

**Justification for Non-Substantive Changes for
Electronic Records Express (ERE) Third Party
OMB No. 0960-0767**

Background

SSA currently uses Electronic Records Express (ERE) Third Party to provide appointed representatives (ARs) with online access to case information, documents, and digital audio hearing recordings contained in disability claimants' electronic folders (eFolders). SSA grants the access to ERE when a field office (FO) or hearing office (HO) processes a Form SSA-1696, Claimant's Appointment of Representative (OMB No. 0960-0527). ERE Third-Party also allows ARs to view status reports for cases pending at the initial, reconsideration, hearing, and appeals levels. Additionally, ARs can upload documents to and download documents from an eFolder, through access to the Appeals and Appointed Representative Services (AARPS).

The current AARPS application enables SSA to provide ARs with a list of disability claimants for whom the AR's Form SSA-1696 has been processed (i.e. the ARs appointments). AARPS also allows ARs to view and download fee payment information for payments made by SSA from claimants past due benefits when SSA has determined the claimant is disabled and there is an approved fee agreement or fee petition. Additionally, ARs can use AARPS to access and review their business information on file with SSA.

Currently, we allow appointed representatives to access AARPS either through our Business Services Online portal, with authentication through SSA's Integrated Registration Services (IRES, OMB No. 0960-0626), or through an appointed representative account through SSA's eAccess authentication (OMB No. 0960-0789). This dual access requires respondents accessing AARPS to navigate through one of the two authentication platforms, then choose to access ERE, and, finally, access the AARPS screens. This is a burdensome process, and the appointed representatives requested that we simplify it to ensure they can access necessary information regarding the claimants they serve faster.

The Appointed Representative Online Services (AROS)

SSA is implementing an IT modification to replace the current AARPS screens with the new Appointed Representative Online Services (AROS) screens. The new AROS screens will also replace the current the access points to the screens, and to provide a modern platform and user interface for the ARs.

AROS will consolidate actions into a single interface and reduce navigation steps for ARs and their staff, to provide access to the information available in the current ERE Third-Party. We will use eAccess authentication through Login.gov and ID.me (OMB No. 0960-0789) to allow authentication for respondents accessing AROS.

In the initial AROS release, SSA will provide access to the current AARPS case information via a dashboard, case listing pages, and claimant details pages. AROS will also provide the ability to download the Hearings and Appeals status reports currently available via ERE Third-Party screens outside of AARPS. In addition, AROS will also provide access to the business information and fee payment details as they currently appear in AARPS. AROS will not modify the appearance or data on the current screens.

Note: We will add eFolder access and other current ERE Third-Party functionalities to AROS through subsequent releases.

We are requesting OMB approval of this IT modification Change Request by COB, **October 9, 2026**, to ensure we can implement our initial release to a limited number of ARs on October 17, 2026.

During the initial release, we will simultaneously use both AROS and AARPS screens; however, we expect to implement AROS to all ARs by December 12, 2026, after which we will retire the current AARPS screens since AROS will replace them.

Revisions to the Information Collection

- **Change #1:** The new AROS screens will provide case information in a dashboard, case listing pages, and claimant details pages. AROS will present some of this information in a dashboard view, enabling ARs to quickly see the most recent changes to specific case information. Additionally, AROS will display case information on case listing pages, allowing ARs to access and filter case details directly within the application, rather than requiring the downloading of a spreadsheet.

Justification #1: We are replacing the old ERE/AARPS screens with the new AROS screens. We currently provide the case information through ERE Third Party screens as header information on the eFolder page and in case status report spreadsheet downloads. To access this information, ARs must navigate to the eFolder page to view details for an individual claimant's case or download a status report for all cases they represent at an adjudicative level (initial/reconsideration, hearings, and appeals).

Unlike the current screens, the AROS screens will provide the same case information available via ERE Third-Party, but with a more user-friendly interface that supports search, sorting, and filtering.

- **Change #2:** The new AROS screens will provide access to business information and fee payments through a single portal for conducting business with SSA on behalf of the claimants. To support this vision, the business information and fee payment details currently available in AARPS will be integrated into AROS. AROS will not modify the appearance or data on these screens.

Justification #2: The current ERE/AARPS screens also provide this information; however, the ARs need to navigate through several other ERE Third Party screens to access it. The new AROS screens will streamline this process for the ARs.

We will implement these revisions following OMB approval and prior to our initial AROS release, which is scheduled for **October 17, 2026**, which will only allow access to AROS to a limited number of ARs as we continue to test the new screens. We expect to fully implement the AROS screens on December 12, 2026. Therefore, we are requesting OMB approval of this Change Request by **October 9, 2026**.

As the new AROS screens are replacing the current AARPS screens, we do not anticipate any change in the overall burden for these screens. While we note that the streamlining of the authentication process and the access points will not significantly affect the overall burden, the AROS screens will still make it easier for the ARs to access the information electronically.

Terms of Clearance

OMB placed the following Terms of Clearance on this Information Collection when they last approved it on 10/19/23 for OMB 0960-0767:

- **Term #1: The agency made clarifying edits to the supporting statement and revised the burden estimate .**

SSA response: SSA made clarifying edits to the Supporting Statement and revised the burden estimate Prior to the triannual renewal. We have maintained these revisions in the submitted documentation.

- **Term #2: Prior to triannual renewal, the agency will merge this information collection with 0960-0753.**

SSA response: SSA is in the process of merging this information collection with 0960-0753, and we will submit that combined information collection under 0960-0753 by the end of September.

Note: we will include the above-mentioned revisions to replace AARPS with AROS in the combined ICR. We will discontinue the ICR for 0960-0767 once OMB approves this Change Request.