

Social Security Advocacy Services Newsletter

September/October 2025

Social Security Advocacy Services (SSAS) is dedicated to assisting Minnesotans with the Social Security disability benefits process so they can secure stable housing, live in dignity, and achieve their highest potential.



In every change, in every falling leaf, there is some pain, some beauty. And that's the way new leaves grow. ~ Amit Ray

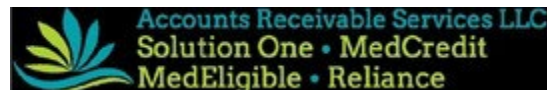
In this issue:

- [Grantee Spotlight](#)
 - [Contract spotlight: Record retention](#)
 - [SSAS invoice approval summary](#)
 - [2026 cost-of-living adjustments \(COLA\)](#)
 - [Create a personal my Social Security account](#)
 - [SOAR model resources](#)
 - [Social Security Advocacy Services team trainings](#)
 - [Social Security Administration updates](#)
 - [Social Security Advocacy Services resources](#)
-

Grantee Spotlight

This section of our newsletter spotlights a Department of Human Services-contracted

Social Security Advocacy Services grantee to promote fostering of partnerships and open communication among all grantees.



Agency name: MedEligible Services

Contact information: 763-585-8400

Website: <https://www.arsprofessionals.com/medeligible.html>

Service provided:

MedEligible Services (MES) is dedicated to helping uninsured and underinsured patients access the financial support they need. Through personalized advocacy, MES assists patients in applying for state and federal benefit programs, ensuring they're matched with the right resources to meet their medical and financial needs. MES's team of Certified Application Counselors work directly with patients, guiding them through the entire application and appeal process. Their expertise in Presumptive Eligibility helps hospitals

and facilities maximize available benefits, resulting in timely payments and reduced bad debt write-offs.

Beyond financial assistance, MES provides comprehensive support including applying for Social Security benefits at all levels – including initial, reconsiderations, hearings, and Appeals Council. The team educates patients and families about programs such as CADI waivers, drug discount programs, and long-term care services. MES partners with social workers and long-term care facilities to assist with discharge planning and smooth care transitions.

With a team committed to compassionate, hands-on support, MedEligible Services bridges the gap between patients, providers, and community resources and ensures the best outcomes for patients and facilities.

Contract spotlight: Record retention

This is a reminder that all Social Security Advocacy Services (SSAS) grantees are required to implement and maintain a record retention policy.



All client files, records, and documentation associated with your SSAS grant contract must be securely retained for a period of six (6) years following the date of expiration or termination of the contract, or longer if required by applicable law. After this period, the documentation must be properly disposed of. This requirement is outlined in Attachment A - Data Sharing and Business Associate Agreement, sections 2.2.H, and 2.6 of your SSAS grant contract.

We encourage you to periodically review your responsibilities and deliverables outlined in your agency's SSAS grant contract with DHS. If you need a copy of this contract, or have any questions, please reach out to your assigned coordinator for assistance.

SSAS invoice approval summary

August 2025

A total of 110 invoices submitted by 12 grantees were approved.

Initial application/reconsiderations	80
ALJ hearing level	29
Appeals Council level	1
Continuing Disability Review (CDR)	0
CDR at ALJ hearing level	0

September 2025

A total of 111 invoices submitted by 17 grantees were approved.

Initial application/reconsiderations	82
ALJ hearing level	26
Appeals Council level	1
Continuing Disability Review (CDR)	0
CDR at ALJ hearing level	2

2026 cost-of-living adjustments (COLA)

Social Security recently announced benefits will increase in 2026 by 2.8 percent. Some increases you should be aware of are:

- SSI federal payment standard will increase to \$994/month for an individual and \$1,491/month for a couple.
- Substantial gainful activity (SGA) amount will increase to \$1,690/month for non-blind persons.
- Review the [2026 COLA fact sheet](#) for the full list of increases.



For further information read this [Social Security press release](#).

Create a personal my Social Security account

With the increasing difficulty in reaching staff at Social Security offices, we encourage everyone, who can, to create a personal *my* Social Security account. *My* Social Security account is a free and secure online gateway to Social Security that provides personalized tools for everyone, whether you currently receive benefits or not.

Some common services available through an account include requesting a replacement Social Security card, checking the status of an application or appeal, estimating future benefits, viewing and printing statements and benefit verification letters, managing benefits you receive, and more.

This is a great resource tool for your clients to receive updates about their disability claims and benefits. Please encourage all your clients to create a personal [my Social Security account](#) and provide them with this Social Security publication “[How to Create an Online Account](#)”.

SOAR model resources

Policy Research Associates has added resources to their [webpage](#) to help advocates use the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) model.

Their webpage includes the history of SOAR, data on its impacts, and links to key resources such as briefs, fact sheets, and articles. You can sign up to receive emails updates about SOAR.

If you are using the SOAR model, we highly recommend bookmarking their SOAR [resource page](#) and exploring their [website](#) for additional resources that maybe helpful to you and the people you serve.

Social Security Advocacy Services team trainings



Technical Assistance (TA) bi-monthly sessions

On the third **THURSDAY** in odd months from 1:30 to 3 p.m., the Social Security Advocacy Services team offers trainings and opportunities for Q&A to our contracted Social Security advocates.

Our next technical assistance training will be **Thursday, November 20, 2025**. Laura Melnick and Jennifer Kelso, attorneys from Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services will be presenting *Public Benefit Law Changes Affecting Noncitizens and Low-income Minnesotans*. You can register for this technical assistance session at this [link](#).

If you are interested in presenting at an upcoming TA session on any topic related to Social Security advocacy services, please contact Tony Reynero at antonio.reynero@state.mn.us.

Social Security Administration updates



Redesigned homepage

Social Security recently redesigned their homepage at [SSA.gov](https://ssa.gov) to make it easier for people to find information, do business online, and enhance access to various services.

Updated methods for overpayment recoveries

Social Security has updated its policy regarding payments for overpayments. For more information, please read POMS recent change [GN 02210 TN89](#).

Social Security Advocacy Services resources

Additional resources can be found at the Minnesota Department of Human Services webpage [Social Security Advocacy Services: Policies and procedures for contracted grantees](#).
