



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Opens New National Hearing Center in St. Louis

Brings 200 Jobs to St. Louis

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today opened in St. Louis, Missouri the agency's fifth National Hearing Center (NHC). The St. Louis NHC is the largest in the nation and is co-located with two other new Social Security facilities -- the National Case Assistance Center (NCAC) and the Midwest Training Center. Together these three facilities will bring over 200 new federal jobs to St. Louis. The project, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, was completed in just ten months and is the fastest the General Services Administration has ever delivered a project of this size, quality, and type.

"The St. Louis NHC will help us reduce the backlog of disability cases in those areas of the country where citizens with disabilities are currently waiting far too long for a hearing decision," Commissioner Astrue said. "For the City of St. Louis and the State of Missouri, these facilities will bring new permanent federal jobs."

The St. Louis NHC will be staffed by 100 people -- 18 Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) and 82 support staff. The NHC uses state-of-the-art electronic video technology to hold disability hearings remotely throughout the country to reduce backlogs. St. Louis initially will hear disability cases for Cleveland, Ohio and Minneapolis, Minnesota -- cities with two of the most backlogged hearing offices in the nation. Social Security has additional NHCs in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Baltimore, Maryland, Falls Church, Virginia, and Chicago, Illinois.

The NCAC and Midwest Training Center will employ 102 people. The NCAC will provide decision-writing assistance to backlogged hearing offices throughout the U.S. The Midwest Training Center will enable the agency to train Midwest and western employees closer to home -- saving taxpayers money by reducing the travel costs associated with employee training.

"The new Social Security facilities in St. Louis are prime examples of Recovery Act dollars at work," said Commissioner Astrue. "I applaud the General Services Administration and the Social Security

staff who worked tirelessly to open these new facilities in record time. The result will be better service for disabled Americans and increased job opportunities for residents of the St. Louis area.”

Social Security’s administrative appeals operation, under the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, is the largest administrative judicial system in the world. ALJs conduct hearings and will issue approximately three-quarters of a million decisions this year. For additional information about Social Security’s hearings and appeals process, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/appeals.

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