Securing today
and tomorrow

**Social Security Administration**

# Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees | Fiscal Year 2023






**Social Security Administration** | March 2022

# FY 2023 Congressional Justification

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and tomorrow

# Social Security Administration

## Budget Overview | Fiscal Year 2023






# Fiscal Year 2023
# President's Budget

## MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING COMMISSIONER

I am proud to lead the Social Security Administration, an outstanding organization with exceptional employees dedicated to helping millions of people who are helped by our programs. Social Security programs affect nearly every member of the public at some point in their lives: from birth, when they start work, if they become disabled or lose a loved one, and when they reach retirement age. We are committed to ensuring equity in delivering our services and improving accessibility to our programs.

The fiscal year (FY) 2023 President's Budget request of $14.8 billion for our administrative expenses will put us on a path to accomplish our new strategic goals outlined in our FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan: optimizing the experience of SSA customers; building an inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce; and ensuring stewardship of SSA programs. We will ensure equity throughout our programs by using data to identify potential inequities and by reaching out to communities of color and underserved communities to incorporate their insights when designing solutions.

This Budget provides staffing and overtime to address higher volumes of receipts, restore our workforce, and help us mitigate the growth in our pandemic-related backlogs. It also funds annual increases necessary to support our fixed costs, such as increases in salaries and benefits, rent, and guards, as well as incorporates new costs to continue to protect the public and our employees from COVID-19.

The Budget focuses on a better understanding of the public's service needs and their experiences. As we better understand our customers' experiences, we will design and deliver services that are more user-friendly, easily accessible, and more equitable and effective, especially for those who have been historically underserved. To accomplish this objective, we are investing in modern technology and business processes that will help us provide better service to the public. This year, we will successfully complete our five-year Information Technology Modernization Plan, replacing legacy systems and improving customer experience. We will build on our plan and the lessons learned from the pandemic, by offering more digital or remote service options for the many customers who prefer to do business with us online or by phone. While we expand our digital and remote service options, we will continue to be responsive to those individuals who need or prefer in-person service. In FY 2022, we plan to increase in-person service to the public and resume in-person hearings.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we must ensure that our programs and services are reaching underserved communities, including individuals facing homelessness, with low incomes, with limited English proficiency, or with mental and intellectual disabilities. We are working to ensure our programs are accessible to everyone who may be eligible. This Budget supports improving equity in our Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program through improved benefit delivery and outreach work, including collaborating closely with diverse stakeholders and third-party organizations in local communities to help members of the public understand possible benefit eligibility. We will develop enhancements to make it easier and more convenient to access our services.

The pandemic disrupted many of our workloads, including at the State disability determination services (DDS) that make disability decisions on our behalf. Our backlogs and average processing time for initial disability claims have increased to an unacceptable level. To address the large backlog of initial disability claims and the additional claims we expect to receive through the end of FY 2023, the Budget would expand processing capacity by increasing staffing by adding more than 4,000 hires in our frontline operations and at the DDS offices. The Budget also increases overtime to ensure employees can quickly and accurately complete cases. Our goal is to reduce the average processing time and prioritize providing decisions to those who have been waiting the longest. We plan to achieve an average processing time of 164 days and decide 85 percent of pending initial disability claims that begin the fiscal year 180 days old or older by the end of September 2023. We plan to complete an estimated 350,000 more initial disability claims in FY 2023 than we completed in FY 2021. In addition to working to reduce the current backlog and high wait times, we must ensure that they do not recur.

Similarly, in FY 2023, we will continue reducing the average wait for a hearing before an administrative law judge by 92 days compared to FY 2021. While our progress has slowed due to pandemic-related challenges, we remain focused on eliminating the hearings backlog in FY 2023. We plan to continue to provide both in-person and online video hearings and prioritize individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing. We will hire Administrative Law Judges and necessary support staff to keep our pending hearings at an optimal level.

We are modernizing our National 800 Number by implementing our Next Generation Telephony Project (NGTP), which replaces three legacy telephone systems with a single platform. While we are working to correct the initial degradation of service experienced during our transition, the new system will be more efficient and customer-centric when it is fully operational. Features, like automated call back and estimated wait times, will allow the caller to decide if they would like to wait on hold or receive a call back and will help us reduce the average speed of answer and our busy rates on the National 800 Number.

A knowledgeable, dedicated, and talented workforce is essential to successfully administering our complex programs. We are investing in our employees, eliminating barriers to hiring and advancement, and fostering an inclusive workforce. We are strengthening our Federal hiring policies through talent teams, effective assessments, and internship improvements. We will also ensure that our employees are treated equitably and receive support for their chosen career paths by investing in training and development, increased workplace flexibilities, and technology that provide better tools to do our work.

Making the right payment to the right person at the right time remains our priority. We will safeguard taxpayer dollars by reducing improper payments and combating waste, fraud, and abuse. We must continue our quality reviews, cost-effective program integrity work, and payment accuracy efforts, while ensuring eligible individuals receive the benefits they are entitled to receive. In addition, persistent and increasingly sophisticated malicious cyber campaigns threaten our security and privacy; therefore, we will continue to enhance our cybersecurity to protect the sensitive information entrusted to us.

Millions of people count on our programs.  This Budget will help us better serve them, while investing in our employees, maintaining strong stewardship and rigorous oversight of the programs we administer, and fulfilling our vision of providing income security for the diverse population we serve.

Respectfully,

Kilolo Kijakazi
Acting Commissioner

March 28, 2022

# BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Social Security Administration's (SSA) fiscal year (FY) 2023 budget request is $14.8 billion, a $1.8 billion or 14 percent increase from the FY 2022 continuing resolution (CR) level. This increase will enable us to improve services at our field offices, State disability determination services (DDS), and teleservice centers for retirees, individuals with disabilities, and their families who rely on our services. The Budget also invests in improving service delivery by assisting people facing barriers in accessing our services through expanded online tools and improved National 800 Number service, and by adding staff to reduce the wait for a disability decision. Major investments include[1]:

- Total Federal payroll costs of over $8.3 billion, an increase of nearly $1 billion from the FY 2022 CR level, including our frontline operations, hearings operations, and support positions.
    - Approximately $5.5 billion for payroll costs to fund the employees in our frontline operations.
    - Approximately $1.2 billion for payroll costs to fund our hearings operations.
    - Approximately $1.6 billion to fund other payroll costs for important functions including quality assurance, work of the Appeals Council and General Counsel, fraud detection and prevention, cybersecurity, systems development and support, finance, policy, communications, and maintenance and oversight of facilities.
- Over $2.5 billion for payroll, hiring, workload processing costs, and other expenses for the State DDS. This amount is an increase of $241 million from our FY 2022 CR level.
- Over $1.5 billion for information technology (IT) services funding, an increase of $431 million from our FY 2022 CR level, to help us maintain and modernize our large IT infrastructure and increase our suite of digital and automated services.
- Significant investments to improve customer experience, service delivery, and equity across our programs, while improving how we interact with the public by putting people at the center of everything we do. The Budget also includes approximately $100 million for outreach to ensure that Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits reach eligible individuals facing barriers to accessing our services, including homeless individuals, children with disabilities, and individuals with mental and intellectual disabilities.
- Nearly $1.8 billion, $224 million above the 2022 CR level, for dedicated program integrity (PI) work, which will allow us to complete our cost-effective PI reviews and

[1] The numbers are not additive to the budget total. In addition, some costs are associated with more than one category.

support our highly successful cooperative disability investigations (CDI) program, which will cover all States and U.S. territories by FY 2023.

### *SSA's Research Budget*

The FY 2023 funding request for research is $86 million, equal to the FY 2022 level. As in previous years, the Budget will fund continued data development and dissemination, modeling efforts, administrative research, and retirement and disability policy research to better serve the public. We are also interested in working with Congress to extend Section 234 authority in order to provide sufficient time to conduct new and ongoing demonstrations. For additional details, please see our Research, Demonstration Projects, and Outreach exhibit in the corresponding technical material, SSI Program section.

### *Office of the Inspector General (OIG)*

The FY 2023 funding request for the OIG is $117.5 million, an increase of $12 million over the FY 2022 CR level. The OIG's FY 2023 funding request includes $2 million in no-year IT modernization funding. The Budget includes a transfer of $15.1 million from the SSA PI allocation adjustment to the OIG for the cost of jointly operated CDI units, which is a $3.9 million increase from the FY 2022 CR level.

## PROGRAMS AND BUDGETS

Our budget request will fund the administrative expenses for our three major programs: Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI), Disability Insurance (DI), and SSI, in addition to other administrative expenses. (See Figures 1 and 2.) Our request includes funding to help ensure full and equitable access to our programs.

**OASI**: Established in 1935, the OASI program is one of the Nation's most successful Government programs, and one that is part of nearly every American's life. The OASI program provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their family members.

**DI:** Established in 1956, the DI program provides benefits for workers who become disabled, and their families.

**SSI:** Established in 1972, the SSI program provides financial support to aged, blind, and disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources.

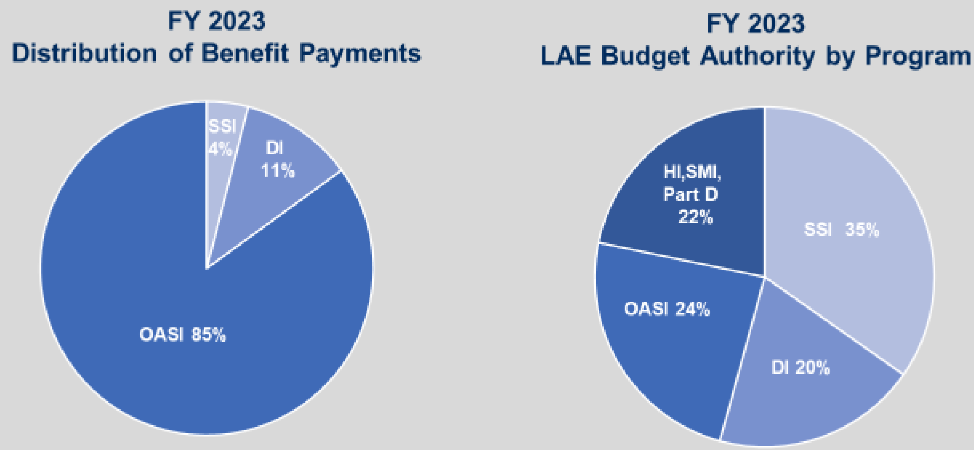
In addition, we support national programs administered by other Federal and State agencies, as required by law, such as Medicare, *Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974*, *Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act*, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, *Help America Vote Act*, State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), E-Verify, Medicaid, and Federal Benefits for Veterans.

