

Disability Analyst Position Description

What does a Disability Analyst do?

Disability Analysts work in an electronic environment to (1) gather information about applicants and their medical conditions, and (2) decide whether the applicants are or are not able to do substantial work in accordance with SSA policy. The gathering of evidence may be done electronically, by mail and by telephone. You will need to know what the applicant believes to be the reason he/she is unable to work and how that impairment(s) limits his/her activities. In addition, you will obtain information regarding their medical treatment, medical studies, treatment dates and locations. You will also be required to obtain information regarding an applicant's past work history and their level of education. You may contact not only the applicant, but also family members, employers, third parties (such as neighbors), doctors, facilities and hospitals where the applicant has been treated. In some instances, you will decide that additional evidence is needed beyond what is provided by their medical sources and you will request consultative examinations and/or studies/testing at government expense.

When the Analyst determines that sufficient evidence has been gathered, they would decide if the applicant's medical condition would be severe enough to prevent them from doing substantial work. In making this decision, the Analyst would consider the SSA policy, severity of the medical impairment(s), any physical or mental limitations imposed by the impairment(s), and the applicant's age, education, and past work experience.

The Analyst position requires a unique blend of medical knowledge and understanding of vocational issues. For example, the Analyst could review one case in which the medical condition was so severe that it would be reasonable to assume that anyone with that impairment severity would be unable to work, regardless of the vocational factors of age, education, and work skills. An example of such a case would be an applicant who had had a stroke that left him permanently paralyzed on one side of the body.

In another case, the Analyst might have to consider more than just the objective medical findings. An example of this type of situation would be an applicant who had had back surgery for a disk problem and now had minimal neurological abnormalities on a physical examination. The factors that would have to be considered in this case would include the severity of the applicant's symptoms, any restriction to the applicant's activities, the age and education of the applicant, and the type of work the claimant had performed previously. Taking into consideration all of these factors plus the medical findings, the Analyst would decide if the applicant would be unable to do substantial work for a period of a year or more.

Must I have a medical or rehabilitation counseling background to be eligible to apply?

No, Analysts are hired as Disability Analysts and are trained in the administrative, medical, and vocational aspects of the job. All Disability Analyst applicants must have a four-year degree from an accredited college or university. A specific major is not required, although a successful applicant must demonstrate the ability to learn highly technical legal and medical terminology. A successful Disability Analyst must also be able to think critically and analytically to make disability determinations.

The job of Disability Analyst requires excellent analytical and communication skills (verbal and written) to prepare concise but thorough written explanations to justify decisions. An ability to organize one's work and to handle a large volume of work is also a must. Disability applicants depend on Analysts to give accurate decisions as timely as possible.

What are the pay and benefits?

Currently, starting pay is at the yearly rate of \$55,555. If specified criteria are met, a Disability Analyst with a minimum of eighteen months of experience can progress to the Advanced Disability Analyst position to handle appellate level claims and receive an in-range salary increase.

Other progression opportunities are available if specified criteria are met, an Advanced Disability Analyst with a minimum of 24 months can progress to a Senior Disability Analyst if specified criteria are met. After a minimum of 30 months, an Advanced Disability Analyst can progress to an Advanced Senior Disability Analyst if specified criteria met. Promotional opportunities beyond those described, are available on a competitive basis.

Benefits are the same as for all North Carolina State employees, and that includes competitive health insurance plan for the employee unless a health maintenance plan is voluntarily selected. Vacation time is earned at the rate of 2.3 weeks per year for the first two years and increases 3 days per year at 2 years, 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, and 20 years, for a maximum of 5.15 weeks per year. Sick leave is accrued monthly at 8 hours per month. Please see www.ncgov.com for more information about state benefits.

When should I apply?

The NC DDS hires Disability Analysts in classes. You may apply any time a position is posted on the OSHR website if you already have a bachelor's degree. If you are still in school, we will accept an application for a posted position prior to your expected graduation as long as you will have graduated by the time the class for which the position was posted begins. **All college degree requirements must be completed before you actually begin work. Minimum Education and Experience required is a Bachelor's degree from an appropriately accredited institution; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.**

How will Disability Analysts be selected?

