

Your Social Security

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News and Information for SSDI and SSI Recipients

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Social Security: Cutting Services

Congressional aide calls the changes “absolutely devastating”.

If you need a letter from Social Security verifying your benefits but don't have access to a computer or are just not comfortable using a computer, you had better act quickly. For the next few months you can still get a benefits verification letter at your local Social Security Administration office, but recently the SSA announced that after April 1 local offices will no longer print out benefit verification letters or provide Social Security number print-outs (which

can be used as temporary IDs while you are waiting to replace a lost Social Security card.)

The Social Security web site, www.ssa.gov, advises Social Security representatives that :

If your clients need proof of their Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits, let them know that they can get a benefit verification letter online instantly through a *my Social Security* account. With *my Social Security* those who receive benefits can easily view, print, or save an official letter that includes proof of their benefit amount and type, Medicare start date and withholding amount, and age. Please do not send your clients to a Social Security office for a benefit verification letter. Offices no longer provide these letters on site. Instead, send your clients to www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

Why might you need a benefits verification letter (also known as a budget letter, a benefits letter, a proof of income letter, or a proof of award letter)? According to www.ssa.gov:

You may need a benefit verification letter for a number of reasons. Perhaps you need proof of income for a loan



After April 1, SSA field offices will no longer print benefit verification letters.

or to verify your monthly income for housing, or state or local benefits. You may need proof of your current Medicare health insurance status. In some cases, a person may need proof of retirement status, disability status, or age. For any of these situations, a benefit verification letter will provide the proof you need.

Sending Social Security beneficiaries to the Internet is fine for those who are computer savvy and have access to a computer, but for others it can create serious difficulties. Jerry Mulvihill, a senior case worker for U.S. Representative Dan Lipinski from Illinois, quoted in the Southtown Star (a publication of the Chicago Sun Times) called the change “absolutely devastating” for many who are dependent on Social Security benefits.

“We have senior citizens come into our office in need of a Social Security payment verification all of the time

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Social Security: Cutting Services

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in order to qualify for (federal) low-income heating assistance in the winter," Mulvihill added. "Many of our seniors, I'm talking about 80-year-old people, do not have access to a computer at home and absolutely will not use a computer."

Jill Hornick, a union representative for the Social Security Administration Field Operations Local in an op-ed piece written for the American Federation of Government Employees web site said she believes "the SSA's initiative is aimed at eventually closing its field offices and eliminating jobs. This is not a cost-saving measure," Hornick said, "because our people are already in the offices working, and all this really requires is the push of a button to print out an 8.5-by-11 inch piece of paper. I can tell you that our local offices receive calls all the time from nursing homes asking for verification of Social Security benefits for elderly people."

Social Security is encouraging people without personal computers to use computers in libraries or other public places. However, if you do use public computers be cautious because they are not secure and you may be transmitting very sensitive personal information including your Social Security number.



"5 Deadly Mistakes That Can Destroy Your Social Security Disability Case" is the #1 guide to improving the odds of winning a disability case.

For a FREE copy for you or someone you care about call Cuddigan Law at 402.933.5400 or email us at lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com

Win \$25 In Free Groceries

The entry deadline for your chance to win has been extended and we've doubled the number gift cards we are giving away.

Now you can win one of twenty \$25 Wal-Mart gift cards to be given away by Cuddigan Law.



Due to a flood of interest, the entry deadline has been extended to midnight Friday, January 7, 2014 and we've doubled the number of gift cards we're giving away.

To register for your chance to win, just send an email to drawing@cuddiganlaw.com with "Free Groceries" in the subject line and please include your name and address and phone number in the body of the email (so we can notify the winners). Or you can enter on our web site at www.cuddiganlaw.com/winfreegiftcard or by sending your contact information to: Cuddigan Law, 1005 S. 107th Ave. Suite 201, Omaha, NE 68114.

Winners will be drawn at random and notified by January 12, 2014.



Comfort Food

From the kitchen of Janet Cuddigan

Here's a cold weather favorite at our house:

Tim's Chicken Chili

1 medium onion, chopped
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 teaspoons sage
2 teaspoons ground cumin 3/4 cup Picante sauce 1 bay leaf
1 large tomato, coarsely chopped
3 cloves minced garlic
1 pound chicken breast, no skin, no bone, cut in 1" pieces
1/4 teaspoon salt
16 ounces canned pinto beans (can use kidney beans)
1 green pepper (can use red pepper)

Cook onion and garlic in oil in a large saucepan until tender, about 4 minutes. Stir in chicken. Cook until chicken is no longer pink, stirring constantly. Sprinkle sage, cumin, and salt over chicken; cook 1 minute. Stir in picante sauce, beans, and bay leaf. Bring to boil. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in green pepper and tomato. Simmer uncovered 10 minutes.

Meet Gail Edmonds

A spotlight on the professional team members who work for you at Cuddigan Law.

Case Managers play a key role in helping Cuddigan Law clients get the benefits they have earned. When you become a client, you are always in contact with the same Case Manager at Cuddigan Law to make sure you do not have to repeat your case to multiple people and to insure you have a one-on-one relationship with our firm.



Gail Edmonds has been with Cuddigan Law since March 2011 and, as a Case Manager, Gail assists the attorneys in making sure you are always up-to-date on the progress of your case. She also updates Social Security with your current medical records and the contact information for your medical care providers. Throughout the process, from beginning to end, Gail is there to insure you understand all the paperwork you receive from Social Security. She works with you until a hearing is scheduled and also after your hearing—making sure you receive your benefits.

"I enjoy the relationships I make with clients and gaining their trust so they know that I am doing everything I can to help them get the benefits they have earned. I like the fact that I am able to know and understand their cases and when they call, I know who they are right away. We go through the emotions of this process together and at the end I enjoy the fact that the client and their family is taken care of."

As a devoted animal lover, outside of the office you can find Gail enjoying the companionship of her animals or volunteering at an animal shelter. She also has donated her time and talents at the Siena Francis house. A native of Michigan, Gail also enjoys the outdoors and gardening with her husband and family.

We're in your corner.

We value the confidence and trust you have placed with us in the past.

If you or a family member or a friend could use our help now or in the future, please pass along our name.

Cuddigan Law.

Disability law is all we do.



Tim & Sean Cuddigan

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