

Why You *Shouldn't* Switch Disability Representatives in Florida



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Thinking About Switching Representatives?	4
One Representative, One Fee Agreement.....	5
The Financial Logistics of Switching or Having Multiple Representatives.....	6
Why is My Current Representative Taking So Long to Reach a Disability Hearing?	8
Think Twice	9



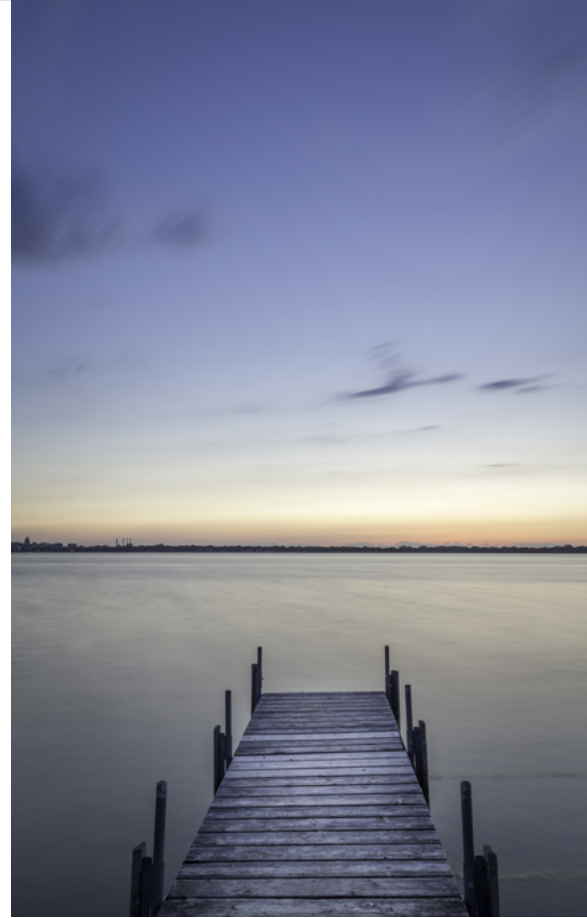
Introduction

Whether you suffer from the long term effects of a stroke or from the emotional sting of depression, filing for disability can often add more stress to your fragile state; however, you shouldn't avoid applying for the disability benefits you deserve simply because it can seem like an overwhelming process.

Whether or not you find the disability benefit application process to be tedious, hiring a professional advocate often has many benefits that extend beyond deciphering complex terminology. It is the sole purpose of the advocates at Disability Experts of Florida (DEF) to provide you with experienced and professional representation of your Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income claims. DEF advocates will stay focused on your claim and improve the chances of getting the benefits you deserve. DEF represents clients dealing with the SSA; their advocates help clients in need fill out paperwork, follow complex procedures and timelines, and prepare for hearings.

Benjamin Franklin summed up the benefits of being well-prepared, stating:

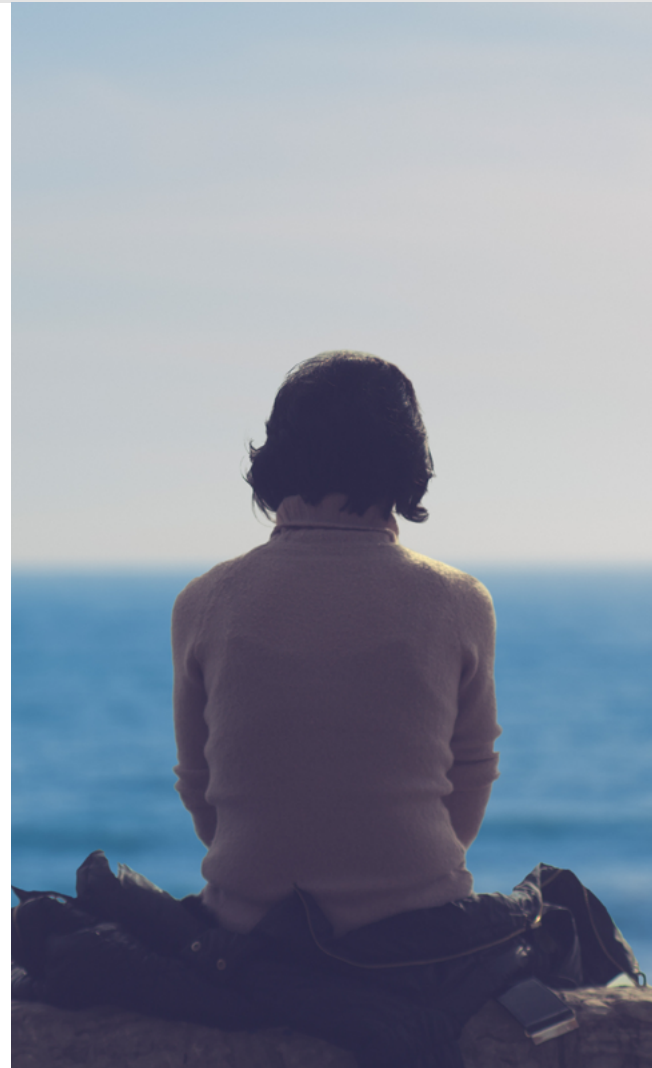
“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”



Thinking About Switching Representatives?