**Figure 1: Benefit Payments and Beneficiaries by Program, FYs 2021-2023**

| **Benefits** *(Outlays in Millions)* | **FY 2021 Actual**[2] | **FY 2022 Estimate** | **FY 2023 Estimate** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Trust Fund Programs** | | | |
| OASI | $982,657 | $1,067,494 | $1,158,897 |
| DI | $140,591 | $140,034 | $147,330 |
| Subtotal, OASDI | $1,123,248 | $1,207,528 | $1,306,227 |
| **General Fund Programs** | | | |
| SSI – Federal[3] | $55,528 | $61,206 | $59,225 |
| SSI State Supplementary Benefits | $2,441 | $3,155 | $3,145 |
| **Total** [4] | $1,181,218 | $1,271,889 | $1,368,597 |
| **Beneficiaries** *(in Thousands)* | **FY 2021 Actual** | **FY 2022 Estimate** | **FY 2023 Estimate** |
| **Trust Fund Programs** | | | |
| OASI | 55,344 | 56,461 | 57,713 |
| DI | 9,562 | 9,177 | 8,931 |
| Subtotal, OASDI | 64,906 | 65,638 | 66,644 |
| **General Fund Programs** | | | |
| SSI Federal Recipients | 7,742 | 7,573 | 7,469 |
| SSI State Supplementary Recipients (with no Federal SSI payment) | 137 | 137 | 144 |
| **Total** [4, 5] | 72,785 | 73,349 | 74,257 |

[2] Benefit payment totals include $1 million for the Special Benefits for Certain World War II Veterans program, which is not broken out separately.
[3] There will be 13 monthly benefit payments in FY 2022.
[4] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[5] Beneficiary totals include approximately 2.6 million concurrent recipients who receive SSI as well as OASI or DI.

### Figure 2: Benefits and Administrative Budget by Program

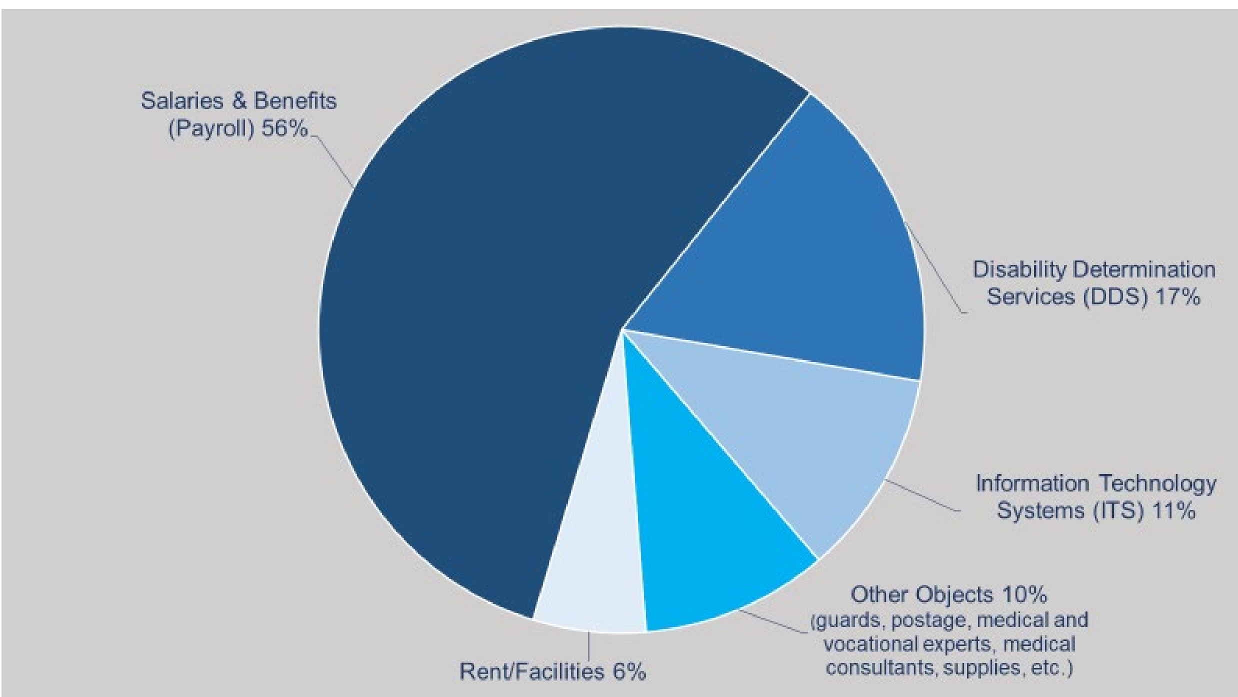



The source is the FY 2023 President's Budget.

Totals do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Medical Hospital Insurance (HI), Supplementary Medical Insurance (SMI), and Part D Prescription Drug Benefit

### Figure 3: LAE Budget by Major Funding Category, FY 2023 Estimates



# FY 2023 FUNDING TABLE

| Budget Authority and Workyears (WY) | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate[6] | FY 2023 President's Budget |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Budget Authority, One-Year** (in millions) | | | |
| Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE)[7,8,9] | $12,931 | $12,931 | $14,773 |
| *(Dedicated Program Integrity Level, Base and Adjustment, included in LAE)*[10] | *($1,575)* | *($1,575)* | *($1,799)* |
| Research and Demonstrations[11,12] | $86 | $86 | $86 |
| Office of the Inspector General (OIG)[13] | $106 | $106 | $118 |
| **Total, Budget Authority**[14] | **$13,122** | **$13,122** | **$14,977** |
| **SSA WYs** | | | |
| Full-Time Equivalents[15] | 59,402 | 58,501 | 59,518 |
| Overtime | 1,697 | 718 | 3,000 |
| Lump Sum Leave | 226 | 250 | 250 |
| **Total SSA WY**[16] | **61,325** | **59,469** | **62,768** |
| Disability Determination Services (DDS) | 13,758 | 13,581 | 14,272 |
| **Total SSA/DDS WY** | **75,083** | **73,050** | **77,040** |
| OIG | 505 | 493 | 538 |
| **Total SSA/DDS/ OIG WY** | **75,588** | **73,543** | **77,578** |

6 Our overall LAE funding level in FY 2022 assumes a full-year continuing resolution (CR).

7 LAE funding includes $135 million in FY 2021, $135 million in FY 2022 under a full-year CR, and $140 million in FY 2023 for SSI user fees. While our funding request includes $135 million for FY 2022, the same as the FY 2021 enacted, we requested $138 million in the FY 2022 President's Budget. The LAE funding also includes $1 million in Social Security Protection Act (SSPA) user fees.

8 The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) provided $300 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic, including paying the salaries and benefits of all employees affected as a result of office closures, telework, phone and communication services for employees, overtime costs, supplies, and for resources necessary for processing disability and retirement workloads and backlogs. It also provided $38 million for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering economic impact payments (EIP) to most individuals. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided an additional $38 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering a second round of EIPs first authorized under the CARES Act. This funding is not reflected in the LAE.

9 P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided $50 million in dedicated funding to address the hearings backlog and $45 million in dedicated funding for IT Modernization.

10 P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided FY 2021 PI funding availability for 18 months (through March 31, 2022). The FY 2023 budget assumes appropriations language for FYs 2022 and 2023 will provide for similar 18-month authority to obligate PI funds.

11 These amounts include $7 million in base research funding classified as mandatory.

12 Congress appropriated $86 million in FY 2021 (available through September 30, 2023) for research and demonstration projects. The FY 2023 President's Budget assumes $86 million in FY 2022 (available through September 30, 2024) and proposes $86 million in FY 2023 (available through September 30, 2025) for research and demonstration projects.

13 P.L. 116-260 allows SSA to transfer $11.2 million in FY 2021 from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The FY 2022 CR continues this transfer in FY 2022 of up to $11.2 million. The FY 2022 Budget requests a $12.1 million transfer in FY 2022, and the FY 2023 Budget requests a $15.1 million transfer.

14 Numbers may not add due to rounding.

15 Full-time equivalents include those funded by the CDI unit PI transfer from the LAE account to the OIG.

16 A workyear (WY) is a measure of time spent doing work or being paid for some element of time (e.g., leave). It is the equivalent of one person working for one year (2,080 hours) and may consist of regular hours, overtime, or lump sum leave, which is payment for unused annual leave upon leaving the agency. WYs include time spent in full-time or part-time employment. Full-time equivalents and overtime WYs include those funded from dedicated funding to reduce the hearings backlog, dedicated funding for IT modernization, and dedicated funding for PI. In addition, the WYs include those funded for the Medicare Low-Income Subsidy Program and the State CHIP.

