

1 **II. SCREENING REQUIREMENT**

2 When an individual seeks to proceed *in forma pauperis*, the Court is required to review the
3 complaint and shall dismiss a complaint, or portion of the complaint, if it is “frivolous, malicious or
4 fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or . . . seeks monetary relief from a defendant
5 who is immune from such relief.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b); 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). A plaintiff’s claim
6 is frivolous “when the facts alleged rise to the level of the irrational or the wholly incredible, whether
7 or not there are judicially noticeable facts available to contradict them.” *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504
8 U.S. 25, 32-33 (1992).

9 **III. PLEADING STANDARDS**

10 General rules for pleading complaints are governed by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. A
11 pleading must include a statement affirming the court’s jurisdiction, “a short and plain statement of the
12 claim showing the pleader is entitled to relief; and . . . a demand for the relief sought, which may include
13 relief in the alternative or different types of relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a).

14 A complaint must state the elements of the plaintiff’s claim in a plain and succinct manner.
15 *Jones v. Cmty Redevelopment Agency*, 733 F.2d 646, 649 (9th Cir. 1984). The purpose of the
16 complaint is to give the defendant fair notice of the claims against him, and the grounds upon which
17 the complaint stands. *Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A.*, 534 U.S. 506, 512 (2002). The Supreme Court
18 explained,

19 Rule 8 does not require detailed factual allegations, but it demands more than an
20 unadorned, the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation. A pleading that offers
21 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 further
factual enhancement.

22 *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted).

23 Conclusory and vague allegations do not support a cause of action. *Ivey v. Board of Regents*, 673 F.2d
24 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982). The Court clarified further,

25 [A] complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to “state a claim
26 to relief that is plausible on its face.” [Citation]. A claim has facial plausibility when
the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable
27 inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged. [Citation]. The
28 plausibility standard is not akin to a “probability requirement,” but it asks for more than
a sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully. [Citation]. Where a complaint

1 pleads facts that are “merely consistent with” a defendant’s liability, it “stops short of
2 the line between possibility and plausibility of ‘entitlement to relief.’

3 *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679 (citations omitted). When factual allegations are well-pled, a court should
4 assume the truth and determine whether the facts would make the plaintiff entitled to relief; conclusions
5 in the pleading are not entitled to the same assumption of truth. *Id.* The Court may grant leave to
6 amend a complaint to the extent deficiencies of the complaint can be cured by amendment. *Lopez v.*
7 *Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1127-28 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc).

8 **IV. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

9 Here, Plaintiff’s complaint indicates his application and appeal for Social Security benefits
10 have been denied, and he seeks review of the decision by the Commissioner of Social Security to deny
11 benefits. (Doc. 1 at 1-2.) The Court has jurisdiction over such claims pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g),
12 which provides in relevant part:

13 Any individual, after any final decision of the Commissioner made after a hearing to
14 which he was a party, irrespective of the amount in controversy, may obtain a review of
15 such decision by a civil action commenced within sixty days after the mailing to him of
16 such decision or within such further time as the Commissioner may allow. Such action
17 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 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 Social Security,
with or without remanding the cause for a rehearing.

18 *Id.* Except as provided by statute, “[n]o findings of fact or decision of the Commissioner shall be
19 reviewed by any person, tribunal, or governmental agency.” 42 U.S.C. § 405(h). The Supreme Court
20 noted the purpose of the legislation was “to forestall repetitive or belated litigation of stale eligibility
21 claims.” *Califano v. Sanders*, 430 U.S. 99, 108 (1977). Plaintiff asserts the Appeals Council denied
22 his request for review on February 4, 2014, at which time the decision of the administrative law judge
23 became the decision of the Commissioner. (Doc. 1 at 2.) Because Plaintiff seeks timely judicial
24 review, the Court has jurisdiction over the matter pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

25 **V. CONCLUSION AND ORDER**

26 Plaintiff’s complaint states a cognizable claim for review of the administrative decision denying
27 Social Security benefits. Based upon the foregoing, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

- 28 1. Plaintiff’s request to proceed *in forma pauperis* (Docs. 3, 6) is **GRANTED**;

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2. The Clerk of Court is DIRECTED to issue summons as to the defendant, Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security;
3. The Clerk of Court is DIRECTED to issue and serve Plaintiff with Social Security Case Documents, including the Scheduling Order, Order regarding Consent, the Consent Form, and USM-285 Forms; and
4. The U.S. Marshal is DIRECTED to serve a copy of the complaint, summons, and this order upon the defendant as directed by Plaintiff in the USM Forms.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: April 17, 2014

/s/ Jennifer L. Thurston
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE