Fact Sheet

APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE SERVICES - ELECTRONIC FOLDER ACCESS (eFOLDER)

GENERAL

What is the Appointed Representative Services?

- The Appointed Representative Services initiative consists of a long-term strategy combining new business processes, systems modifications, and regulatory changes that will streamline the collection, processing, and maintenance of information for appointed representatives and their claimants. The cornerstone of the suite of services is a comprehensive website where a person appointed to represent a claimant for Social Security benefits can perform most of their business with us.

- When fully operational in 2015, a representative will be able to register with us online. Once registered, the representative can schedule an appointment, enroll for direct payment of fees, enroll and obtain online access to electronic claims folders (eFolder), request the status of pending claims, and provide information to help us process a fee agreement or fee petition.

Why is the agency developing services for appointed representatives?

- Approximately 80% of cases at the hearings level involve representation. Agency hearings offices and field offices spend a significant amount of time communicating with, and responding to, requests from appointed representatives. This initiative will improve the efficiency and level of service provided.

- Appointed representative information is stored in approximately 19 different systems. This initiative will result in a single authoritative source for appointed representative data, in the Appointed Representative Database (ARDB).

What services are available now?

- Social Security has developed and implemented an online service for viewing the electronic claims folder called eFolder Access. Appointed representatives enrolled for this service can view, supplement, print, or copy their clients' eFolders using Electronic Records Express (ERE).

- To register for eFolder access, a representative submits Form SSA-1699, *Registration for Appointed Representative Services and Direct Payment.* After registering, we send the representative two unique identifiers - a USER ID for accessing the website and a REP ID. The REP ID is the representative's unique code that helps us identify the representative for official business purposes.

- Before we grant access to eFolder, we must conduct an in-person enrollment interview to verify the representative's identity and address.

- Once enrolled, the representative may view documents in the eFolder immediately, request to download specific documents, or request the entire eFolder in either PDF or ZIP format.

- **When a representative asks how they can enroll for access to their clients' folder, what do we tell them?**

    1. Appointed Representatives requesting access to the eFolder *must* have cases pending at the Hearings level.
    2. If the representative has cases pending at the hearings level, the appointed representative (or the hearing office) should let the hearing office know they would like an invitation to enroll. Hearing offices should be maintaining a list of interested representatives using the "**Appointed Representative Tracking System" (ARTS)**.

- **How does the enrollment process work?**

    1. A notice is sent to the representative inviting them to register/enroll for access to eFolders. The notice address is obtained from ODAR CPMS rep tables, which meets one part of the authentication requirements.
    2. Before the day of enrollment, the representative must complete form 1699 and fax it to headquarters for entry into the Customer Support Application (CSA) database. This entry does two things:
        a. Registers the representative with SSA
        b. Assigns the representative a USER ID and REP ID
    3. The day of enrollment the representative MUST have:
        a. The invitation (notice),
        b. Government issued Identification (drivers license, passport)
        c. Text enabled cell phone.
    4. After the representative has presented their invitation and the ID, an ODAR employee will guide them through the enrollment process to get access to their clients folders.

- **Who should representatives call for assistance with completing their SSA-1699?**

    Registration support is handled in a special processing unit in the Office of Central Operations. For questions regarding registration, representatives should call 1-800-772-6270 between the hours of 7:00 am and 7:00 pm Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

- **A representative enrolled for eFolder access, needs help retrieving information from the electronic folder. What resources are currently available?**

    A user guide is available from the first page a representative accesses in the Electronic Records Express (ERE) application. Appointed representatives can also call 1-866-691-3061 for telephone support for accessing the electronic folder.

- **When will representatives who have cases pending at the initial claim, reconsideration and appeals council level have online access to claims folders?**
  - In FY11 representative will be given access to their client's electronic folders pending at the appeals council.
  - We anticipate expansion to cases at the initial and reconsideration levels will require a multi-year effort to ensure an easy-to-use registration process for representatives.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ELECTRONIC FOLDER ACCESS (eFOLDER)

Frequently Asked Questions from Representatives

- **Which internet browsers are compatible with the Electronic Records Express website?**

  The Electronic Records Express website was designed for use with the latest versions of Internet Explorer (version 6, 7, or 8 for Windows XP or Windows 2000) or Firefox (version 2 or 3 for Windows XP, Windows 2000, or MacOS). For optimized use, it is highly recommended that the representative's browser have JavaScript enabled as their browser's preferences.

- **Which file formats are acceptable to upload through the Electronic Records Express website?**

  Depending on which service you are using, the Electronic Records Express website will accept at least one of the following file formats: .doc, .wpd, .jpg, .bmp, .txt, .xls, .pdf, .tiff, .tif, .docx, .mdi, .rtf, and .xlsx

- **Is there a maximum file size that a representative can send through the Electronic Records Express website?**

  Yes. The total file size of individual submissions using Send Response for Individual Case cannot exceed 50 megabytes. The total file size of files sent using Communication Utility cannot exceed 5 megabytes. (i.e., the aggregate size for all files in any one upload submission may not exceed 50MB or 5MB respectively.)

- **Are there any instructions that can help the representative use the new access to the electronic folder site?**

  Yes, there are User Instructions that will guide you through this process. You can find these instructions on any ERE page by selecting the "User Instructions" link in the upper right hand corner.