# FY 2023 PERFORMANCE TABLE

| Workload and Outcome Measures | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 President's Budget |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Retirement and Survivor Claims**[17] | | | |
| Retirement and Survivor Claims Completed (thousands) | 6,082 | 6,615 | 6,534 |
| **Disability Claims**[18] | | | |
| Initial Disability Claims Receipts (thousands) | 2,009 | 2,231 | 2,570 |
| Initial Disability Claims Completed (thousands) | 2,011 | 1,986 | 2,350 |
| Initial Disability Claims Pending (thousands) | 740 | 939 | 1,159 |
| Average Processing Time for Initial Disability Claims (days)[19] | 165 | 185 | 164 |
| **Disability Reconsiderations** | | | |
| Disability Reconsiderations Receipts (thousands) | 571 | 576 | 682 |
| Disability Reconsiderations Completed (thousands) | 516 | 526 | 617 |
| Disability Reconsiderations Pending (thousands) | 193 | 228 | 293 |
| Average Processing Time for Disability Reconsiderations (days)[19] | 147 | 187 | 168 |
| **Hearings** | | | |
| Hearings Receipts (thousands) | 383 | 376 | 472 |
| Hearings Completed (thousands) | 451 | 406 | 472 |
| Hearings Pending (thousands) | 350 | 320 | 320 |
| Annual Average Processing Time for Hearings Decisions (days)[20] | 326 | 375 | 335 |
| **National 800 Number** | | | |
| National 800 Number Calls Handled (millions)[21] | 31 | 33 | 36 |
| Average Speed of Answer (ASA) (minutes) [22] | 14 | 19 | 12 |
| Agent Busy Rate (percent) | 0% | 7% | 1% |
| **Program Integrity** | | | |
| Periodic Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR) Completed (thousands) | 1,616 | 1,721 | 1,800 |
| Full Medical CDRs Completed (included above, thousands) | 511 | 621 | 700 |
| SSI Non-Medical Redeterminations Completed (thousands) | 2,367 | 1,928 | 2,166 |
| **Selected Other Agency Workload Measures** | | | |
| Social Security Numbers Completed (millions) | 12 | 15 | 18 |
| Annual Earnings Items Completed (millions) | 277 | 284 | 288 |
| Social Security Statements Issued (millions)[23] | 12 | 15 | 15 |
| **Selected Production Workload Measures** | | | |
| Disability Determination Services Production per Workyear | 239 | 247 | 275 |
| Office of Hearings Operations Production per Workyear | 78 | 74 | 86 |
| Other Work/Service in Support of the Public-Annual Growth of Backlog (workyears) | N/A | (1,000) | (300) |

[17] Includes Medicare.

[18] The estimates for disability claims receipts and claims pending are highly variable due to COVID-19 and our evolving operational status since 2020.

[19] Average processing times for our initial disability claims and appeals workloads will depend upon the ability to obtain timely medical evidence and effectively schedule consultative exams.

[20] Average processing time for hearings is an annual figure. In FY 2022, we plan to resume in-person hearings and prioritize individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing. As we work through those oldest cases, we anticipate a temporary increase in the average processing time. Projections for the end of year monthly (September) processing time for hearings are 570 days and 270 days for FYs 2022 and 2023, respectively.

[21] National 800 Number Calls Handled data for FY 2021 does not include automated calls handled. There were approximately 2.7 million automated calls handled through May 21, 2021; data on automated calls handled from May 22 to date is still pending due to technical issues that occurred while transitioning to a new telephone system.

[22] The Agency Priority Goal target to improve the National 800 Number service achieves an Average Speed of Answer of less than 12 minutes, including implementation of estimated wait time and call back options, by September 30, 2023.

[23] The Social Security Statements Issued measure includes paper statements only. It does not include electronic statements issued. In FY 2021, *my* Social Security users accessed their Social Security Statements 64 million times. In FY 2021, we spent approximately $6.7 million to send statements to people aged 60 and over who were not receiving Social Security benefits. Consistent with FY 2021, in FY 2022 and FY 2023, we will send paper statements to people aged 60 and older who are not receiving Social Security benefits and who are not registered for a *my* Social Security account, at a cost of approximately $8.7 million in FY 2022 and $9.1 million in FY 2023.

# BUDGET SUMMARY: *OPTIMIZE THE EXPERIENCE OF SSA CUSTOMERS*

Optimizing the customer experience (CX) is our priority, and this Budget focuses on improving the public's experience with and access to our services and programs. In accordance with Executive Order 14058, *Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government,* we are designing and delivering services that focus on the experiences of the people we serve. In particular, we want individuals to access our services across service delivery channels as seamlessly as possible. As an example of our commitment to CX, we are examining all services that currently require original or physical documentation or in-person appearance as an element of identity or evidence authentication, with a goal of identifying potential opportunities for reforms that can support modernized customer experiences, while ensuring original documentation requirements remain where there is a statutory or strong policy rationale. We are also accountable for executing and reporting on cross-program benefit eligibility by supporting applicants and beneficiaries to identify other benefits for which they may be eligible and by integrating our data and processes with those of other Federal and State entities whenever possible. For additional details, please see our Customer Experience exhibit in the corresponding technical material, LAE section.

## *Advancing Equity in Our Programs*

Our vision is to provide income security for the diverse populations we serve, including those in underserved communities, people with disabilities, workers, and their families. Our intent is to serve all who seek access to our programs. In particular, we will work to reduce barriers to access across our programs. In order to do so, we must identify and eliminate disparities that underserved communities and individuals may face when doing business with us. We will reduce barriers in our administrative system by increasing the collection of race and ethnicity data to determine whether our programs are equitably serving our applicants and beneficiaries, revising our policies and practices to expand options for service delivery, and ensuring equitable access to unrepresented claimants in the disability application process. We will also decrease burdens for people who identify as gender diverse or transgender in the Social Security Number card application process, increase access to our research grant programs for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions, and expand procurement opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses. We also are committing through an Agency Priority Goal to improve equity in our SSI program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities, by increasing the number of all SSI applications by 15 percent, restoring rates closer to pre-pandemic levels, and increasing the number of SSI applications from underserved communities by 25 percent, both relative to a 2021 baseline. For a list of our accomplishments and actions, see the Advancing Equity exhibit in the corresponding technical material, LAE section.

## *Managing the Projected Increase in Initial Disability Claims*

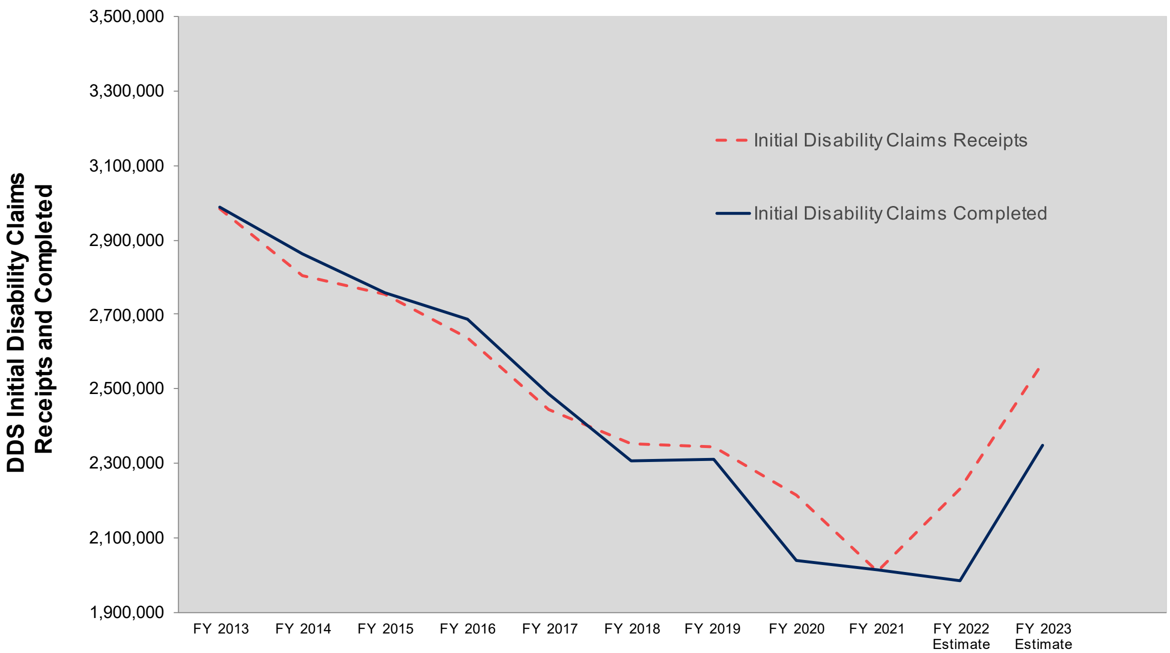
Addressing the initial disability claims backlog is a critical part of improving the service we provide. We must work down the backlog of cases while also handling a projected increase in disability applications, and we are prioritizing actions to reduce the time it takes for individuals to receive initial disability decisions. We have had challenges in hiring and retaining DDS employees. Consistent with national trends, the DDSs have experienced high staff attrition, particularly in their medical examiner positions, as well as difficulties hiring and retaining qualified candidates across the nation.

The Budget supports hiring approximately 1,900 employees in FY 2023 and increased overtime levels. To combat some of our DDS hiring challenges, we developed a national "Hiring Best Practices" workgroup, which recommends incorporating new technologies in a virtual environment and expanding the use of different platforms, such as social media. We are also developing a new telework plan for the States to share best practices. We believe these improved hiring practices and workforce policies, as well as maximizing the use of overtime to develop and complete cases, will help us handle more cases. Compared to FY 2022, we plan to complete nearly 365,000 more claims in FY 2023. It will take a multi-year effort to eliminate the backlog and return wait times to pre-pandemic levels.

While we were able to make some progress in reducing the initial disability claims backlog in FY 2021 due to fewer receipts coming in than projected, the pending level has increased again to over 798,000 through February 2022 compared to 594,000 in September 2019. Fiscal-year-to-date wait times (through February 2022) are 173 days compared to 120 days in September 2019. We received significantly fewer claims' receipts in FYs 2020 and 2021 than we expected, and we are preparing for an increase as the pandemic improves (see Figure 4). Our modeling continues to project an increase in future years, and we will closely monitor receipt levels.

We acknowledge that it is challenging for individuals to wait five and a half months on average to receive a disability decision. We have made it a priority to improve the average processing time for initial claims and work down older cases, even as our initial claims receipts are projected to increase. We are increasing capacity to process these initial claims and prioritizing those who have waited the longest. In particular, by the end of 2023, we will achieve an average processing time for initial disability claims of 164 days. We will also prioritize processing claims that are over six months old at the beginning of FY 2023, with the goal of completing at least 85 percent of these aged claims by the end of the FY 2023.

