

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Martinez v. Commissioner of Social Security

Martinez · No. 1:25-cv-00375-CDB (SS) · Decided April 2, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California granted Erin Martinez’s application to proceed in forma pauperis in an action seeking review of the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of disability benefits. The court found the complaint timely and cognizable under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) and directed the clerk to issue a summons, scheduling order, and consent or reassignment documents.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	April 2, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00375-CDB (SS)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed an action seeking review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying disability benefits and moved to proceed in forma pauperis.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	At the in forma pauperis screening stage, the court must dismiss a complaint that is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. The court also considered whether the complaint stated a cognizable claim for judicial review and whether the action was timely under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).
PARTIES	Erin Martinez v. Commissioner of Social Security

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether Plaintiff satisfied the requirements to proceed in forma pauperis under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a).
- Whether the complaint was subject to dismissal under the in forma pauperis screening provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915.
- Whether the complaint timely and sufficiently invoked jurisdiction for judicial review of the Commissioner's final decision under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

HOLDINGS

- 1. Plaintiff satisfied the requirements of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a), and the application to proceed in forma pauperis should be granted.
- 2. The complaint states a cognizable claim for review of the Commissioner's administrative decision and is not subject to dismissal at this stage under 28 U.S.C. § 1915.
- 3. The action was timely and the court has jurisdiction because Plaintiff filed within the applicable sixty-day period after the Appeals Council's January 30, 2025 denial and alleged residence in Kern County, California.

KEY QUOTATIONS

- “The Court may authorize the commencement of an action without prepayment of fees “by a person who submits an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets such person...possesses (and) that the person is unable to pay such fees or give security therefor.”” (at 1)*
- “Any individual after any final decision of the Commissioner made after a hearing to which he was a party, irrespective of the amount in controversy, may obtain a review of such decision by a civil action commenced within sixty” (at 3)*

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Erin Martinez sought Social Security disability benefits, but the Administrative Law Judge denied the claim. The Appeals Council denied review on January 30, 2025. Martinez filed a complaint in the Eastern District of California on March 31, 2025, claimed residence in Kern County, California, and sought to proceed without paying the filing fee.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Appeals Council denied Plaintiff's request for review of the Administrative Law Judge's decision on January 30, 2025. Plaintiff filed this action on March 31, 2025, within the applicable filing period, and submitted an application to proceed in forma pauperis. The court found the complaint cognizable, granted the application, and directed the Clerk to issue the summons, scheduling order, and reassignment documents.

DISPOSITION

other

OPINION

(SS) Martinez v. Commissioner of Social Security

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 11 ERIN MARTINEZ, Case No. 1:25-cv-00375-CDB (SS) 12 Plaintiff, ORDER GRANTING APPLICATION TO

PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS AND

13 v. DIRECTING CLERK OF THE COURT TO

ISSUE SUMMONS, SCHEDULING ORDER,

14 COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL AND CONSENT OR REQUEST FOR

SECURITY, REASSIGNMENT DOCUMENTS

15 Defendant. (Doc. 2) 16 17 18 Plaintiff Erin Martinez (“Plaintiff”) initiated this action with the filing of a complaint on