- **When a representative is denied access to their client's electronic folder there are several reasons this can occur, such as:**

  - ☑ They may have entered the wrong social security number

- ☑ The case may not be at the hearing level (only cases at the hearing level can be viewed)
- ☑ The case may have closed at the hearing level – a representative only has access to the case for a limited period after the decision was issued on the case.
- ☑ They may not be shown as the representative for that case.
- ☑ Thee shown as the representative but an *end* date is shown in the CPMS representative information screen.
- ☑ CPMS shows the case is a fully electronic case but eView shows "CEF N".

The hearing office should check CPMS and eView to resolve this issue for the representative.

- **When a representative tries to access their client's electronic folder and receives a message that they are suspended, what do they do?**

  - ☑ This message is received if the representative had 10 unsuccessful attempts to access electronic folders within a 24-hour period. They must contact the Social Security Administration at 1-866-691-3061 to reinstate your access to the service.

- **Once a representative is reinstated, will their next failed attempt suspend them again?**

  No, this restarts the clock and the count for failed attempts (10).

- **When a representative tried to access their client's electronic folder and receives a message "unable to process your request" – what does that mean?**

  - ☑ The case may not be electronic
  - ☑ There are multiple electronic cases pending at Social Security and the system cannot determine which one to display.

Note: These unsuccessful attempts to access their claimant's electronic folder will **not** count as one of the 10 unsuccessful attempts that will cause your access to be suspended.

- **Can a representative access any electronic case pending with Social Security?**

  No, currently only cases at the hearing office can be viewed.

- **After a representatives requests documents, how will they know when their documents are available?**

  An email will be sent to them when their documents are ready to "pick-up". For more detailed information about this process, there are User Instructions that will guide them through this process. These representatives can find these instructions on any ERE page by selecting the User Instructions link in the upper right hand corner.

- **What should a representative do if they requested documents from their client's folder through the secured website and they are not received?**

  If it has been more than 48 hours and the representative has not received an email, have them request the document (s) again.

- **What should a representative do if they requested a download, received an email that their files were ready for "pick-up" but when they went to get them there was nothing there?**

  Files are retained for seven (7) days. The representative will need to request the files again if they are no longer available.

- **If a representative began a download but it was interrupted, will all the files disappear?**

  No, the files remain for 24-hours after you begin the download process.

- **Can a representative add new documents to their clients folder while in their file?**

  Yes, use the "Upload New Files" button at the bottom of the screen.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN TO COMPLETE THE FORM SSA-1699

- **The form SSA-1699 has a new name, Registration for Appointed Representative Services and Direct Payment. Do all appointed representatives who have already registered for direct pay need to complete the form again?**

  No. A new Form SSA-1699, Registration for Appointed Representative Services and Direct Payment, *is only needed if*:
  - The appointed representative is already registered and needs to update direct payment or contact information; or
  - The appointed representative received a letter from Social Security asking him/her to complete the form in order to enroll for access to clients' electronic folders pending at the hearings level.

- **When should an appointed representative complete the Form SSA-1699, Registration for Appointed Representative Services and Direct Payment?**

  Appointed representatives **SHOULD** complete Form SSA-1699, Registration for Appointed Representative Services and Direct Payment, if:

  - The appointed representative is an attorney or a non-attorney eligible for direct pay who, for the first time, wants to register for direct payment of fees from clients' past-due benefits; or
  - The appointed representative is a representative who already submitted a Form SSA-1699 but now needs to update information; or
  - The appointed representative received a letter from SSA asking him or her to complete the form in order to enroll for access to clients' electronic folders pending at the hearing level.

  An appointed representative **DOES NOT** need to complete Form SSA-1699 if:

  - The appointed representative is not in the business of providing services to SSA claimants and beneficiaries, but will be appointed as a representative for a relative, friend, or other acquaintance, or
  - The appointed representative already completed a Form SSA-1699, unless the appointed representative now needs to update information previously submitted.

Comparison of Electronic Records Express and Appointed Representative Services

	Electronic Records Express (ERE)	**Appointed Representative Services (ARS)**
▪ Purpose	• Ability to submit evidence directly to eFolders via the internet. • Ability to track submitted evidence	• A single webpage that contains all eServices for a single appointed representatives, including: o Link to ERE (eFolder access) o Account maintenance
▪ Registration	• Through the Automated User Account Setup (AUAS). • Administrator/Regional Administrator/Sponsor can register representative and their staff for ERE access. o Create user account by assigning an 8-digit USER ID o Issue a temporary password	• Through Integrated Registration Services (IRES), o Representative supplies first/last name, SSN, DOB, permanent address and phone number. o NUMI check completed. If pass, o Representative creates a password and answers 5 Knowledge Based Authentication (KBA) questions. o Representative is issued a USER ID (mailed to address maintained by SSA). . • Appointed Representative Data Base (ARDB) through input of data to Customer Support Application (CSA) screens. o Representative complete series of questions (SSA-1699). o Requests services(eFolder Access) o Activation Code issued (must be entered to activate service).
▪ Activation of Service	. • N/A.	• Representative enters activation code • Representative enters cell phone number • Representative receives immediate passcode on cell phone • Representative enters the cell phone number • Access to eFolder service is now complete
▪ Reset passwords	• Administrator/Regional Administrator/Sponsor can reset the representative/staff password.	• Representative must answer KBA questions to reset password. • If fail KBA questions, representative must call the 800# and have a temp password mailed.
▪ Reactivate account	• Administrator/Regional Administrator/Sponsor can reactivate the representative/staff password.	• Representative must call the 800# to have account reactivated.