

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
ARKANSAS, HOT SPRINGS DIVISION

James Lucas v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration

Lucas · No. 6:25-cv-06100 · Decided April 16, 2026

SUMMARY

This Report and Recommendation addresses James Lucas’s appeal under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) from the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The United States Magistrate Judge recommends affirming the Commissioner’s decision, concluding that the ALJ’s residual functional capacity determination and vocational-expert hypothetical were supported by substantial evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, Hot Springs Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Spencer G. Singleton
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, Hot Springs Division
DECIDED	April 16, 2026
DOCKET	6:25-cv-06100
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The magistrate judge issued a Report and Recommendation recommending affirmance of the administrative decision.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's findings to determine whether they are supported by substantial evidence on the record as a whole. The court must affirm when substantial evidence supports the ALJ's decision, even if substantial evidence could support a contrary result or the court might have reached a different conclusion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	James Lucas v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's residual functional capacity determination.
2. Whether the ALJ erred by failing to include every limitation identified by state-agency psychological consultant Dr. Rachel Morrissey despite finding the assessment persuasive.
3. Whether the ALJ's hypothetical question to the vocational expert included all limitations supported by the record.

HOLDINGS

1. An ALJ is not required to adopt an entire medical opinion, even when the opinion is considered persuasive; the ALJ may accept some portions and reject or omit others when the RFC is otherwise supported by the record.
2. The ALJ's RFC determination was supported by substantial evidence and should be affirmed.
3. The hypothetical question fully set forth the impairments accepted by the ALJ and supported by the record; therefore, the vocational expert's testimony constituted substantial evidence supporting the finding that Plaintiff could perform other work.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The ALJ, however, bears the primary responsibility for making the RFC determination and for ensuring there is "some medical evidence" regarding the claimant's "ability to function in the workplace" that supports the RFC determination." (Discussion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged disability from ankylosing spondylitis, sciatic nerve damage, disc and neck problems, carpal tunnel syndrome, degenerative disc disease, osteoarthritis, chronic pain, and bipolar disorder. The ALJ found severe impairments including carpal tunnel syndrome, spondylosis, chronic pain syndrome, PTSD, generalized anxiety disorder, and depressive disorder, but determined that Plaintiff retained the residual functional capacity for restricted light work. Although the ALJ found Plaintiff unable to perform past relevant work, the vocational expert identified order caller, router, and price tagger marker jobs existing in significant numbers in the national economy.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed applications for DIB and SSI on June 22, 2022, alleging disability beginning February 26, 2022. The applications were denied initially and on reconsideration; following an April 9, 2024 administrative hearing,

the ALJ issued an unfavorable decision on July 18, 2024. Plaintiff filed this action on September 29, 2025, and the magistrate judge recommended that the ALJ's decision be affirmed, subject to the parties' opportunity to object under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Ramirez v. Barnhart, 292 F.3d 576, 583 (8th Cir. 2002)
- Johnson v. Apfel, 240 F.3d 1145, 1147 (8th Cir. 2001)
- Haley v. Massanari, 258 F.3d 742, 747 (8th Cir. 2001)
- Young v. Apfel, 221 F.3d 1065, 1068 (8th Cir. 2000)
- Cox v. Apfel, 160 F.3d 1203, 1206 (8th Cir. 1998)
- Stormo v. Barnhart, 377 F.3d 801, 807 (8th Cir. 2004)
- Krogmeier v. Barnhart, 294 F.3d 1019 (8th Cir. 2002)
- Lauer v. Apfel, 245 F.3d 700, 703-04 (8th Cir. 2001)
- McKinney v. Apfel, 228 F.3d 860, 862 (8th Cir. 2000)
- Austin v. Kijakazi, 52 F.4th 723, 729 (8th Cir. 2022)
- Goff v. Barnhart, 421 F.3d 785, 794 (8th Cir. 2005)
- Pickney v. Chater, 96 F.3d 294, 296 (8th Cir. 1996)
- Eichelberger v. Barnhart, 390 F.3d 584, 590 (8th Cir. 2004)
- Thompson v. Nix, 897 F.2d 356, 357 (8th Cir. 1990)