

This office is responsible for conducting a disability hearing and making a new determination about whether you/[beneficiary_full_name] continue to be disabled under the Social Security Act. We are writing about the options for appearing at a disability hearing during the COVID-19 national public health emergency.

Currently, due to COVID-19, we have closed our office to the public, and we are holding hearings by telephone or online video only. An online video hearing is a hearing that we hold over the internet, and you/[beneficiary_full_name] may participate from any private location using a computer, tablet, or mobile device with a camera, speakers, and a private internet connection. We are currently using Microsoft Teams for online video hearings, as explained in more detail below. We will not hold the hearing by telephone or online video unless you/[beneficiary_full_name] agree[s] to appear in that manner.

Please let us know whether you agree to appear at a hearing by telephone or by online video

We are offering you the option to appear at a hearing by telephone or by online video. As stated above, we will only hold the hearing by telephone or online video if you agree/[beneficiary_full_name] agrees to appear in that manner. If you do not/[beneficiary_full_name] does not agree to appear by telephone or online video, we will delay scheduling the hearing until our offices reopen.

What You Need To Do

Please carefully review the attached COVID-19 Remote Hearing Agreement Form. **Complete this form with black or blue ink.**

Return the completed form by [return date].

How To Return The Form

You may use the return envelope that we have provided or fax the completed form to us at [fax number]. Please note that the return address may be for a scanning center that works with us.

The completed form must include the barcode page on top of the form.

Important information about appearing at a hearing by online video

If you agree/[beneficiary_full_name] agrees to appear at a hearing by online video, we will provide you with instructions on how to participate in the hearing, and we will email you a meeting invite and link that allows you to access the hearing directly. We also will provide instructions on how to download and use Microsoft Teams, as well as provide technical assistance on the day of the video hearing if necessary.

If you choose to use a smartphone to join the online video hearing, you must ensure that the phone is Wi-Fi accessible and compatible with the web-based Microsoft Teams technology. On

the day of the hearing, we may call you at the phone number(s) provided to confirm that you are able to access the online video hearing.

Before the hearing, you must download the Microsoft Teams application from the App Store or Google Play and install it on a personal mobile device, or you must access the hearing from a supported internet browser if using a desktop or laptop. Standard data charges may apply when downloading the Microsoft Teams application. Once you install the application, you may access the online video hearing directly using the meeting invite link and instructions we provide.

Please note that Microsoft Teams is a third-party application. To participate in an online video hearing, you may be asked to agree to Microsoft's terms of use and privacy policies, which we do not control. Our Internet Privacy Policy, which describes our online information practices is available at <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/privacy.html>, and does not apply to Microsoft Teams.

Reviewing evidence when you appear by telephone or by online video

If you agree/[beneficiary_full_name] agrees to appear at a hearing by telephone or by online video, you will have an opportunity to review the evidence in your/[beneficiary_full_name] claim(s) file before the hearing. We can send you a copy of your claim file on an encrypted Compact Disc (CD) or by email as an encrypted email attachment. Please call us at the number shown below if you would like us to send you a copy of the claim(s) file by CD or email.

Protecting Your Privacy

We will collect and maintain personally identifiable information you share/[beneficiary_full_name] shares with us during the hearing to make a decision on your claim(s). During the COVID-19 emergency, for telephone and online video hearings, a disability hearing officer (DHO) will conduct the hearing from a personal residence. The DHO and other employees will safeguard personal information during a telephone or online video hearing. We recommend that you use a private internet connection, in a location such as a home or office, when participating in a telephone or online video hearing.

Suspect Social Security Fraud?

Please visit <http://oig.ssa.gov/r> or call the Inspector General's Fraud Hotline at 800-269-0271 (TTY 866-501-2101).

If You Have Any Questions

If you have any questions or wish to provide more information, please call us at the number(s) shown below Monday-Friday between [opening hour] and [closing hour]. When you call or leave a message, please provide the Case ID: [case_id], your name/[the beneficiary's full name] and a call back number.

[Signature]

[Phone #]

Enclosures

