

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON

Betsy Richards v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration

Richards · No. 6:25-cv-00133-SB · Decided December 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Oregon granted Betsy Richards’s unopposed application for \$7,051.52 in attorney’s fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act. The order explains that the award belongs to the claimant, is subject to Treasury Offset Program deductions, and may be paid to her attorney under the assignment if no offset applies.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Oregon
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stacie F. Beckerman
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Oregon
DECIDED	December 23, 2025
DOCKET	6:25-cv-00133-SB
DISPOSITION	approved
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court considered Plaintiff's unopposed application for attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court order with no reported citation or stated precedential designation.
PARTIES	Betsy Richards v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration

TOPICS

attorney fees administrative law civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security Administrative Law Attorney's Fees

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to an award of \$7,051.52 in attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act.

2. Whether an EAJA fee award belongs to the Social Security claimant and is subject to offset under the Treasury Offset Program despite the claimant's assignment of the award to counsel.
3. Whether the award could be made payable and mailed to Plaintiff's attorney if Plaintiff had no debt subject to offset.

HOLDINGS

1. The court granted Plaintiff's unopposed application for \$7,051.52 in attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act.
2. An EAJA fee award belongs to the Social Security claimant and is subject to offset under the Treasury Offset Program.
3. Because Plaintiff assigned her right to court-awarded EAJA fees to her attorney, the award may be made payable and mailed to counsel if Plaintiff does not owe debt subject to offset.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Pursuant to Astrue v. Ratliff, 560 U.S. 586, 596-98 (2010), district courts' EAJA fee awards belong to the social security claimant and are subject to offset under the Treasury Offset Program." (Page 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Betsy Richards applied for \$7,051.52 in attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act. Her application was unopposed, and she had assigned to her attorney the right to any court-awarded EAJA fees. The court ordered that the award belonged to Richards, remained subject to offset for qualifying debt, and could be paid to her attorney if no offset applied.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

After the underlying Social Security litigation, Plaintiff filed an unopposed application for \$7,051.52 in EAJA attorney's fees. The district court granted the application and addressed the effect of Plaintiff's assignment of the fee award to her attorney and any potential Treasury Offset Program debt.

DISPOSITION

approved

CASES CITED

- Astrue v. Ratliff, 560 U.S. 586, 596-98 (2010)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON BETSY RICHARDS, Case No. 6:25-cv-00133-SB Plaintiff, ORDER v. COMMISSIONER SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, Defendant. BECKERMAN, U.S. Magistrate Judge. The Court

hereby GRANTS Plaintiff Betsy Richards' ("Plaintiff") unopposed application (ECF No. 16) for \$7,051.52 in attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act ("EAJA"), 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d).

Pursuant to *Astrue v. Ratliff*, 560 U.S. 586, 596-98 (2010), district courts' EAJA fee awards belong to the social security claimant and are subject to offset under the Treasury Offset Program. Consequently, this Court's EAJA fee award belongs to Plaintiff but is subject to offset. Plaintiff assigned to her attorney the right to any court-awarded EAJA fees.

Thus, if Plaintiff does not owe debt that is subject to offset, the Court's EAJA fee award shall be made payable and mailed to Plaintiff's attorney: John E. Haapala, Jr., 401 E 10th Ave., Suite 240, Eugene, Oregon 97401. IT IS SO ORDERED. DATED this 23rd day of December, 2025. HON. STACIE F. BECKERMAN United States Magistrate Judge PAGE 2 — ORDER