19 March 31, 2025, seeking review of the final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security
20 denying disability benefits. (Doc. 1). Plaintiff did not pay the filing fee and instead filed an 21
application to proceed in forma pauperis (or “IFP”) pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915. (Doc. 2). For 22
the following reasons, the Court finds issuance of the new case documents and Plaintiff’s 23
application to proceed in forma pauperis appropriate. 24 I. Proceeding in forma pauperis 25 The
Court may authorize the commencement of an action without prepayment of fees “by 26 a person
who submits an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets such person...possesses 27 (and)
that the person is unable to pay such fees or give security therefor.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). Here, the
Court has reviewed Plaintiff’s application and financial status affidavit (Doc. 2) and finds 1 the
requirements of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) are satisfied. 2 II. Screening Requirement 3 When a party
seeks to proceed in forma pauperis, the Court is required to review the 4 complaint and shall
dismiss the complaint, or portion thereof, if it is “frivolous, malicious or fails 5 to state a claim
upon which relief may be granted; or...seeks monetary relief from a defendant who 6 is immune
from such relief.” 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(b) & (e)(2). A plaintiff’s claim is frivolous “when 7 the facts
alleged rise to the level of the irrational or the wholly incredible, whether or not there are 8
judicially noticeable facts available to contradict them.” *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 32-33
9 (1992). 10 III. Pleading Standards 11 A complaint must include a statement affirming the court’s
jurisdiction, “a short and plain 12 statement of the claim showing the pleader is entitled to relief;
and...a demand for the relief sought, 13 which may include relief in the alternative or different
types of relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a). The 14 purpose of the complaint is to give the defendant fair
notice of the claims, and the grounds upon 15 which the complaint stands. *Swierkiewicz v. Sorema*
N.A., 534 U.S. 506, 512 (2002). As set forth 16 by the Supreme Court, Rule 8: 17 ... does not
require detailed factual allegations, but it demands more than an unadorned, the-defendant-
unlawfully-harmed-me accusation. A pleading that offers 18 labels and conclusions or a formulaic
recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do. Nor does a complaint suffice if it tenders
naked assertions devoid of 19 further factual enhancement. 20 *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662,
678-79 (2009) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). 21 Vague and conclusory
allegations do not support a cause of action. *Ivey v. Board of Regents*, 673 22 F.2 266, 268 (9th
Cir. 1982). The *Iqbal* Court clarified further, 23 [A] complaint must contain sufficient factual

matter, accepted as true, to “state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 24 544, 570 (2009). A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged. *Id.* at 556. The plausibility standard is not akin to a “probability requirement,” but it asks for more than a sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully. *Id.* Where a complaint pleads facts that are “merely consistent with” a defendant’s liability, it “stops short of the line between possibility and plausibility of “entitlement to relief.” 1 and determine whether the facts would make the plaintiff entitled to relief; legal conclusions are 2 not entitled to the same assumption of truth. (*Id.*). The Court may grant leave to amend a complaint 3 to the extent deficiencies of the complaint can be cured by an amendment. *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 4 F.3d 1122, 1127-28 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc). 5

IV. Discussion and Analysis 6 Plaintiff seeks review of a decision by the Commissioner of Social Security denying 7 disability benefits. (Doc. 1). The Court may have jurisdiction pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), 8 which provides: 9 Any individual after any final decision of the Commissioner made after a hearing to which he was a party, irrespective of the amount in controversy, may obtain a review 10 of such decision by a civil action commenced within sixty days after the mailing to him of such decision or within such further time as the Commissioner may allow. 11 Such action shall be brought in the district court of the United States for the judicial district in which the plaintiff resides or has his principal place of business...The 12 court shall have power to enter, upon the pleadings and transcript of the record, a judgment affirming, modifying, or reversing the decision of the Commissioner of 13 Social Security, with or without remanding the cause for a rehearing. 14 (*Id.*). Except as provided by statute, “[n]o findings of fact or decision of the Commissioner shall 15 be reviewed by any person, tribunal, or governmental agency.” 42 U.S.C. § 405(h). 16 On January 30, 2025, the Appeals Council denied Plaintiff’s request for review of the 17 decision of the Administrative Law Judge denying Plaintiff’s claim for benefits. (Doc. 1, ¶ 2). As 18 such, Plaintiff has 60 days from January 30, 2025, to file a civil action, notwithstanding any 19 additional time due to mail service. (*Id.*) (“60 days, plus five (5) days for delivery by mail, to file 20 a Civil Action.”); 42 U.S.C. § 405(g); 20 C.F.R. § 404.981. On March 31, 2025, Plaintiff filed a 21 complaint in this Court seeking judicial review of the Commissioner’s final decision. (See *id.*). 22 Thus, Plaintiff’s complaint is timely. Plaintiff claims residency in Kern County, California. (Doc. 23 1, ¶ 4). Therefore, the Court has jurisdiction over this action. 24 /// 25 26 /// 27 1} V. Conclusion and Order 2 Plaintiff’s complaint states a cognizable claim for review of the administrative decision 3 | denying Social Security benefits. Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Plaintiff’s 4 | application to proceed in forma pauperis (Doc. 2) is GRANTED. The Clerk of Court is directed to 5 | issue the following: 1) a Summons; 2) the Scheduling Order; 3) the Order re Consent or Request 6 | for Reassignment; and 4) a Consent to Assignment or Request for Reassignment form. 7 | IT IS ORDERED. | Dated: _ April 2, 2025 | nnd Rr

9 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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