

Honesty is Key in Applying For Disability Benefits

Lying can cost you more than benefit loss

The application process for [Social Security disability](#) benefits can be lengthy and confusing without the right guidance. Many questions will be asked regarding your living arrangements, medical conditions and treatment, and sources of income. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is responsible for collecting and analyzing this information for your benefits claim.

The penalties in place for individuals found to be lying on their Social Security disability claims range from losing their benefits to heavy fines and even jail time. In one such case, a West Virginia woman concealed her income and living conditions from the SSA, allowing her to collect thousands in unnecessary disability benefits.

According to *The Lincoln Journal*, the woman collected over \$30,000 in SSA funds from March 2003 – June 2009 after telling the SSA she did not live with her husband when she actually did. If found guilty at trial, she could receive 3 years of probation, 5 years in prison, and a fine of \$250,000.



How Do I Make Sure I'm Giving Valid Details?

If you are unsure of any details of your Social Security disability case, you should seek the help of a professional Social Security Disability lawyer. Your lawyer will explain each part of the claim process, including determining if you are eligible for [Disability Insurance Benefits](#) (DIB) or [Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI).

Applying for DIB and SSI not only involves proving your disability, disclosing your living arrangements, medical status, and any sources of income, but also requires proof of your prior work history and “work credits” earned – all information your Social Security Disability lawyer can help you prepare and verify.

Lawyers at firms like LaVan & Neidenberg who specialize in Social Security Disability claims can assist you with the application process. Having the help of a professional who is well-versed in Social Security disability benefits may help reduce the risk of providing false or inconsistent information.

Don't let the future of your benefits become compromised! **Mistakes now can delay your benefits, cancel eligibility, or land you in jail.** If you're ever in doubt of how to proceed, you should seek the help of a professional. For trusted assistance when dealing with the Social Security Administration you should [consult with a Social Security Disability lawyer today](#) – 1-888-234-5758.

And, to learn more about the Social Security disability claims process, be sure to [request your free copy of our book](#), *Disability Benefits: Secrets Social Security Won't Tell You*.

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New Housing Program for Homeless Female Veterans

Female Soldiers: Forgotten Heroes

Veteran homelessness has been a rising problem throughout the duration of The Iraq War and recently a trend in the rise of female veteran homelessness has become cause for extra concern.

Reports from the Department of Veterans Affairs identify between 7,000 and 8,000 female veterans are homeless. These numbers may be higher as further study indicates that female veterans are less likely to seek help than their male counterparts and are 3.6 times more likely to become homeless than women who have never served in the military.

The continued increase of women in the military serving more front-line roles has also led to the increase of female veterans being afflicted with [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#), or PTSD, a common anxiety that affects people such as military veterans who have experienced traumatic experiences. Veterans of both genders may struggle with unemployment, difficulty in obtaining housing, and relationship issues upon their return. While there are many programs that are helping combat these issues for our veterans, many neglect the additional challenges faced by female veterans.

One state has developed a program, Female Soldiers: Forgotten Heroes (FS:FH) that aims to create new housing opportunities to homeless female veterans. **With an estimated 1.8 million female veterans across the US, over 15,000 of these reside in Connecticut with approximately 200-300 identified as homeless.** Connecticut's current state veteran homeless housing holds approximately 124 beds with less than 10 of these designated for women.

Organizations Step In to Help

Partnering with Homes for the Brave, a non-profit, 42-bed transitional home for homeless veterans, and Kicks for Nick, a charity network bringing soccer balls to the children of Iraq and Afghanistan, FS:FH will become the first female-oriented, 15-bed expansion of the Homes program.

Homes for the Brave is currently looking for property for the FS:FH housing complex and is looking to open its doors in 2011. Once established, the complex will not only mirror the services offered to the regular Homes residents such as safe housing, vocational training, job placement and medical assistance, but also specialized services for women.

NEW ADVANCES IN VETERAN DISABILITY TREATMENTS

REMOTE TREATMENT FOR PTSD

Many VA treatment centers have special programs designated to the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but they rely heavily on personal interaction between patient and doctor to achieve results. For veterans and soldiers who live hundreds or even thousands of miles from a treatment center, this therapy is sometimes out of the question. However, a new mobile treatment option is being tested that will allow video conferences between doctors and patients.

The telehealth system is a 8 x 20 foot transport container that houses 3 treatment rooms with the standard amenities of a normal clinic – minus the doctor. Video teleconferencing equipment will allow the doctor to establish a remote connection with the patient; cameras and monitors on both sides will capture and relay video and audio so the patient-doctor interaction can progress as if they were in the same room. Many doctors use physical data, such as a soldier's gait, to diagnose certain types of brain damage, and with the use of live video feeds, it is now possible for a doctor in the US to diagnose and evaluate a soldier in Iraq without stepping foot on a plane.

