

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

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|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| NATALIA KUZNETSOVA, |) | |
| |) | |
| Plaintiff, |) | |
| |) | Case No. 19-cv-3065 |
| v. |) | |
| |) | Judge Robert M. Dow, Jr. |
| NANCY A. BERRYHILL, |) | |
| Acting Commissioner of the Social |) | |
| Security Administration, |) | |
| |) | |
| Defendant. |) | |

ORDER

Before the Court is Plaintiff’s motion for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* [4]. For the reasons stated below, the Court grants Plaintiff’s motion.

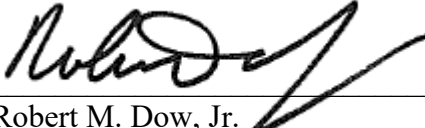
STATEMENT

Plaintiff has filed an application to proceed *in forma pauperis* [4]. The federal *in forma pauperis* statute is designed to ensure that indigent litigants have meaningful access to the federal courts. *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324 (1989). The statute allows a litigant to pursue a case in federal court without fees and costs provided that the litigant submits an affidavit which asserts an inability “to pay such fees or give security therefor.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1). In order to proceed *in forma pauperis*, “a plaintiff’s income must be at or near the poverty level.” *Bulls v. Marsh*, 1989 WL 51170, at *1 (N.D. Ill. May 5, 1989); see also *Zaun v. Dobbin*, 628 F.2d 990, 992 (7th Cir. 1980). To measure poverty level, many judges in this district use the poverty guidelines promulgated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>). The 2019 guidelines for the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia set the poverty level for a household of two at \$16,910.

The Court relies on the financial affidavit filed along with the *in forma pauperis* motion to assess a party’s claim to indigency. According to Plaintiff’s affidavit, her household income from all sources is below the HHS-poverty level for her household of two. Therefore the Court grants Plaintiff’s application to proceed *in forma pauperis* [4] and waives the filing fee.

Finally, the Court notes that, pursuant to Local Rule 4(b), Plaintiff’s action for review of a final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security does not require the issuance of a summons or U.S. Marshals’ service of process.

Dated: May 17, 2019



Robert M. Dow, Jr.
United States District Judge