

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Griffin M. B. v. Martin O'Malley

Griffin M. B. · No. 2:24-cv-00056 ADS · Decided March 14, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California reviewed the denial of Griffin M. B.’s application for Supplemental Security Income benefits. The court held that the Administrative Law Judge properly considered the State Agency consultants’ mental assessments, adequately assessed the residual functional capacity, and posed a complete hypothetical to the vocational expert. The Commissioner’s decision was affirmed, and the action was dismissed with prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Autumn D. Spaeth
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	March 14, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-00056 ADS
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying his application for Supplemental Security Income benefits.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's decision under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), affirming factual findings supported by substantial evidence and based on application of the proper legal standards.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district-court memorandum opinion; precedential status unknown
PARTIES	Griffin M. B. v. Martin O'Malley, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- judicial review of agency action
- administrative law
- agency adjudication
- disability definition
- ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security

administrative law

disability benefits

judicial review of agency action

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ properly considered the mental assessments of the non-examining state-agency psychological and medical consultants.
2. Whether the ALJ's residual functional capacity assessment was supported by substantial evidence and properly incorporated the assessed mental limitations.
3. Whether the ALJ posed a complete hypothetical question to the vocational expert.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ properly considered the opinions of Drs. Foster-Valdez and Ying by addressing their supportability and consistency and reasonably finding them persuasive.
2. The ALJ's RFC assessment was supported by substantial evidence and adequately incorporated the mental limitations assessed by the state-agency consultants.
3. The ALJ posed a complete hypothetical question to the vocational expert because the hypothetical incorporated the limitations properly included in the RFC.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"An RFC is "an assessment of an individual's ability to do sustained work-related physical and mental activities in a work setting on a regular and continuing basis.""

"The RFC does not need to directly correspond to a specific medical opinion; rather, "the ALJ is responsible for translating and incorporating clinical findings into a succinct RFC.""

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff applied for SSI based primarily on mild intellectual delay and had past work as a janitor, shoe store employee, and busser. Psychological evaluations found borderline-to-low-average intellectual functioning and an ability to understand, remember, and carry out short, simple instructions, while state-agency consultants assessed an ability to perform simple instructions and tasks. Plaintiff testified that he could perform household chores, use public transportation, handle money, and work, although he had difficulty obtaining employment. The ALJ determined that Plaintiff had severe borderline intellectual functioning but retained the residual functional capacity for work at all exertional levels with limitations to simple repetitive tasks, no assembly-line work, and occasional workplace changes.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff applied for SSI benefits, and the application was denied initially and on reconsideration. After a hearing before an administrative law judge, the ALJ found Plaintiff not disabled. The Appeals Council denied review, making the ALJ's decision the Commissioner's final decision. Plaintiff then filed this action, and the parties consented to disposition by a United States Magistrate Judge.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Lester v. Chater, 81 F.3d 821, 828 n.5 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Mayes v. Massanari, 276 F.3d 453, 458-59 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Reddick v. Chater, 157 F.3d 715, 725 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Garrison v. Colvin, 759 F.3d 995, 1010 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Connett v. Barnhart, 340 F.3d 871, 874 (9th Cir. 2003)
- Vincent ex rel. Vincent v. Heckler, 739 F.2d 1393, 1394-95 (9th Cir. 1984)
- Howard ex rel. Wolff v. Barnhart, 341 F.3d 1006, 1012 (9th Cir. 2003)
- Valentine v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 574 F.3d 685, 690 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Hill v. Astrue, 698 F.3d 1153, 1161-62 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Rounds v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 807 F.3d 996, 1006 (9th Cir. 2015)
- Stubbs-Danielson v. Astrue, 539 F.3d 1169, 1174 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Bayliss v. Barnhart, 427 F.3d 1211, 1217 (9th Cir. 2005)