**Figure 4: Initial Disability Claims Receipts and Completed, FYs 2013-2023**



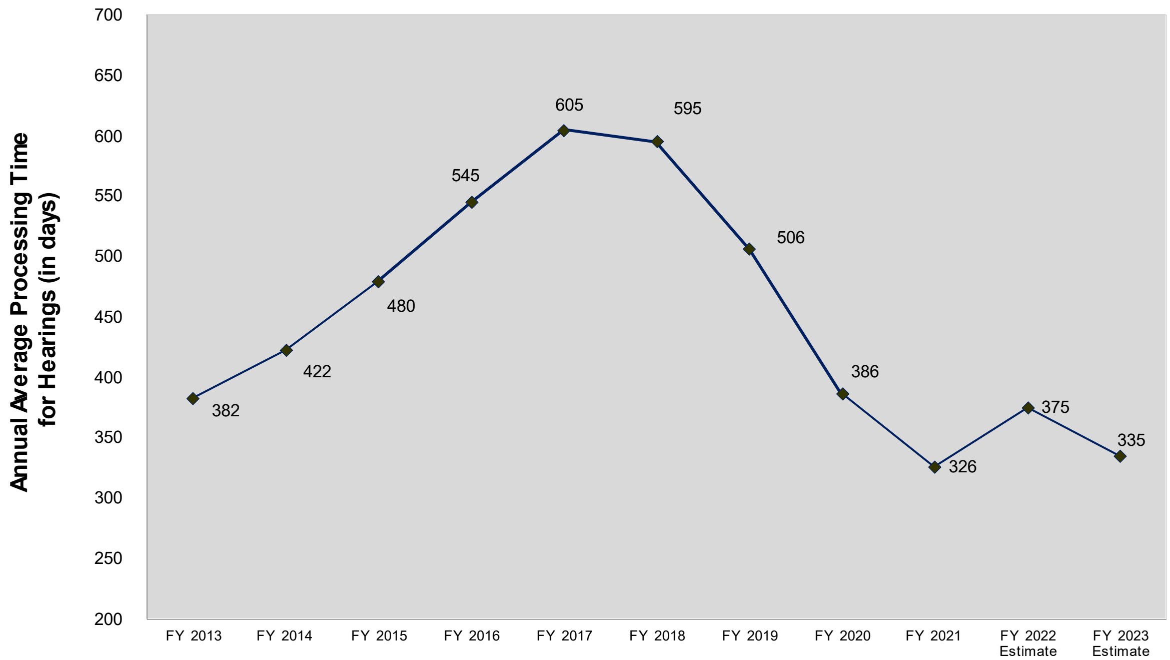

## *Eliminating the Disability Hearings Backlog*

In FY 2023, we expect increases in pending hearings as we complete additional initial disability claims, and we are prioritizing our actions to keep pace with completing incoming volumes while reducing the time individuals wait for a hearing. From September 2017 through February 2022, we reduced the average monthly wait time for a hearing from 633 to 313 days, a major achievement. Beginning in January 2022, our average processing time began to increase. We restarted in-person hearings in March 2022 and plan to continue with a hybrid of in-person and virtual hearings.

We now anticipate eliminating the backlog and achieving a 270-day monthly average wait time by the end of FY 2023. As we ramp up in-person hearings for applicants who chose to wait for an in-person hearing, we expect the annual average wait time to be 375 days in FY 2022. We expect to reduce the annual average wait time to 335 days in FY 2023 (see Figure 5). Since the DDSs will be processing increased volumes of initial claims and reconsiderations, we are preparing for a downstream increase in hearings requests, requests for Appeals Council review, and civil action court filings. We plan to hire Administrative Law Judges in FY 2022 and FY 2023 to ensure we support our hearings operations. We are also planning to hire support staff as needed to assist with hearings workloads.

We must ensure that we make fair, policy-compliant disability decisions supported by the most efficient modern business processes to help support income security for all who are eligible for our benefits. To improve case processing and efficiency and ensure decisional quality, in FY 2022 we are continuing the nationwide rollout of our modern case processing system, the Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System (HACPS), for hearings and appeals level cases.

**Figure 5: Hearings Wait Times, FY 2013-FY 2023**




## *Enhancing Online Services*

We continue to expand our online service capabilities and enhance the customer experience by providing convenient, user-friendly, and secure digital self-service options for those who can access the internet. Our online customer portal, *my* Social Security, ensures we provide access to many of our services and is a preferred option for many of our customers to conduct business with us. Since we implemented *my* Social Security, we have registered over 63 million users. In FY 2021, the public completed about 290 million successful online transactions compared to 221 million in FY 2020. *my* Social Security gives our customers convenient access to a growing suite of services using their mobile device or computer.

We are taking multiple steps to increase online service delivery to make it easier for our customers to access our services. For example, we have undertaken a multi-year effort to redesign our website, ssa.gov, to enhance the customer experience. In FY 2021, we collaborated with the United States Digital Service to conduct extensive customer research, evaluate our content and customer needs, produce a new website design, and iterate the design through actual customer feedback. Our goal is to implement a dynamic, task-oriented website that guides customers to the most effective service option for their needs, improves their experience by simplifying processes, and removes barriers to successful usage. We are implementing new technology that will allow us to better manage web content and directly integrate with our secure online services. In FY 2022, we plan to transition the final redesigned ssa.gov website into production based on beta site customer feedback. We also plan to develop a mobile-accessible, online process for individuals applying for or receiving services to upload forms, documentation, evidence, or correspondence without needing to travel to a field office.

Further, we updated the ssa.gov website to include more information on identifying and reporting Social Security scams. We provide information on proactive steps the public can take to protect themselves from scammers. In addition, as part of our effort to enhance online services, we improved the secure registration process for *my* Social Security to increase successful registrations while maintaining security. We continue to modernize digital identity to improve identity proofing.

The Budget supports continued investments in 2023 including:

- Enabling the public to schedule, update, and cancel appointments for certain services online;
- Expanding use of automated appointment reminders and mobile check-in services available to field office visitors;
- Providing an online and mobile accessible Document Portal for submission of required documentation to minimize manual processing;
- Reducing reliance on paper forms by increasing access to online forms through the adoption of eSignature Technology; and
- Expanding digital services to obtain a replacement Social Security card without having to visit a field office.

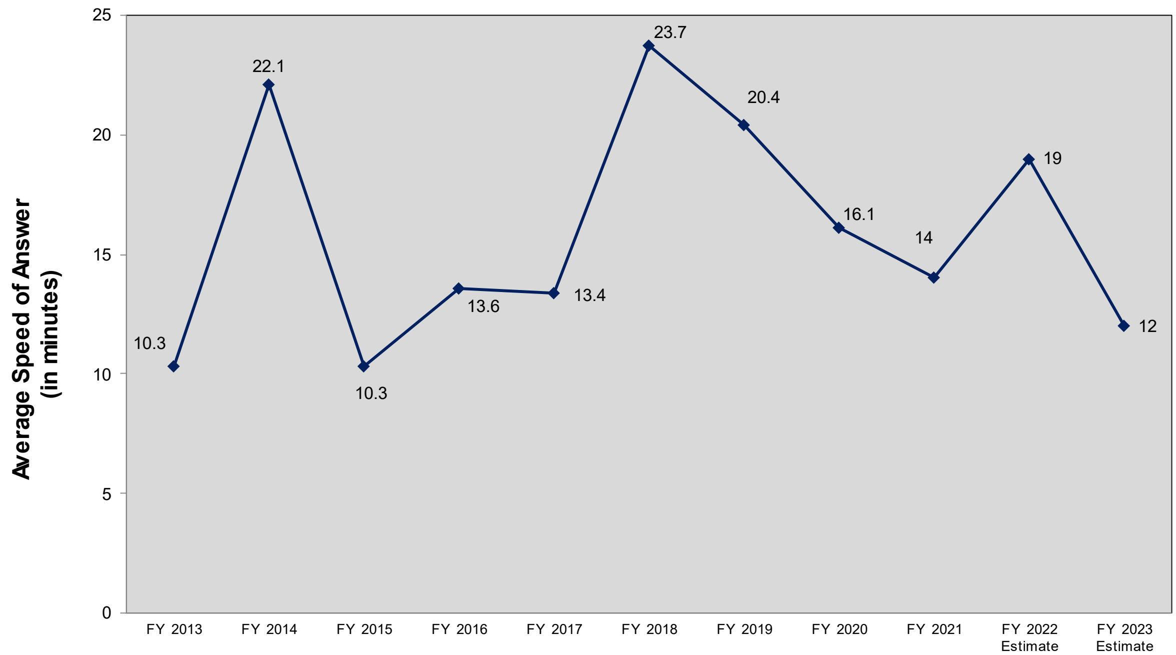
## *Improving National 800 Number Service*

Our National 800 Number offers a wide variety of services including:

- Answering a broad range of Social Security and Medicare questions;
- Scheduling appointments with our field offices;
- Providing status updates on current claims or appeals; and
- Ensuring the accuracy of our records.

Millions of our customers depend on our National 800 Number technicians to answer important questions, and many use phone services as the primary method to contact us. Improving our service is critical to optimizing the customer experience. We are focusing our efforts on improving our automated services and adding services to allow many callers to quickly complete their requests through self-service, freeing agents to help callers who need more assistance. Our Next Generation Telephony Project, which replaces our three legacy telephone systems with a single platform, will improve our telephone service. We expect the new system to be more efficient than our current platforms, provide more self-service opportunities for the public, improve performance management, and reduce the time it takes to implement process improvements. As reflected in our new Agency Priority Goal, in FY 2023, these investments will reduce average wait times to less than 12 minutes (see Figure 6). We also plan to reduce the average busy rate from 7 percent to 1 percent.

**Figure 6: National 800 Number Wait Times, FY 2013-FY 2023**




## *Strengthening Service in Our Field Offices*

Our field offices provide a broad range of services to millions of people. Our customer service representatives:

- Handle benefit claims, appeals, and post-entitlement events;
- Process applications for Social Security cards;
- Enroll people in Medicare;
- Address other needs and questions from visitors; and
- Play a critical role in our stewardship responsibilities by redetermining eligibility for SSI benefits and initiating CDRs.

