

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Stacey Masako Hayward v. Commissioner of Social Security

Hayward · No. 2:25-cv-01606-DC-DMC · Decided December 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California adopted the parties’ stipulation awarding Plaintiff Stacey Masako Hayward \$8,200 in attorney’s fees and expenses under the Equal Access to Justice Act following remand of her Social Security action. The order provides that the fees are payable to Plaintiff, subject to any federal-debt offset, and may be paid directly to her counsel if no offset applies; no costs were awarded under 28 U.S.C. § 1920.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Dena Coggins
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	December 23, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-01606-DC-DMC
DISPOSITION	approved
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review of a final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security. After the action was remanded to the Commissioner for further proceedings, the parties stipulated to an award of attorney's fees and expenses under the Equal Access to Justice Act.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Stacey Masako Hayward v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- attorney fees
- costs
- judicial review of agency action
- administrative law
- remedies

PRACTICE AREAS

- administrative law
- civil procedure
- remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should adopt the parties' stipulation awarding Plaintiff \$8,200.00 in attorney's fees and expenses under the Equal Access to Justice Act.
2. Whether costs should be awarded under 28 U.S.C. § 1920.
3. How any EAJA fee payment should be made in light of potential federal-debt offsets and the assignment of fees to Plaintiff's counsel.

HOLDINGS

1. The court adopted the parties' stipulation and awarded Plaintiff \$8,200.00 in attorney's fees and expenses under 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d).
2. No costs were awarded under 28 U.S.C. § 1920.
3. EAJA fees are payable to Plaintiff, but the government may pay Plaintiff's counsel directly if the Treasury determines that Plaintiff owes no federal debt; any assignment remains subject to an allowable federal-debt offset.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Stacey Masako Hayward filed an action seeking review of a final decision by the Commissioner of Social Security. The court remanded the matter for further proceedings, after which the parties agreed that Plaintiff should receive \$8,200.00 in attorney's fees and expenses under the EAJA and no costs under 28 U.S.C. § 1920.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action on June 10, 2025. On November 26, 2025, the court remanded the matter to the Commissioner for further proceedings under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). The parties then filed a stipulation requesting an EAJA award of \$8,200.00 and no costs under 28 U.S.C. § 1920, which the court adopted.

DISPOSITION

approved

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The matter had already been remanded to the Commissioner for further proceedings. This order does not issue additional remand instructions.

CASES CITED

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

OPINION

Plaintiff, 13 v. ORDER ADOPTING THE PARTIES' STIPULATION FOR THE AWARD OF 14
COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL ATTORNEY'S FEES AND EXPENSES SECURITY, UNDER
THE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE 15 ACT Defendant. 16 (Doc. No. 19) 17 18 On June 10,
2025, Plaintiff Stacey Masako Hayward filed this action seeking review of a 19 final decision of
Defendant Commissioner of Social Security.

(Doc. No. 1.) On November 26, 20 2025, the matter was remanded to the Commissioner of Social
Security for further proceedings 21 pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). (Doc. No. 18.) On December
17, 2025, the parties filed a 22 stipulation with the court in which the parties agree that Plaintiff
shall be awarded attorney's fees 23 and expenses under the Equal Access to Justice Act ("EAJA"),
28 U.S.C. § 2412(d), in the 24 amount of \$8,200.00, and no costs under 28 U.S.C. § 1920.

(Doc. No. 19.) 25 Good cause appearing, and pursuant to the parties' December 17, 2025
stipulation, the 26 court orders as follows: 27 1. Pursuant to the EAJA, 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d),
Plaintiff is awarded attorney's fees 28 and expenses in the amount of \$8,200.00; 1 2. No costs are
awarded under 28 U.S.C. § 1920; 2 3.

After the issuance of this order, the government shall consider the assignment of 3 the EAJA
attorney's fees to Plaintiff's counsel; 4 a. Pursuant to the decision in *Astrue v. Ratliff*, 560 U.S. 586
(2010), any such 5 assignment will depend on whether the attorney's fees are subject to any 6
offset allowed under the United States Department of Treasury's ("the 7 DOT") Offset Program; 8
b. Fees shall be made payable to Plaintiff, but if the DOT determines that 9 Plaintiff does not owe
a federal debt, then the government shall cause the 10 payment of attorney's fees to be made
directly to Plaintiffs counsel, 11 Francesco Paulo Benavides; and 12 4.

Whether the payment of attorney's fees is made payable to Plaintiff or to her 13 counsel, the check
will be mailed to Plaintiff's counsel's mailing address at: 14 Francesco Paulo Benavides Law
Offices of Francesco 15 1990 N. California Blvd., 8th Floor 16 Walnut Creek, CA 94596 17 IT IS
SO ORDERED. 18 Dated: _ December 22, 2025 19 Dena Coggins United States District Judge 20
21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28