

October 2008
NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION

This notice contains important information for you:

IF You apply for or receive retirement, survivors, or disability insurance benefits or Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) payments from Social Security;

OR IF You are the representative payee for an individual who receives Social Security benefits or SSI;

AND You have a visual impairment that substantially limits your ability to see, so that you require materials to be in an accessible format in order to participate in these programs.

A federal court has authorized a class action lawsuit against the Social Security Administration (SSA) on behalf of people with visual impairments who require communications from SSA to be in an accessible format in order to participate in the Social Security or SSI programs. The court has authorized two classes: If you have a visual impairment that substantially limits the major life activity of seeing and you (1) apply for or are receiving Social Security or SSI benefits, or (2) are the representative payee for a Social Security beneficiary or SSI recipient, then you are a member of at least one of the two classes. This means that the court's decision in this case may affect your rights. The case, called American Council of the Blind v. Astrue, No. C05-04696, is pending in the Federal district court in San Francisco, California.

The plaintiffs are asking the court to find that SSA has violated a federal law called the Rehabilitation Act. The Rehabilitation Act says disabled individuals cannot be denied meaningful access to Federal programs and benefits. Plaintiffs, who include the American Council of the Blind, are asking the court to order SSA to provide communications in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, electronic mail, computer disk, and audio recording to make sure that people with visual impairments have meaningful access to SSA's programs. This case does *not* include any claims for money damages.

This notice tells you about your right to intervene in this case, submit comments, and how to contact plaintiffs' class counsel. You do not have to intervene or take any action in response to this notice in order to be included in the class or affected by the outcome of the case. If you want to intervene or have questions about this case, you should contact class counsel listed below at either the toll-free 800 number or the email provided at the end of this notice by December 31, 2008.

The court would like maximum input from the class members. The same number and email may be used to provide class counsel with suggestions about how SSA can effectively communicate with people who have visual impairments. You should give class counsel your comments by December 31, 2008.

Please do not telephone the court, the court clerk's office, or SSA for information about this case. If you require this notice in an alternative format such as Braille, large font print, audio recording or computer disk, please leave your name, request and delivery address at the number or email listed below.

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