Improving service in our field offices remains a priority. The Budget invests in our frontline staff so that we provide timely help to people who need our assistance. The Budget also invests in IT modernization to provide our employees user-friendly systems and tools to better serve the public, as well as convenient digital and automated services so that many of our customers do not need to visit a field office. We are improving the customer experience in our field offices by implementing business process improvements and providing options that will make visits to our field offices easier, such as enhancing mobile check-in application and an online appointment scheduler. The mobile check-in enhancements, scheduled for Quarter 3 of FY 2022, will make it easier for visitors with appointments to check in by reducing the customer's check-in process from 13 screens to 6, while also improving visitor management by linking the appointment to our intake system allowing technicians to identify the visitor and reason for visit without having to collect certain customer data.

Our online appointment scheduler, the Enterprise Scheduling System (ESS), is a user-friendly, intuitive scheduling system that will allow the public to self-schedule/edit/reschedule/cancel appointments, with options to choose the office location, date, and time. In FY 2023, customers who successfully complete an online Social Security Number application will be presented with a link to ESS to self-schedule an in-office appointment to provide documentation to complete their application for an original or replacement Social Security card. Customers who consent to electronic messaging will receive confirmation via text or email with a link to access ESS to edit/reschedule/cancel their appointment as necessary. Electronic messaging will assist technicians/managers in regulating traffic flow in and out of the office for some enumeration appointments.

### *Reducing Processing Center Backlogs*

Our processing centers (PC) handle the most complex benefit payment decisions. In addition, the PCs:

- Issue benefit payment after appeals decisions;
- Determine and collect debt;
- Correct records; and
- Perform PI work.

The PCs remain focused on reducing a backlog of pending actions. We are implementing business process and automation improvements to handle our cases with increased efficiency. We are continuing our efforts to streamline and clarify workload policies, achieve consistency in quality assessments, and develop enhancements in training. We also continue to look for new opportunities to complete simple tasks more quickly and implement automation initiatives that will eliminate duplicate work and help us continue to reduce pending cases.

# BUDGET SUMMARY: *MODERNIZING OUR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY*

Information technology is key to providing a high-quality, convenient, accessible, and efficient customer experience for the millions of people who depend on us. We are investing in modern technology that will ensure that the public receives relevant and timely information, provides them with more service options to easily interact with us across all service channels, and assists our technicians to complete their work more efficiently.

Key initiatives for FYs 2022 and 2023 include:

- Enabling the public to schedule appointments online for select services;
- Introducing an online service for adult disability beneficiaries to complete the SSA-454 (Continuing Disability Report) without needing to visit a field office;
- Enhancing mobile check-in services available to field office visitors;
- Expanding the number of forms users can complete online;
- Implementing electronic calendaring for all hearing participants, allowing our staff to schedule hearings;
- Finalizing the remaining claims types the Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System can process;
- Automating services on our website, including adding more customer centric portals, introducing mobile applications, and modernizing the way our online customers receive claim status information;
- Increasing the ability to obtain a replacement Social Security card without having to visit a field office;
- Enhancing the caller experience through the transition of the National 800 Number platform to the Next Generation Telephony Project;
- Investing in our effective cybersecurity program; and
- Monitoring the implementation of our online and mobile tools that enhance the SSI customer experience, specifically through a mobile wage reporting application, and the ability to establish a protective filing date online.

For additional details, as well as a list of our accomplishments, please see our IT exhibit in the corresponding technical material, LAE section.

# BUDGET SUMMARY: *BUILD AN INCLUSIVE, ENGAGED, AND EMPOWERED WORKFORCE*

We have always been committed to promoting inclusion, fairness, accessibility, and equity to all Americans, both in running the agency and administering our programs. The diversity of our workforce is a great strength, and our employees remain our most important asset.

Our goal is to increase the proficiency and diversity of our leadership cadre and provide a pipeline to fill potential gaps in leadership and critical positions. We promote a workplace that recognizes and celebrates our employees' abilities and encourages our employees in their chosen career paths. As part of our efforts to empower, build, and protect our workforce, we continue to prioritize employee health and safety. We are evaluating our personnel policies and work environments, piloting new operating approaches and workplace innovations, and carefully considering trends related to the future of the Federal workplace. The more effort we place on employee safety, agency-wide communication, employee engagement, training, and development, the better equipped our employees will be to carry out our mission and provide the quality of service the public expects and deserves.

# BUDGET SUMMARY: *STREAMLINING AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

To ensure our programs meet the needs of our beneficiaries, we are streamlining, simplifying, and advancing policy and procedures to make our programs more responsive; create less burden on our customers; and ensure that our dedicated employees can easily and consistently apply our rules. We are updating our program policy and IT to ensure that our disability determinations reflect and keep pace with modern medicine and technological advancements in healthcare. We will make evidence-based decisions guided by the best available science and data, collect data where it is lacking, and improve our capacity to develop and implement evidence-based policies across our programs. For example, in FY 2023 we will improve our disability determination and SSI application policies and processes.

## *Disability Determination Policies*

We are using policy tools to improve both quality, consistency, and timeliness of disability decisions. We are improving disability case processing through our enterprise-wide efforts to develop and implement modern, national claims processing systems that will seamlessly interact with each other from initial claim filing through a final appeal decision. In FY 2022, Disability Case Processing System 2 (DCPS2) will be the single, national case processing system utilized by DDSs to adjudicate our disability determinations. We will continue to rollout DCPS2 to all the State DDSs, which will provide increased efficiencies and improved customer service through business process modernizations. We are bringing decision support tools using artificial intelligence technologies, machine learning, and predictive analytics to many aspects of the disability determination process to improve decisional accuracy and policy compliance.

### *SSI Simplification Administratively*

We recognize the importance of removing administrative burdens that challenge the efficient and compassionate administration and delivery of our programs. We are undertaking a thorough review of the SSI filing experience, business process, policy, regulations, law, and software capability. We are exploring ways to make filing the SSI application easier by considering how our customers experience the application process. We are researching how SSI applicants understand the application questions, how the user interacts with us and the application, and will use this data to inform how the application and process should look. We plan to deliver an application that is user-centered, responsive, intuitive, equitable, easy to use, and accessible online.

## BUDGET SUMMARY: *ENSURING STEWARDSHIP OF SSA PROGRAMS*

### *Looking Toward the Future*

The Administration remains committed to protecting and strengthening Social Security, including supporting the goals of addressing and improving the program's financial outlook over the long term, and of pursuing policies that improve equity and fairness.

We look for ways to do business better, such as addressing root causes of improper payments, sharing best practices, providing our technicians better tools and training to do their jobs, and applying sound management principles to everyday work processes. To pursue policies that ensure equity and fairness, we will identify potential barriers to access for contracts, grants, and procurement. We plan to identify and bolster open competition in the acquisition and grants process, including disseminating proposal requests more widely to ensure broad opportunities and responses.

### *Supporting Our Cost-Effective Program Integrity Work*

Our funding request helps ensure individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and it safeguards the integrity of benefit programs to better serve recipients by confirming eligibility, improving payment accuracy for both overpayments and underpayments, and preventing fraud. Dedicated program integrity funding helped us eliminate the CDR backlog in FY 2018. In addition, program integrity funding allows us to conduct SSI redeterminations, expand the anti-fraud CDI program, and support special attorneys for fraud prosecutions. During a critical time in the pandemic, we temporarily deferred certain workloads, such as medical CDRs, so we could prioritize service to the public and maintain beneficiaries' payments and healthcare. In addition, we initially implemented a moratorium on scheduling in-person consultative exams to protect the safety of claimants and reduce the burden on the medical community.

These actions resulted in a decrease in completed CDRs and prevented us from maintaining currency in FYs 2020 and 2021. We are restoring our PI workloads to pre-pandemic levels and anticipate eliminating the CDR backlog in FY 2023 by increasing processing capacity to handle more reviews. We plan to process approximately 700,000 CDRs and about 2.2 million SSI redeterminations in FY 2023.

The proposed $1.8 billion in discretionary funding, including a $1.5 billion allocation adjustment, is essential in providing the dedicated resources supporting the effective stewardship of program dollars. Access to approximately $19 billion in discretionary funding over 10 years, including approximately $16 billion in allocation adjustments, would produce $75 billion in gross Federal savings ($51 billion from allocation adjustments, with net deficit savings of approximately $35 billion in the 10-year window and additional savings in the outyears). For additional details please see our program integrity exhibit in our corresponding technical materials, LAE section.

### *Enhancing Our Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities*

We partner with OIG, State DDSs, and State and local law enforcement to operate CDI units. The primary mission of these units is to investigate suspected fraud before we award benefits and during the CDR process. In FY 2022, we will provide coverage to the 3 remaining States (Alaska, Delaware, and Pennsylvania), achieving our goal to cover all 50 States and U.S. territories by October 2022.

We are improving the use of data analytics and predictive modeling to enhance fraud prevention and detection activities. With these models, we can better identify suspicious and evolving patterns of concerning activities in our workloads, allowing us to proactively detect and prevent fraud before issuing payments.

### *Enhancing Our Payment Accuracy Efforts*

This Budget supports streamlining and modernizing our debt management systems; improving our death data processing; and refining the way we collect and use data to improve payment accuracy. These efforts would increase collection options for individuals, bring efficiency to our workloads to help ensure individuals receive the correct payment amounts, and protect personally identifiable information. We are also providing our beneficiaries additional options for repaying their debts, such as our Pay.gov website. For additional detail see our Improper Payment exhibit in our corresponding technical materials, LAE section.

### *Addressing the Climate Crisis*

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment to everyone, including those we serve. As a result, we created our *Climate Action Plan* outlining SSA's climate adaptation actions to address climate risks and vulnerabilities. Our plan demonstrates our commitment to conserve resources by encouraging employees and contractors to reduce energy consumption and water usage, reduce the amount of waste produced, and promote re-use and recycling whenever possible. Further, our plan calls for us to install renewable energy technology, use as much pollution-free electricity as possible, and reduce emissions from our vehicles and heating plants.

We will also bolster our efforts to tackle the climate crisis through investments in our infrastructure.