If you have already applied for disability and are waiting on your hearing date, then you are most likely familiar with the challenges associated with the SSA disability application process. If you are waiting for your hearing, then you already know what a long, drawn out process this can be. When you have recently become disabled and medical bills begin to pile up, you may start to feel anxious and impatient, and assume that representation is delaying the process.

Those who suffer from a disability or disabilities can also be led to feel that they are not being represented properly, which is why they would decide to change representation. In some cases, disabled individuals may move out-of-state, which would require a change in representation. There are a variety of reasons that push individuals to second guess whether or not they should switch disability representatives. Even though switching representation at the time may seem like a good idea, it is more than likely not the most beneficial option for you to proceed with.



One Representative, One Fee Agreement

While there is no law against switching representation or have multiple representatives, it is not necessarily in your best interest to do so because of the various complex processes involved.

If you have already hired a disability representative, then it would be financially beneficial for you to stay with him or her. When you hire one representative, the fee process is much less convoluted than it would be if you were transitioning to a different representative and having to pay for multiple advocates.

Switching Representatives or Having Multiple Representatives

If you are switching disability representatives and your first representative has invested many resources into your case, then your first representative is likely to expect compensation for his/ her work.

If you make the decision to switch representatives, you will have to engage in a fee petition process, instead of a fee agreement. Both your former and current disability representative will expect appropriate compensation for their work toward earning you the benefits you deserve.

Therefore, the disability representative you discharged would file a fee petition and, more often than not, he or she will not waive or withdraw their right to a fee for the work they had already completed on your case.

Essentially, both your former and current disability representatives will file a fee petition, or the second representative will ask your first representative to withdraw his or her request for a fee. Your first representative has the option to withdraw his or her fee agreement; however, your first representative will typically only withdraw their fee if you have moved out of state.



The Financial Logistics of Switching or Having Multiple Representatives

When you hire one disability representative for your case, the initial fee agreement determines the how much your representative will earn. However, when you switch or hire multiple representatives for your case, there is an additional payment process that begins. Basically, if you have multiple disability representatives, the fee agreement process becomes invalid and the fee petition process is invoked.

While the client has the right to appeal, the Social Security Administration evaluates how much the former and current disability representatives will be paid based on the number of hours they spent on the case and other factors (including the complexity of the case). The judge has the final say on how much each representative earns during the fee petition process.

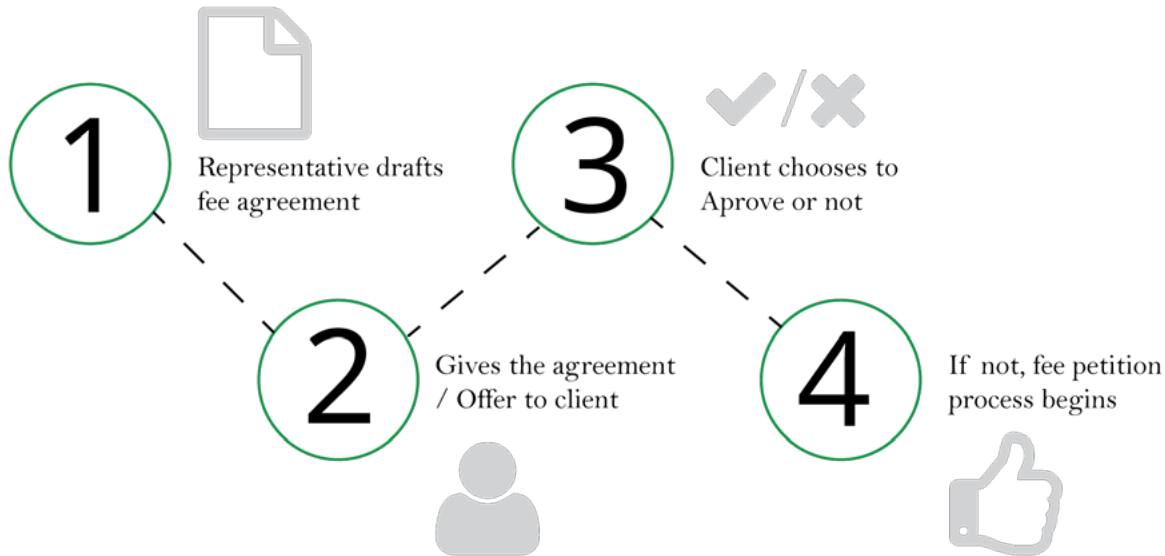
When a client has only one representative, the fee agreement states that they will receive the lesser of 25% of retroactive benefits or \$6,000.00. Hypothetically, let's say your representative takes your claim and it gets approved within two weeks; however, there is a five month waiting period and the retroactive payment doesn't get approved. In this case, a fee petition would be filed. If the fee agreement for retroactive payment is approved, then there is no fee agreement petition.