The treatment center is being tested at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington with another test scheduled to take place in the South Pacific – doctors in Honolulu will be able to treat Army Reserve soldiers in Iraq. Once successful tests are confirmed, the units will be developed for deployment at US military sites worldwide.

NURSE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR VA CARE

A new training program for nurses at the Medical College of Georgia has been developed to focus on creating nursing students who specialize on successful treatment of veterans in VA clinics and hospitals.

The **Dedicated Clinical Nurse Leader-Students to Veterans Program** partnered the MCG with the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center to create a specialized 3-rotation clinical schedule for masters-level clinical nurse leaders to specialize in longer-term involvement with groups of veterans. This longevity will result in a better understanding of the VA hospital system, as well as fewer medical errors.

A fundraising gala is scheduled for May 1st, 2010, at the Wilton Library in Wilton, CT to benefit the project and raise awareness. Donations are also being collected via postal mail and through their website at www.kickfornick.org/FemaleSoldiersForgottenHeroes.

LaVan & Neidenberg salutes the efforts of this wonderful organization and encourages our veterans to never be afraid to seek assistance when needed.

If you have questions or need assistance with your disability rating or claim, contact 1-888-234-5758.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EASTER SUNDAY – APRIL 4, 2010

The Easter Sunday date varies because it is determined using a calculated lunar calendar. It is the first Sunday approximately after the first full moon on or after the March equinox. Many Christians celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. Festivities include special church services, decorating eggs for Easter egg hunts, and special meals. Eggs, chicks, and rabbits are common symbols of the holiday as they symbolize the rebirth of nature and coming of the spring season.

WORLD HEALTH DAY – APRIL 7, 2010

On this day, various events at local, national and international levels take place to raise awareness of global health issues. This year's theme is "1000 cities – 1000 lives" which highlights city-level efforts to improve health.

Earth Day – April 22, 2010

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the celebration of Earth Day with the "Billion Acts of Green" program designed to encourage and identify environmental service projects that benefit the fight against climate change. Earth Day celebrations focus on improving environmental awareness and can involve something as simple as signing a petition for clean water.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- LaVan & Neidenberg has recently expanded to better serve our clients! We have added 2 new departments, the Correspondence and Communication Department to ensure timely delivery and filing of client disability claim documentation. We have also added the Prospective Client Relations Department to ensure timely communication with prospective clients who contact us through our website. We have also added new client liaisons, drivers who go directly to new clients' homes to pick up their paperwork - one in Tampa, FL and two in Atlanta, GA.

SIGN OUR PETITION FOR FREE MEDICAL RECORDS!

LaVan & Neidenberg is sponsoring a petition to change medical records fees in the State of Florida. Currently, patients are required to pay up to \$1 per page to obtain a copy of their own medical records. The Firm's legislative initiative proposes to **make medical records FREE for all individuals applying for disability benefits.**

Please join us in our fight and [sign our petition](#) today! Thank you for your support!

Putting Your Benefits Away

Can I deposit my SSA disability benefits into a savings account?

Depending on the benefit program you are enrolled in, you may need to keep an eye on your assets, as each program determines eligibility and use of funds differently.

If you are currently receiving monthly Social Security disability benefits due to a disabling condition that prevents you from working you are allowed to use those benefits as you see fit. Your monthly Disability Insurance Benefits (DIB) in most cases is the amount you would have received if you had retired at full retirement age. This amount can be reduced if you are receiving unemployment or workers' compensation at the same time.

Because these benefits are determined by the number of years you worked when able and how much money you paid into the system, these funds allow you to enjoy property ownership, a savings account, and stock investments without penalty.

If you are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits you are limited to a maximum of \$2,000 of countable assets. This includes, but is not limited to, real estate (aside from the primary residence), vehicles in excess of the primary transportation, funds in bank accounts in excess of necessary living expenses, and cash value of life insurance policies. Basically, anything not essential to daily life (house, car, money to pay bills, etc.) is considered a countable asset and would count against you in determining your SSI benefits. This is because the SSI program awards benefits based on financial need and does take into account your current and ongoing financial situation.

If you are on SSI you must be careful to watch your savings account and report your financial status in full, or you run the risk of having your benefits removed, or in severe cases facing fines or jail time.

To review your benefit status and determine whether or not you are allowed to accrue your benefits in a savings account, or to just have someone on your side to monitor your assets and make certain you are staying within the SSA guidelines for benefit continuation, you should talk to a [qualified Social Security Disability attorney](#).

[LaVan & Neidenberg](#) has attorneys experienced in all matters of Social Security disability and Supplemental Security Income benefits. [Contact our Social Security disability firm today](#) at **1-888-234-5758.**