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Social Security Benefits Application Assistance

Since 2004, the Department of Corrections has provided public benefits program assistance to offenders. By providing this assistance an offender's opportunities for success are enhanced. One of these benefits includes Social Security application assistance.

Each facility will establish and maintain point of contact information (telephone, fax, and email) with their local Social Security Administration (SSA) office. This will include providing the local SSA office with facsimile signatures of Department staff authorized to assist offenders in this process.

The standard Social Security application assistance process should begin approximately 6 months prior to release. Using the below criteria will assist in determining if an offender is eligible to receive assistance. If at least one of the below is met, the Social Worker/Treatment Specialist or Designee will provide assistance applying for Social Security benefits prior to release.

Criteria for Assistance (meeting at least one):

- MH2 Classification
- Developmental Disability
- High HSU need or on-site HSU designation
- Attaining the age of 65 prior to release
- Special Circumstances (often these referrals include individuals with recently diagnosed, debilitating or terminal illnesses).

If an offender does not meet any of the above criteria they should be encouraged to apply on their own once released. The SSA will determine if a disability exists for benefit consideration.

Reentry Legal Services (RLS) is a DOC contract to provide civil legal services to disabled and mentally ill offenders. Some offenders, at designated facilities, may be eligible to participate. See RLS for more information.

Social Worker/Treatment Specialist or Designee Responsibilities:

While each institution has their own procedure, the typical timeline for the Social Security Assistance Application process is as follows: Approximately 6 months prior to release and using the eligibility criteria, evaluate caseload and determine potential participants for Social Security Application Assistance. Approximately 4-5 months prior to release, complete a Pre-Release Screening for SSA (DOC-2248) and forward to your local SSA Office. Upon return of the reviewed DOC-2248, provide needed SSA forms to the offender and obtain requested PSU/HSU records. No more than 90 days prior to the offender's release, submit completed SSA forms and supporting documentation to the local SSA office. Submit additional documentation to SSA/Disability Determination Bureau, if requested. Notify the local SSA office of offender movement and releases relative to the application in process. Update the Offender SSA/MA Tracking Record Disability Benefits (DOC-2249) and Offender SSA/MA Tracking Record Non-Disability (DOC-2249A) throughout the process.

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Reference/Resources:

Executive Directive #30

DOC-2248 – Pre Release Screening for SSA Benefits

DOC-2249 – Offender SSA/MA Tracking Record Disability Benefits

SSA-16 – Application for Disability Insurance Benefits

SSA-8000 – Application for Supplemental Security Income

SSA-3368 – Disability Report - Adult

SSA-827 – Authorization to Disclose Information to the Social Security Administration