We are committed to adapting to climate change by following the National Climate Assessment reports and flood-plain maps that will increase our capability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate risk vulnerabilities. We will also consider climate change adaptation when we make operating, planning, purchasing, and budgetary decisions. We will continue improving our understanding of climate change risks through interagency initiatives and the National Climate Task Force established through Executive Order 14008 *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. Additionally, we will improve environmental stewardship by setting environmental goals, measuring progress, taking corrective action where necessary, and communicating the results.

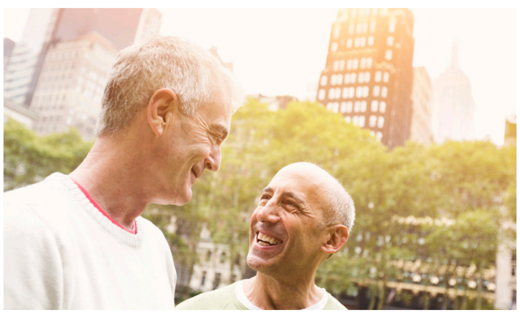
## *Investing in Cybersecurity to Safeguard our Data*

We are well-positioned to implement the cybersecurity measures under Executive Order 14028, *Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity*. We must be vigilant and protect against network intrusions and improper access of data by strengthening our defensive cyber capabilities, sharing cyber threat information with our Federal and industry partners, and making new investments to establish a Zero Trust Architecture. For additional details see our IT exhibit in our corresponding technical materials, LAE section.







Securing today
and tomorrow

**Social Security Administration** | Publication No. 22-017 | March 2022
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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

# FY 2023 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

## Key Tables

### Table i.1 - Summary Table of SSA's Appropriation Request

| FY 2023 | FTE | Amount |
|---|---|---|
| Payments to Social Security Trust Funds | | $ 11,000,000 |
| Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program | - | - |
| FY 2023 Request | - | $ 48,828,722,000[1] |
| FY 2024 First Quarter Advance | - | $ 15,800,000,000 |
| Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) | 59,433[2] | $ 14,773,300,000[3] |
| Office of the Inspector General (OIG) | 532 | $ 117,500,000 |

[1] Excludes $15,600,000,000, previously reported in the FY 2022 President's Budget as a first quarter advance for FY 2023.

[2] FTEs include those funded from dedicated funding for program integrity, for reimbursable work, and for the Medicare Low-Income Subsidy Program. FTEs do not include those funded for the Medicare Savings Program (75 FTEs) and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (10 FTEs).

[3] Includes $140,000,000 for SSI State Supplementary user fees and up to $1,000,000 for non-attorney user fees.

**Table i.2 – SSA Full Time Equivalents and Workyears**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | Change FY 22/FY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SSA Full Time Equivalents | 59,195 | 58,201 | 59,218 | 1,017 |
| SSA Overtime/Lump Sum Leave | 1,917 | 968 | 3,250 | 2,282 |
| **Subtotal, SSA Workyears[1,2]** | **61,112** | **59,169** | **62,468** | **3,299** |
| Disability Determination Services (DDS) Workyears | 13,758 | 13,581 | 14,272 | 691 |
| **Subtotal, SSA and DDS Workyears** | **74,870** | **72,750** | **76,740** | **3,990** |
| OIG Full Time Equivalents | 499 | 487 | 532 | 45 |
| OIG Overtime/Lump Sum Leave | 6 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| **Subtotal, OIG Workyears** | **505** | **493** | **538** | **45** |
| **TOTAL SSA/DDS/OIG WORKYEARS** | **75,375** | **73,243** | **77,278** | **4,035** |

[1] Workyears include those funded from dedicated funding to reduce the hearings backlog, dedicated funding for IT modernization, dedicated funding for program integrity, dedicated funding to assist Treasury in administering the second economic impact payment, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, MACRA, MSP, SCHIP, and LIS. The workyears do not include those funded from reimbursable work.

[2] Due to variations in the reporting of Full-Time Equivalents, the workyears included in this table will not match those included in the Budget Appendix.

**Table i.3 – SSA Outlays by Program (in millions)[1]**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | Change FY 22/FY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Trust Fund Programs** | | | | |
| Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) | $991,291 | $1,076,652 | $1,168,527 | $91,875 |
| Disability Insurance (DI) | $143,396 | $143,049 | $150,612 | $7,563 |
| **Subtotal, Trust Fund Programs** | **$1,134,687** | **$1,219,701** | **$1,319,139** | **$99,438** |
| **General Fund Programs** | | | | |
| Supplemental Security Income (SSI) | $60,154 | $65,939 | $64,367 | -$1,573 |
| Special Benefits for Certain World War II Veterans | $1 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Subtotal, General Fund Programs** | **$60,155** | **$65,939** | **$64,367** | **-$1,573** |
| **TOTAL SSA Outlays, Current Law** | **$1,194,842** | **$1,285,640** | **$1,383,506** | **$97,865** |
| Percent change from FY 2022 | | | | 7.61% |
| **Proposed General Fund Legislation** | | | | |
| Increase Afghan Special Immigrant Visas | $0 | $0 | $15 | $15 |
| Treat Certain Populations as Refugees for Public Benefits | $0 | $0 | $1 | $1 |
| **Subtotal Outlays, Proposed General Fund Legislation** | **$0** | **$0** | **$16** | **$16** |
| **TOTAL SSA Outlays, Current & Proposed Law** | **$1,194,842** | **$1,285,640** | **$1,383,522** | **$97,881** |

**Table i.4 – Current Law- OASDI Outlays and Income (in millions)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | Change FY 22/FY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outlays** | | | | |
| OASI Benefits | $982,657 | $1,067,494 | $1,158,897 | $91,403 |
| DI Benefits | $140,591 | $140,034 | $147,330 | $7,296 |
| Other[2] | $11,439 | $12,173 | $12,912 | $739 |
| **TOTAL OUTLAYS, Current Law** | **$1,134,687** | **$1,219,701** | **$1,319,139** | **$99,438** |
| **Income** | | | | |
| OASI | $935,909 | $1,024,648 | $1,067,973 | $43,325 |
| DI | $144,395 | $159,244 | $167,208 | $7,964 |
| **TOTAL INCOME, Current Law** | **$1,080,304** | **$1,183,892** | **$1,235,181** | **$51,289** |

[1] Totals may not equal sums of component parts due to rounding.
[2] "Other" includes SSA & non-SSA administration expenses, beneficiary services, payment to the Railroad Retirement Board, and demonstration projects.

### Table i.5 – Current Law- OASDI Beneficiaries and Average Benefit Payments (in thousands)

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | Change FY 22/FY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Average Number of Beneficiaries** | | | | |
| OASI | 55,344 | 56,461 | 57,713 | 1,252 |
| DI | 9,562 | 9,177 | 8,931 | -246 |
| **TOTAL BENEFICIARIES** | **64,906** | **65,638** | **66,644** | **1,006** |
| **Average Monthly Benefit** | | | | |
| Retired Worker | $1,544 | $1,640 | $1,741 | $101 |
| Disabled Worker | $1,277 | $1,342 | $1,410 | $68 |
| Projected COLA Payable in January | 1.3% | 5.9% | 4.3% | -1.6% |

### Table i.6 – Current Law- Supplemental Security Income Outlays (in millions)[1]

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | Change FY 22/FY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Federal Benefits[2] | $55,528 | $61,206 | $59,225 | -$1,981 |
| Other[3] | $4,615 | $4,775 | $5,141 | $365 |
| **Subtotal, Federal Outlays** | $60,143 | $65,981 | $64,366 | -$1,616 |
| State Supplementary Benefits | $2,441 | $3,155 | $3,145 | -$10 |
| State Supplementary Reimbursements | -$2,430 | -$3,197 | -$3,144 | $53 |
| **Subtotal, Net State Supplementary Payments[4]** | $11 | -$42 | $1 | $43 |
| **TOTAL OUTLAYS, Current Law** | **$60,154** | **$65,939** | **$64,367** | **-$1,573** |

[1] Totals may not equal sums of component parts due to rounding.
[2] There are 12 payments per year in FY 2021 and FY 2023. There are 13 payments in FY 2022.
[3] "Other" includes beneficiary services, research, and administrative expenses.
[4] States must reimburse us in advance for State Supplementary Payments. There will always be 12 State reimbursements in each fiscal year, but there can be 11, 12, or 13 benefit payments per fiscal year because a monthly payment is advanced into the end of the previous month anytime the due date falls on a weekend or holiday. Hence, the "Net State Supplementary Payment" numbers vary from year-to-year depending on the timing of the October benefit payments at the beginning and end of each fiscal year.

**Table i.7 – SSI Recipients and Benefit Payments[1]**

**(Recipients in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | Change FY 22/FY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Average Number of SSI Recipients** | | | | |
| Federal Recipients | | | | |
| Aged | 1,076 | 1,077 | 1,085 | 8 |
| Blind or Disabled | 6,666 | 6,496 | 6,384 | -112 |
| **SUBTOTAL, FEDERAL RECIPIENTS** | **7,742** | **7,573** | **7,469** | **-104** |
| State Supplement Recipients (with no Federal SSI payment) | 137 | 137 | 144 | 7 |
| **TOTAL SSI RECIPIENTS, Current Law** | **7,879** | **7,711** | **7,613** | **-98** |
| *SSI Federal Recipients Concurrently Receiving* | | | | |
| *OASDI Benefits (included above)* | 2,625 | 2,578 | 2,555 | -23 |
| **Average Monthly Benefit** | | | | |
| Aged | $431 | $456 | $481 | $25 |
| Blind and Disabled | $617 | $648 | $680 | $32 |
| **AVERAGE, All SSI Recipients** | **$591** | **$620** | **$651** | **$31** |
| Projected COLA Payable in January | 1.3% | 5.9% | 4.3% | -1.6% |

**Table i.8 – Special Benefits for Certain WWII Veterans Overview**
**(Outlays in millions)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | Change FY 22/FY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Federal Benefits | $1 | $0[1] | $0[1] | $0 |
| Administration[2] | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **TOTAL OUTLAYS** | **$1** | $0[1] | $0[1] | **$0** |
| Average Number of Beneficiaries | 158 | 102 | 61 | -41 |
| Average Monthly Benefit | $298 | $337 | $353 | $16 |

[1] Totals may not equal sums of component parts due to rounding.
[2] Less than $500,000.