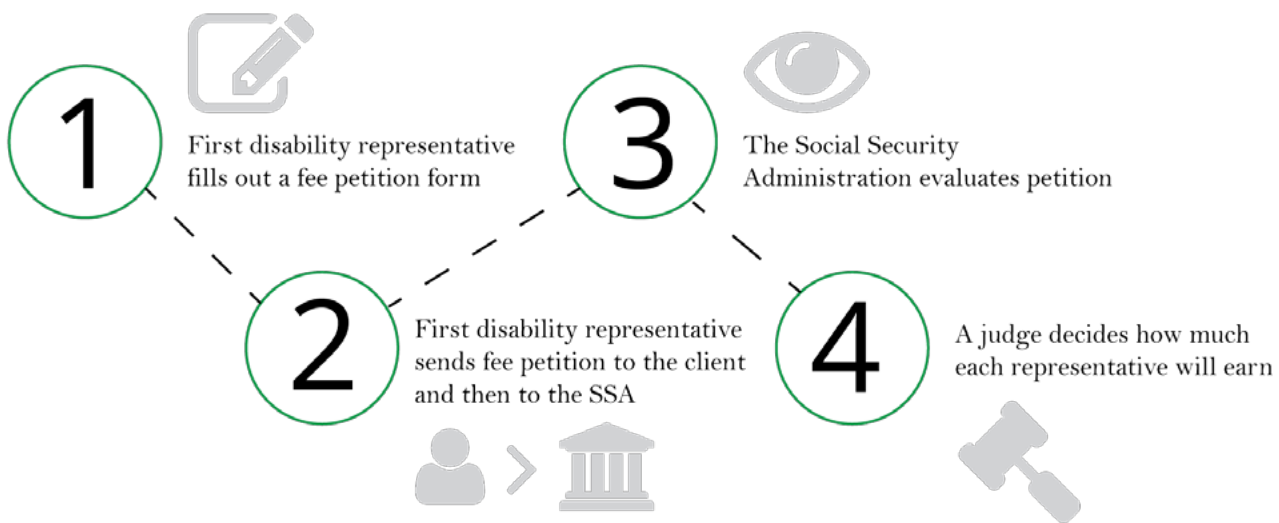
The Financial Logistics of Switching or Having Multiple Representatives *(cont.)*

Fee Agreement Process

(Used to decide what you are going to pay if there is only 1 representative)



Fee Petition Process



Why is My Current Representative Taking So Long to Reach a Disability Hearing?

Understandably so, you can grow highly impatient waiting on your disability benefits; however, it is important to remember that the hearing schedule dates cannot be changed simply by switching disability representatives. **Your hearing date will still be the same even if another representative tells you otherwise** - it takes time. Your hearing date is solely based on the date in which the hearing request was filed.

Try to follow through with your first representative. Only if they are unreachable should you search for other representation. Many disability representatives will not take over for another representative because of the convoluted process that is involved. There are, however, certain difficult circumstances, such as moving out of state, in which another representative would ideally take over your case.

Switching or having multiple representatives does not decrease your opportunity to receive benefits; however, you are more apt to lose money from the benefits you would receive.



Think Twice

Hiring a disability representative has many benefits; with a representative, you'll be fully prepared for your hearing, avoid compiling and completing paperwork on your own, and have a better understanding of complicated SSA terms and processes. You should seek a representative who is reliable and reputable, and has a plethora of experience and high success rates. As Dr. Steve Maraboli, a behavioral scientist and social philosopher, says:

“Intent reveals desire; action reveals commitment.”

You have shown intent through your desire to pursue the benefits you deserve; hire an advocate at Disability Experts of Florida to show you how their action reveals commitment to you.

Often, it can be difficult, tedious and complicated to file for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). Hiring an experienced advocate, such as those with Disability Experts of Florida, alleviates some of the complexities of applying for benefits and will help you through the process to make sure you earn the benefits you deserve.

It is important that you hire qualified, experienced and professional representation, so you are less likely to change representation and experience the financial drawbacks that come with doing so.

Applying for disability benefits is complicated enough, but if you switch disability representatives or hire multiple representatives, it becomes a much more convoluted process with the fee petition process.



Think Twice (cont.)

Remember that your hearing date is not dependant on your advocate; switching representation because the process is taking too long won't make the wait any shorter. Just remember to be patient because these processes take time. Don't hire new representation unless you feel it is an absolute must and there is no other way.

You may feel like you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel, but just remember:

“Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.” - Carl Bard



Share This Guide



CONNECT WITH US:



www.disabilityexpertsfl.com



www.facebook.com/pages/Disability-Experts-of-Florida/269568489775362



www.twitter.com/DisabilityXpert



(855)-777-0455