

GUIDE 10 / SUBMIT AND FOLLOW UP

ORA filing and follow-up walkthrough

Prepare files, choose the right starting route, review your application, and keep a reliable record after submission.

What you will leave with: Complete a careful filing session and distinguish saved work, agency processing, and confirmed submission.

Use this guide with current official instructions. Complete worksheets privately; do not send sensitive information through the website.

Choose your starting route before signing in

OPM's current FERS disability instructions use the Online Retirement Application, or ORA. If you are a current federal employee, contact your agency HR office to start the disability retirement process. If separated, begin through ORA's former-federal-employee options and select the disability application. Do not use the older instruction to choose paper routing solely because more than 31 days have passed. Use OPM's official website links and the instructions displayed for your situation.

1. Confirm current or former-employee status using your personnel record. Record any separation date and the one-year OPM receipt deadline.
2. For an HR-initiated application, supply a personal email you can retain after separation and check for the official invitation.
3. For a former-employee application, follow the ORA account and Login.gov identity-verification instructions. Have identity documents available privately.
4. Use the platform Help page for technical assistance. Never give your password, one-time authentication code, or signature PIN to a consultant.

Prepare a filing-session folder

Collect the files before starting a long session. PDF copies should open correctly, remain legible at normal zoom, include all pages, and use clear filenames. Check the live platform for file size, file type, upload category, and certification requirements; these can change. This walkthrough describes preparation and quality control rather than promising that every screen label or order will stay the same.

- Applicant statement and any continuation pages, with corresponding question or item labels.
- Supervisor, physician, and agency documents; track missing contributions and ask the responsible office how they must be supplied.
- Relevant medical evidence, including older history when needed to explain the condition. Do not treat a past-year-only rule as universal.
- SSDI application receipt or other required evidence of the Social Security application.
- Applicable service, marital, court-order, military, insurance, and beneficiary documents requested for your individual circumstances.

Current evidence matters. SF 3112 asks for recent diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment information; it does not say to discard all historical records. Ask your provider for an individualized update when the existing

record does not describe your present restrictions or expected duration.

Work through each section deliberately

1. Review personal contact and service information against source documents. Flag discrepancies for HR rather than guessing or replacing official data without explanation.
2. Read retirement and benefit-election questions carefully. Disability documentation and insurance, survivor, or tax choices are separate decisions; obtain the relevant benefits or tax guidance before certifying an uncertain election.
3. Enter your applicant answers in the requested sections. Use the statement workbook to connect symptoms, actual duties, frequency, duration, and work effects. Identify continuation pages clearly.
4. Upload each file into its intended category. Open or preview the uploaded version if available, then compare its filename and page count with your private tracker.
5. Review every unanswered item. Use truthful explanations where the platform permits them rather than choosing an inaccurate response to get past a required field.
6. Complete the requested certifications only after reviewing the entire package. A saved draft or completed identity check is not the same as submission.

Handle missing items and technical problems

Fictional worked example

Taylor uploads the physician report and sees a saved draft, but no submission confirmation. Taylor records the draft status, finishes the remaining certifications, and saves the resulting confirmation. When an agency form remains outstanding, Taylor contacts the responsible HR official rather than labeling the missing document "included."

If a deadline is near, request official instructions immediately. Save a technical support ticket, the time, the error message, and the steps attempted, using screenshots that do not expose sensitive information. A support ticket does not automatically extend the filing deadline. Do not improvise a mailing address or assume that another delivery method is accepted without official direction. If you cannot resolve a deadline problem promptly, seek qualified legal advice.

Keep a submission and correspondence record

Your private worksheet

Route used and official instructions checked on: _____. HR or OPM contact responsible for the next stage: _____.

Session date: _____. Sections reviewed: _____. Unresolved questions before certification: _____.

Files transmitted: filename ____ / document date ____ / page count ____ / upload category ____.

Status shown after completing the process: _____. Confirmation or reference number stored privately at: _____. Date and time: _____.

Follow-up log: message received ____ / what it requests ____ / response deadline ____ / person responsible ____ / response sent ____ / proof saved _____.

After filing: monitor without assuming an outcome

☐ I saved a complete application copy and the actual confirmation, not only a dashboard screenshot of a draft.

☐ I know whether the next step belongs to me, HR, payroll, or OPM.

☐ My personal email and mailing address are accurate and I monitor official requests.

☐ I calendar every evidence request or decision deadline immediately and keep the original notice.

☐ I send supplements only through the authorized process and label whether they add information or replace a previous version.

Keep a factual communication log and use the contact route identified by your agency or OPM. Avoid repeated duplicate submissions unless requested. Processing duration varies, and a received application has not necessarily been medically adjudicated. This guide covers an initial application; a denial, proposed removal, or appeal deadline calls for a separate review of the notice and, where appropriate, an attorney.

Official sources

OPM - FERS disability eligibility and current application routing · OPM - Online Retirement Application · OPM - SF 3112 supporting disability documentation · 5 CFR 844.201 - Application requirements and time limits

Reviewed October 14, 2026. Check current official sources before acting.

TFDR provides independent non-attorney education. These resources are not official forms, legal advice, medical opinions, or individualized tax advice. You prepare and submit your own application. OPM determines eligibility.