**Table i.9 – Administrative Outlays as a Percent of Trust Fund Income and Benefit Payments - FY 2023 (in millions)**

| | Administrative Outlays | Trust Fund Income | Percent of Trust Fund Income |
|---|---|---|---|
| OASI | $3,543 | $1,067,973 | 0.3% |
| DI | $2,879 | $167,208 | 1.7% |
| **OASDI (combined)** | **$6,422** | **$1,235,181** | **0.5%** |

| | Administrative Outlays | Benefit Payments | Percent of Benefit Payments |
|---|---|---|---|
| OASI | $3,543 | $1,158,897 | 0.3% |
| DI | $2,879 | $147,330 | 2.0% |
| **Subtotal, OASDI (combined)** | **$6,422** | **$1,306,227** | **0.5%** |
| SSI (Federal and State) | $5,064 | $62,370 | 8.1% |
| Other[1] | $3,277 | - | - |
| **TOTAL** | **$14,763** | **$1,368,597** | **1.1%** |

[1] Includes administrative outlays for Hospital Insurance and Supplemental Medical Insurance ($3.169 billion), administrative outlays from the General Fund to OIG, SCHIP, MIPPA LIS ($39 million), and reimbursables ($69 million). Our calculation of discretionary administrative expenses excludes Treasury administrative expenses, which are mandatory outlays.

**Table i.10 – Tax Rates, Wage Base and Economic Assumptions**

| | CY 2021 | CY 2022 | CY 2023 | Change CY 22/CY 23 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Employer/Employee Rates (each)** | | | | |
| OASDI (Social Security) | 6.20% | 6.20% | 6.20% | 0.0% |
| Hospital Insurance (HI) (Medicare) | 1.45% | 1.45% | 1.45% | 0.0% |
| **EMPLOYEE TOTAL** | **7.65%** | **7.65%** | **7.65%** | 0.0% |
| **Self-Employment Rates** | | | | |
| OASDI (Social Security) | 12.40% | 12.40% | 12.40% | 0.0% |
| HI (Medicare) | 2.90% | 2.90% | 2.90% | 0.0% |
| **TOTAL** | **15.30%** | **15.30%** | **15.30%** | 0.0% |
| **Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)** | | | | |
| January | 1.3% | 5.9% | 4.3% | -1.6% |
| **Contribution and Benefit Base** | | | | |
| OASDI | $142,800 | $147,000 | $156,300 | $9,300 |
| HI | (no cap) | (no cap) | (no cap) | |
| **Annual Retirement Test** | | | | |
| Year Individual Reaches Full Retirement Age (FRA)[1] | $50,520 | $51,960 | $55,200 | $3,240 |
| Under Full Retirement Age | $18,960 | $19,560 | $20,760 | $1,200 |
| **Wages Required for a Quarter of Coverage** | $1,470 | $1,510 | $1,600 | $90 |

[1] For months prior to attaining FRA. There is no limit on earnings beginning the month an individual attains full retirement age.

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## CONTENTS

## TABLES

## APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

### PAYMENTS TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUNDS[1]

*For payment to the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund, as provided under sections 201(m) and 1131(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, $11,000,000.*

*Note – A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117–43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.*

[1] Social Security checks, like those issued by other Federal agencies, are negotiable for only 12 months from their date of issue. Under the "Limited Payability" procedure, the value of unnegotiated checks issued on or after October 1, 1989, is credited directly to the trust funds from Treasury's general fund when the checks are canceled. These funds do not pass through the Payments to Social Security Trust Funds account, but the interest adjustments do pass through this account.

Section 1131 of the Social Security Act requires the Commissioner of Social Security to furnish information regarding deferred vested pension rights to pension plan participants (and their dependents or survivors). It permits the administrative expenses of carrying out this pension reform work to be funded initially from the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) Trust Fund through SSA's Limitation on Administrative Expenses and authorizes an annual appropriation of Federal funds to reimburse the OASI Trust Fund.

## GENERAL STATEMENT

The Payments to the Social Security Trust Funds (PTF) account provides Federal fund payments to the Social Security trust funds for several distinct activities. The purpose of each requested payment is to put the trust funds in the same financial position they would have been in had they not borne the cost of certain benefits or administrative expenses chargeable to general revenues. This account includes payments requiring an annual appropriation and payments made to the trust funds under permanent indefinite authority.

### ANNUAL APPROPRIATION

The annual PTF appropriation provides reimbursement to the Social Security trust funds for non-trust fund activities. These activities include pension reform and interest on unnegotiated checks. Listed below is the estimated annual appropriation and resulting obligations for FY 2023.

**Table 1.1—Annual Appropriation and Obligations (In thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | $11,000 | $11,000 | **$11,000** | ***$0*** |
| **Obligations**[1] | $4,167 | $11,050 | **$11,050** | ***$0*** |

### PERMANENT INDEFINITE AUTHORITY

Amounts not subject to the annual appropriation include: (1) receipts from Federal income taxation of Social Security benefits; (2) Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) and Self-Employment Contribution Act (SECA) tax credits; (3) reimbursement for Federal employee union administrative expenses; and (4) reimbursement for the loss in FICA tax revenue resulting from the payroll tax holiday provided by the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 and extended by the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011. The permanent appropriation provides that the trust funds be credited for each of these revenue items.

**Taxation of Social Security Benefits**

The Social Security Amendments of 1983 provide for taxation of up to one-half of Social Security benefits in excess of certain income thresholds. The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1993, P.L. 103-66, amended this provision so that up to 85 percent of benefits could be subject to taxation. The additional amounts collected from this 1993 provision are paid to the Hospital

[1] The obligations include Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefits Act activity, funded from unobligated balances carried forward from prior years. These funds, provided in FYs 1996 and 1997, remain available until expended to reimburse the trust funds.

Insurance (HI) Trust Fund; no additional income is due to the Social Security trust funds resulting from the enactment of the 1993 law.

Section 733 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, P.L. 103-465, also increased the taxable portion of nonresident aliens' Social Security benefits from 50 percent to 85 percent. The Offices of the General Counsel at SSA and at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, agreed that the additional income resulting from the law should go to the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) trust funds as opposed to the HI Trust Fund.

The taxes are collected as Federal income taxes; subsequently, an equivalent payment to the Social Security trust funds is made from the general funds of the Treasury. Transfers of estimated aggregate tax liabilities arising from Social Security benefits of U.S. citizens are made quarterly and then adjusted as actual receipts are known. The estimated income from these taxes is $48,240 million in FY 2022 and $50,649 million in FY 2023 from U.S. citizens; the taxes imposed on aliens are withheld from benefit payments and will generate estimated income of $268 million in FY 2022 and $290 million in FY 2023. The estimates for taxation of benefits reflect corresponding growth related to benefit levels and the beneficiary population.

**FICA and SECA Tax Credits**

The Social Security Amendments of 1983 also provided for the granting of FICA and SECA tax credits to individuals. The tax credits are granted at the time the individual is taxed and are funded by the general funds of the Treasury through reimbursement to the trust funds. The FICA tax credit applies only to wages earned in calendar year 1984. The SECA tax credit applies from calendar year 1984 through calendar year 1989. There are small periodic adjustments made due to tax credits being applied retroactively.

**Reimbursement for Employee Union Expenses**

In addition to taxation of benefits and tax credits, the PTF account includes reimbursement to the trust funds from general funds, including interest, for certain administrative expenses incurred in support of Federal employee union activities. In FYs 2022 and 2023, $11 million will be funded initially by SSA's Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) appropriation.

**Reimbursement for Payroll Tax Holiday**

P.L. 111-312, the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010, reduced employees' payroll contributions from 6.2 percent to 4.2 percent for calendar year 2011. P.L. 112-78, the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011, amended P.L. 111-312 to extend the reduced payroll contributions through February 29, 2012. On February 22, 2012, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-96) extended the reduced rate through December 31, 2012. The general funds reimburse the trust funds for this loss in tax revenue. While the law has expired, we expect additional adjustments for prior years will continue to occur. We estimate that there will be a -$1 million prior year adjustment for FY 2022.

## BUDGETARY RESOURCES

The FY 2023 annual appropriation request for PTF is $11,000,000. We expect to make $50,961,000,000 in payments to the trust funds in FY 2023, including amounts appropriated under permanent indefinite authority.

**Table 1.2—Amounts Available for Obligation[1]**
**(In thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Annual Appropriation** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** |
| **Permanent Appropriation** | **$34,807,619** | **$48,518,000** | **$50,950,000** |
| Total Appropriation | $34,818,619 | $48,529,000 | $50,961,000 |
| Unobligated Balance, Start-of-Year | $12,822 | $12,822 | $12,772 |
| **Subtotal Budgetary Resources** | **$34,831,441** | **$48,541,822** | **$50,973,772** |
| **Obligations** | **($34,811,786)** | **($48,529,050)** | **($50,961,050)** |
| Unobligated Balance, End-of-Year | $12,822 | $12,772 | $12,722 |
| Unobligated Balance, Lapsing | $6,833 | $0 | $0 |

The "Start-of-Year" and "End-of-Year" unobligated balances represent funds appropriated for the Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefits Act (CIRHBA) in FYs 1996 and 1997 and made available until expended. The lapsed unobligated balance represents the amount of the annual appropriation not obligated in the current year.

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.

## ANALYSIS OF CHANGES

The FY 2023 annual appropriation request is the same as the FY 2022 level. The obligations reported below include CIRHBA activity, funded from unobligated balances carried forward from prior years. These funds, provided in FYs 1996 and 1997, remain available until expended.

**Table 1.3—Summary of Changes**
**(In thousands)**

| | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** | ***$0*** |
| **Obligations** | **$11,050** | **$11,050** | ***$0*** |

## BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS BY ACTIVITY

The table below displays the budget authority and obligations for each of the PTF activities funded by the annual appropriation. Prior year unobligated balances fund CIRHBA obligations.

