



24 **issue. If the Parties choose to use the NLMF to address disability**  
25 **processes, the policies and procedures of the NLMF will apply. If the**  
26 **parties agree to address disability processes through the NLMF, the**  
27 **committees and subcommittees referred to in this Article will report to the**  
28 **NLMF for appropriate action. Absent the NLMF, the NCD will forward**  
29 **recommendations to the Commissioner.**

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31 **B. The NCD will consist of eight (8) Union and eight (8) Agency members.**  
32 **This NCD will meet on a bimonthly basis in Baltimore, MD.**

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34 **C. The NCD will be briefed on all aspects and phases of the current disability**  
35 **process and new disability initiatives. Agency official(s) with decision**  
36 **making authority on disability issues shall conduct the briefings.**

37  
38 **D. The Union will be entitled to copies of all pertinent documents concerning**  
39 **disability initiatives in order to make informed recommendations and**  
40 **decisions.**

41  
42 **E. SSA will pay all travel and per diem for Union NCD members pursuant to**  
43 **Federal travel regulations and this agreement.**

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45 **Section 2. Subcommittees and Workgroups**

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47 **A. The Agency will invite the Union, at the appropriate General Committee or**  
48 **Council level, to name employees to serve as full participants in all existing**  
49 **and future subcommittees and workgroups.**

50

51 **B. Each subcommittee and workgroup will have equal Union and Agency**  
52 **appointed members. Union appointees will participate in site visits to**  
53 **evaluate pilot and testing initiatives. The Agency will pay for all travel and**  
54 **per diem for Union appointees, including Union appointee's participation in**  
55 **site visits to evaluate pilot(s) and testing initiatives, pursuant to all Federal**  
56 **travel regulations and this agreement.**

57

58 **C. No changes in policies and procedures that impact on employee work**  
59 **assignments and/or working conditions will be implemented until**  
60 **thoroughly piloted and tested by the parties. All pilots, disability initiatives**  
61 **and/or rollout of disability initiatives will be negotiated at the National level**  
62 **in accordance with this agreement.**

63

64 **D. The NCD will charter subcommittees and/or workgroups to develop pilot**  
65 **plans, criteria and evaluation mechanism for all piloted disability initiatives**  
66 **that impact on employee work assignments and/or working conditions.**  
67 **Such workgroups and/or subcommittees will have equal Union/Agency**  
68 **membership with a minimum of six (6) Union and six (6) Agency members.**

69

70 **E. The NCD shall establish the subcommittees identified in this section, as**  
71 **well as any additional subcommittees and/or workgroups determined to be**  
72 **necessary by the NCD:**

73 **1. Disability Claims Processes**

- 74 ○ **iClaims**
- 75 ○ **e-Dib**
- 76 ○ **Disability Direct Initiative**
- 77 ○ **Streamline Disability Applications**

78 **2. Disability Medical Development & Decisions**

- 79 ○ **Transfer of DDS Claims**
- 80 ○ **Disability Claims Manager (DCM)**
- 81 ○ **CDRs**
- 82 ○ **Systems**

83 **3. Hearings and Appeals**

- 84 ○ **Decision Writers**
- 85 ○ **Attorney Adjudicators**
- 86 ○ **Analysts**

87 **4. Ticket to Work (TWWIA)**

88 **5. Special Disability Workload (SDW)**

89 **6. Third Party Involvement**

90 **7. Roll of OQP**

91

92 **F. The NCD will establish a charter for each subcommittee within 120 days after**  
93 **the effective date of this agreement. Each subcommittee charter shall identify**  
94 **the following:**

- 95 ○ **Purpose**
- 96 ○ **Objectives**
- 97 ○ **Composition**
- 98 ○ **Leadership**
- 99 ○ **Phases and/or Deliverables**
- 100 ○ **Methodology**
- 101 ○ **Milestones and/or Completion Date**

102

103 **G. The subcommittees will be empowered to provide recommendations to the**  
104 **NCD on all matters before them. In addition to the chartered purpose and**  
105 **objectives, chartered subcommittees and workgroups will address the**  
106 **following issues in completing their assigned responsibilities and provide**  
107 **recommendations to the NCD:**

- 108 ○ **In-line and end-of-line quality assurance;**
- 109 ○ **Automation;**
- 110 ○ **Management Information Systems;**
- 111 ○ **Distribution of staff;**
- 112 ○ **Prevention of repetitive stress injuries and stress in the**  
113 **workplace;**
- 114 ○ **Training**

115

116 **H. Established committees shall commence within 90 days after the effective**  
117 **date of their charter.**

118

119 **I. Subcommittees and Workgroups will make recommendations to the NCD,**  
120 **and issue a report on consensus decisions. Each party may issue a report**  
121 **on issues which no consensus was reached. Copies of all such reports**  
122 **will be provided to the NLMF.**

123

124 **Section 3 – Current Disability Issues**

125

126 **A. Standardizing Appointments**

127 **Appointment times will be standardized based on a statistically valid**  
128 **national study that the Agency will complete of the amount of time that it**  
129 **takes to conduct various types of disability interviews. The results of the**  
130 **study will be provided the joint union-management**  
131 **workgroup/subcommittee which will propose to the Disability Committee**  
132 **standardized appointment times for different types of disability cases.**

133

134 **B. Increased Disability Workloads**

135       **The disability workloads will increase substantially in the future. As a**  
136       **result, a workgroup/subcommittee will review the staffing mix and position**  
137       **descriptions of current positions within components and will study**  
138       **whether alternative job assignments and staffing distributions would**  
139       **streamline the disability process and improve productivity. This review**  
140       **will also examine disability workloads in all components and**  
141       **subcomponents, including the PSC prototype involvement, the disability**  
142       **processing centers in the PSCs, ICTUs, field offices, etc. Results of the**  
143       **workgroup/subcommittee findings will be referred to the NLMF for**  
144       **appropriate decisions making.**

145       **C. Goals and Productivity Index Data**

146       **Decision writing and case workup times will be based on statistically valid**  
147       **office studies and not on a national basis. The result of each office study**  
148       **will be provided to the joint Union/Management workgroup which will**  
149       **propose fair and equitable goals and productivity index for each position in**  
150       **a hearing office.**

151       **D. Internet Disability Case Review**

152       **Management will make every reasonable effort to assign the task of**  
153       **reviewing and processing Internet disability cases and appeals to qualified**  
154       **personnel. SSA will make every reasonable effort to provide a defined**  
155       **period of scheduled time to reviewers to do this job. SSA will conduct a**

156 **statistically valid study to determine the average length of time that it takes**  
157 **to review and process different types of Internet disability claims and**  
158 **appeals. The results of the study will be used to determine how much time**  
159 **will be scheduled for reviewing and processing Internet disability claims**  
160 **and appeals.**

161

#### 162 **E. Performance Standards and Alignment Statements**

163 **The NCD will be assigned the task of studying and recommending**  
164 **alignment issues and performance standards as they relate to disability**  
165 **workloads. The NCD will recommend to the Commissioner, Agency goals**  
166 **regarding disability claims and appeals, and individual performance**  
167 **standards for those who process disability related workloads.**

168 **The committee will also consider the impact of factors that are beyond the**  
169 **direct control of unit employees such as variations in DDS times, medical**  
170 **examiner involvement, etc.**

171

#### 172 **Section 4 - Employee Disability Claims**

173 **The NLMF committee will address coordination and assistance for**  
174 **employees who file disability claims for themselves. The committee will**  
175 **address the OPM and SSA relationship with an employee filing a claim for**

176            **disability and explain to the employee the impact of filing the claim while**  
177            **still employed by the Agency.**

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