

# LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

Information for Release

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## **NOSSCR COMES TO NASHVILLE TO TALK ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY**

*National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives will discuss best practices to help clients navigate appeals process.*

NASHVILLE, Tenn., July 18, 2007 –Tennessee ranks among the lowest in the nation for initial allowance of Social Security benefits. What many people don't know, however, is that appealing the initial decision can greatly increase your chances of being approved. The National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives will meet in Nashville July 23 for a training session to teach lawyers to how better navigate the appeals process.

“Nationally, about 38 percent of those who apply are approved,” said Dave Ettinger, an attorney with Legal Aid Society and a member of the NOSSCR board of directors. “In Tennessee that number is closer to 28 percent. But about 70 percent of those who make it to an administrative hearing are approved.”

According to Ettinger, to make it to the administrative hearing level can take more than two years and that long wait can be discouraging. Only one in three applicants makes it that far.

“That's the purpose of the NOSSCR session,” Ettinger said. “We want to help lawyers understand how to prepare for the process and to prepare their clients as well.” Currently, there are 160 lawyers registered to attend the event, which will cover the appeals process at the state and federal levels and include sessions on preparing clients to give testimony. Attending attorneys can receive CLE credit.

Founded in 1968, the Legal Aid Society is a private, not-for-profit organization governed by a local board of directors comprised of attorneys and members of the client population. Legal Aid Society provides free legal assistance in civil matters to people in 48 Middle Tennessee counties with a total eligible population of 382,000. It has offices in Nashville, Gallatin, Clarksville, Murfreesboro, Columbia, Tullahoma, Cookeville and Oak Ridge.