

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 or
7 not there are judicially noticeable facts available to contradict them.” *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S.
8 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
13 include relief in the alternative or different types of relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a).

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

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
22 not do. Nor does a complaint suffice if it tenders naked assertions devoid of further
23 factual enhancement.

23 *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). Vague
24 and conclusory allegations do not support a cause of action. *Ivey v. Board of Regents*, 673 F.2d 266,
25 268 (9th Cir. 1982). The Court clarified further,

26 [A] complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to “state a claim
27 to relief that is plausible on its face.” [Citation]. A claim has facial plausibility when
28 the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable
inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged. [Citation]. The

1 plausibility standard is not akin to a “probability requirement,” but it asks for more than
2 a sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully. [Citation]. Where a complaint
3 pleads facts that are “merely consistent with” a defendant’s liability, it “stops short of
 the line between possibility and plausibility of ‘entitlement to relief.’

4 *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679 (citations omitted). When factual allegations are well-pled, a court should
5 assume their truth and determine whether the facts would make the plaintiff entitled to relief; legal
6 conclusions are not entitled to the same assumption of truth. *Id.* The Court may grant leave to amend a
7 complaint to the extent deficiencies of the complaint can be cured by an amendment. *Lopez v. Smith*,
8 203 F.3d 1122, 1127-28 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc).

9 **IV. Discussion and Analysis**

10 Plaintiff seeks review of a decision by the Commissioner of Social Security denying disability
11 benefits. (Doc. 1) The Court may have jurisdiction pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), which provides:

12 Any individual, after any final decision of the Commissioner made after a hearing to
13 which he was a party, irrespective of the amount in controversy, may obtain a review of
14 such decision by a civil action commenced within sixty days after the mailing to him of
15 such decision or within such further time as the Commissioner may allow. Such action
16 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.

17 *Id.* Except as provided by statute, “[n]o findings of fact or decision of the Commissioner shall be
18 reviewed by any person, tribunal, or governmental agency.” 42 U.S.C. § 405(h).

19 Plaintiff alleges the Appeals Council denied her request for review of the decision denying
20 benefits on December 15, 2017, at which time the decision of the administrative law judge became the
21 final decision of the Commissioner. (Doc. 1 at 2) Because Plaintiff initiated this action within 65
22 days of the date of Appeals Council’s notice, her request for judicial review of the decision is timely.
23 Therefore, the Court has jurisdiction over the matter pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

24 **V. Conclusion and Order**

25 Plaintiff’s complaint states a cognizable claim for review of the administrative decision denying
26 Social Security benefits. Based upon the foregoing, the Court **ORDERS**:

- 27 1. Plaintiff’s motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* (Doc. 2) is **GRANTED**;
- 28 2. The Clerk of Court is **DIRECTED** to issue summons as to the defendant, Nancy

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Berryhill, 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: February 8, 2018

/s/ Jennifer L. Thurston
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE