an address change.