All Disability Analyst applicants who meet the educational requirement will be invited to complete a two-part screening tool prior to consideration for an interview. Both parts of the screening tool are timed and do not require previous knowledge of the disability program or medical terminology but will assess your ability to learn the types of information used on the job and your writing skills. Offers of employment will be made following interviews, reference checks, and federal credentialing.

What training would I receive?

You should expect to be in the classroom for the first three months. This class is an accelerated learning environment in which you would learn Social Security Law and Regulations as well as medical terminology and information about a number of more common impairments. For example, you would learn about ischemic heart disease -- what it is and how it might affect a person's ability to stand and walk, lift and carry, bend, stoop, kneel, etc. You would also learn about mental impairments as well as physical. For example, you would learn what bipolar disease is and how to evaluate the severity of the impairment and how it might affect a person's ability to concentrate, work with others, and sustain work, etc.

In month four of training, you should expect to receive a month of caseload management training while receiving actual cases assigned to you. After successful completion of the initial four-month training period, you would be assigned to a case processing unit and have additional cases assigned to you. At first, you will work very closely with a case consultant, but you will become more independent as your skills increase. You will learn how to obtain information from applicants and medical sources, how to manage a caseload, and how to make the decisions on your cases. During your first year as a Disability Analyst, your primary responsibility would be to learn this complex job so that you could serve your claimants well -- giving them accurate information and making the correct decisions on their cases as quickly as possible.

Where would I work?

All NC DDS employees are based in Raleigh, NC. Analysts participating in the Disability Analyst Training program are eligible to request a hybrid telework schedule after successfully completing the first 30 days of the training class for one day a week. If routine/recurrent telework is approved for a Disability Analyst once they have completed the training class, they must report to the DDS Worksite at least two days a week with a maximum of three days telework.

What are my hours?

The NC DDS Worksite is open Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Teleworking hours are available from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. After completion of 12-months as a Disability Analyst, an Analyst may be eligible to work overtime for pay or compensatory time pending availability.

Does this job require any travel?

No, Analysts rarely see applicants face-to-face. Their work is done by mail, phone, and computer. Analysts are based in an office in Raleigh; however, there is an opportunity for a hybrid telework schedule based on performance and position.

How can I tell if this is a job for me?

Here are some of the things that we think make a good Analyst:

Intellectual curiosity (Do you want to know more -- learn new things? But can you be satisfied at some point that you have sufficient information and stop gathering more?)

Sustained focus (Can you sustain attention for a lot of cases all day? Will the claimants you deal with at the end of the day receive as good service as if you had worked on their cases in the morning?)

Good communication skills (Can you adjust your style to communicate with people of varying educational levels? Can you prepare a concise, but thorough written explanation of your decisions?)

Ability to learn technical and medical information (Can you learn new material easily and use that information to solve problems/make decisions?)

Ability to work quickly and to change tasks (Can you work efficiently, and be organized in your approach to work? Can you work at a faster pace when needed? Can you handle interruptions and different tasks without losing focus?)

What are the physical and mental demands of the Analyst position?

This position requires reading detailed medical records, interviewing applicants by telephone about their medical conditions and past work, eliciting medical information from physicians by phone, inputting data into a computer, evaluating the facts in the cases, and is typically done while sitting at a desk in a cubicle with partial walls in a sometimes noisy environment. Other requirements of this work include:

- Sitting for prolonged periods
- Ability to perform keying of information on a computer
- Ability to navigate a variety of computer systems simultaneously
- Ability to use a computer system to input information into files and to read information in files
- Gross and fine manipulation involving paper, writing instruments, and a computer keyboard
- Ability to move to different locations within office complex (most of an Analyst's time is spent in his/her individual work cubicle and/or within the assigned case processing unit)
- Ability to communicate effectively, oral and written, in English
- Ability to scan written materials to select pertinent information
- Ability to read handwritten, typed and computerized information, including photocopied materials and faxed materials of varying print quality and legibility as well as materials sent to you on a computer system
- Ability to sustain attention to details and concentrate
- Ability to deal with several tasks simultaneously, to prioritize work, and to be flexible in dealing with conflicting demands
- Ability to work quickly and move rapidly from one task to another
- Ability to meet set production and quality requirements