**Table 1.4—New Budget Authority & Obligations, Annual Authority[1]**
**(In thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | | | |
| Pension Reform | $6,000 | $6,000 | $6,000 |
| Unnegotiated Checks | $5,000 | $5,000 | $5,000 |
| Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefits | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Total Annual Appropriation** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** |
| **Obligations** | | | |
| Pension Reform | $2,644 | $6,000 | $6,000 |
| Unnegotiated Checks | $1,523 | $5,000 | $5,000 |
| Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefits | $0 | $50 | $50 |
| **Total Obligations** | **$4,167** | **$11,050** | **$11,050** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.

## Payments to the Social Security Trust Funds

The table below displays budget authority and obligations for the PTF activities not subject to the annual appropriation. This includes taxation of benefits, FICA and SECA tax credits, reimbursement for certain union administrative expenses, and reimbursement for the employee payroll tax holiday. The actual amount appropriated for these activities is determined by the actual amount collected from, or to be reimbursed for, each activity.

**Table 1.5—Budget Authority and Obligations, Permanent Indefinite Authority (In thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | | | |
| Reimb. for Union Administrative Expenses | $4,440 | $11,000 | $11,000 |
| Employee Payroll Tax Holiday[1] | $1,883 | -$1,000 | $0 |
| Taxation of Benefits, U.S. | $34,555,996 | $48,240,000 | $50,649,000 |
| Taxation of Benefits, Nonresident Alien | $245,300 | $268,000 | $290,000 |
| FICA Tax Credits | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| SECA Tax Credits | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Total Permanent Appropriation** | **$34,807,619** | **$48,518,00** | **$50,950,000** |
| **Obligations** | | | |
| Reimb. for Union Administrative Expenses | $4,440 | $11,000 | $11,000 |
| Employee Payroll Tax Holiday | $1,883 | -$1,000 | $0 |
| Taxation of Benefits, U.S. | $34,555,996 | $48,240,000 | $50,649,000 |
| Taxation of Benefits, Nonresident Alien | $245,300 | $268,000 | $290,000 |
| FICA Tax Credits | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| SECA Tax Credits | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Total Obligations** | **$34,807,619** | **$48,518,000** | **$50,950,000** |

[1] P.L. 111-312, the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010, reduced employees' payroll contributions from 6.2 percent to 4.2 percent for calendar year 2011. P.L. 112-78, the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011 amended P.L. 111-312 to extend the reduced payroll contributions through February 29, 2012. On February 22, 2012, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-96) extended the reduced rate through December 31, 2012. The general funds reimburse the trust funds for the loss in tax revenue (Title VI, Sec 601). While the law has expired, we expect additional adjustments for prior years will continue to occur.

## OBLIGATIONS BY OBJECT CLASS

The table below displays the obligations by object class for the total PTF account (annually and permanently appropriated funds).

**Table 1.6—Obligations by Object**
**(In thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Other Services** | $8,607 | $22,050 | $22,050 |
| **Financial Transfers** | $34,801,296 | $48,508,000 | $50,939,000 |
| **Financial Transfers: Employee Payroll Tax Holiday** | $1,883 | -$1,000 | $0 |
| **Total Obligations** | **$34,811,786** | **$48,529,050** | **$50,961,050** |

## BACKGROUND

### AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The Social Security Act sections described below authorize the PTF account.

**Table 1.7—Authorizing Legislation**
**(In thousands)**

| | Amount Authorized | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pension Reform: S.S. Act, Section 1131(b)(2) | Indefinite | $6,000 | $6,000 | $6,000 |
| Unnegotiated Checks: S.S. Act, Section 201(m); Social Security Amendments of 1983, Section 152 | Indefinite | $5,000 | $5,000 | $5,000 |
| Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefits: Internal Revenue Code of 1986, Sections 9704 and 9706; Energy Policy Act of 1992, Section 19141[1] | Indefinite | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Subtotal Annual PTF Appropriation** | | **$11,000** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** |
| Reimbursement for Union Administrative Expenses: FY 2002 Social Security Appropriations Act | Permanent Indefinite | $4,440 | $11,000 | $11,000 |
| Employee Payroll Tax Holiday: P.L. 111-312, Section 601, As Amended By Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act: P.L. 112-78 | Permanent Indefinite | $1,883 | -$1,000 | $0 |
| Taxation of Benefits, U.S.: Social Security Amendments of 1983, Section 121 | Permanent Indefinite | $34,555,996 | $48,240,000 | $50,649,000 |
| Taxation of Benefits, Nonresident Aliens: Social Security Amendments of 1983, Section 121 | Permanent Indefinite | $245,300 | $268,000 | $290,000 |
| FICA/SECA Tax Credits: Social Security Amendments of 1983, Section 124(b) | Permanent Indefinite | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Subtotal Permanent PTF Appropriation** | | **$34,807,619** | **$48,518,000** | **$50,950,000** |
| **Total Appropriation** | | **$34,818,619** | **$48,529,000** | **$50,961,000** |

[1] We do not request additional funds because the balance of the $10,000,000 per year appropriated in FYs 1996 and 1997 remains available until expended to reimburse the trust funds.

## APPROPRIATION HISTORY

The table below displays our annual appropriation request, amounts approved by the House and Senate, and the amount Congress ultimately appropriated. This does not include amounts appropriated under permanent authority.

**Table 1.8—Appropriation History Table**

| Fiscal Year | Budget Estimate to Congress | House Committee Passed | Senate Committee Passed | Enacted Appropriation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 | $20,402,000 | - - -[1] | $20,404,000[2] | $20,404,000[3] |
| 2014 | $16,400,000 | - - -[4] | $16,400,000[5] | $16,400,000[6] |
| 2015 | $16,400,000 | $16,400,000[7] | - - -[8] | $16,400,000[9] |
| 2016 | $20,400,000 | $20,400,000[10] | $20,400,000[11] | $11,400,000[12] |
| 2017 | $11,400,000 | $11,400,000[13] | $11,400,000[14] | $11,400,000[15] |
| 2018 | $11,400,000 | $11,400,000[16] | $11,400,000[17] | $11,400,000[18] |
| 2019 | $11,000,000 | $11,000,000[19] | $11,000,000[20] | $11,000,000[21] |
| 2020 | $11,000,000 | $11,000,000[22] | $11,000,000[23] | $11,000,000[24] |
| 2021 | $11,000,000 | $11,000,000[25] | - - -[26] | $11,000,000[27] |
| 2022 | $11,000,000 | $11,000,000[28] | - - -[29] | |
| **2023** | **$11,000,000** | | | |

[1] The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

[2] S. 3295.

[3] Department of Defense, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6).

[4] The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

[5] S. 1284.

[6] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76).

[7] H.R. 83.

[8] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

[9] Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).

[10] H.R. 3020.

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[11] S. 1695.

[12] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113).

[13] H.R. 5926.

[14] S. 3040.

[15] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L 115-31).

[16] H.R. 3358.

[17] S. 1771.

[18] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L 115-141).

[19] H.R. 6470.

[20] S. 3158.

[21] Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L 115-245).

[22] H.R. 2740.

[23] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

[24] Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020 in the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94).

[25] H.R. 7614.

[26] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

[27] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260).

[28] H.R. 4502.

[29] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

## PENSION REFORM

**Authorizing Legislation:** Section 1131(b)(2) of the Social Security Act.

### PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

The purpose of this payment is to reimburse the OASI Trust Fund for the cost of certain pension reform activities chargeable to Federal funds.

**Table 1.9—Pension Reform: Budget Authority**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Budget Authority** | $6,000,000 | $6,000,000 | **$6,000,000** | *$0* |

The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, P.L. 93-406 (Pension Reform Act, also known as ERISA) established section 1131 of the Social Security Act. This requires the Commissioner of Social Security to furnish information regarding deferred vested pension rights to pension plan participants (and their dependents or survivors), either upon request or automatically upon application for retirement, survivors, or disability insurance benefits.

Each time an employee leaves employment that earned him or her vested rights to a pension, we receive related information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in either paper or electronic format. We control, scan (using optical character recognition), and, if necessary, key the paper forms and transfer the data to the ERISA mainframe system. We add these data, along with electronic data received from the IRS, to the ERISA Master Files after the name is verified against the NUMIDENT (SSN record) database. Each month, we compare an activity file of new benefit applications to the ERISA Master Files. We send an ERISA notice of pension plan eligibility to individuals included in both the activity file and the ERISA Master Files. This notice includes the information the worker needs to contact the pension plan administrator. We also resolve exceptions and respond to inquiries from employers and the public.

Section 1131(b)(1) permits the administrative expenses of carrying out this pension reform work to be funded initially from the OASI Trust Fund through our LAE account. Section 1131(b)(2) authorizes an annual appropriation of Federal funds to reimburse the OASI Trust Fund. To the extent that resources needed to process this workload exceed the budget authority available for reimbursement in the current year, we make reimbursement to the OASI Trust Fund at the beginning of the subsequent year, including interest as appropriate. We began to incur pension reform administrative expenses in FY 1977.

**Table 1.10—Pension Reform: Obligations**

| Fiscal Year | Obligations |
|---|---|
| FY 2013 | $2,521,092 |
| FY 2014 | $1,010,592 |
| FY 2015 | $858,477 |
| FY 2016 | $1,421,941 |
| FY 2017 | $881,832 |
| FY 2018 | $1,582,104 |
| FY 2019 | $1,000,827 |
| FY 2020 | $862,908 |
| FY 2021 | $2,643,759 |
| FY 2022 Estimate | $6,000,000 |
| **FY 2023 Estimate** | **$6,000,000** |

## RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

The FY 2023 budget requests $6,000,000 to reimburse the OASI Trust Fund for the cost of carrying out our responsibilities under the Pension Reform Act. The FY 2023 request is the same as the FY 2022 level. The table below summarizes the recent trend of pension coverage report receipts:

**Table 1.11—Receipts from Pension Coverage Reports**

| Fiscal Year | Pension Coverage Report Receipts |
|---|---|
| FY 2013 | 3,810,675 |
| FY 2014 | 8,156,306 |
| FY 2015 | 6,310,851 |
| FY 2016 | 7,964,997 |
| FY 2017 | 7,061,212 |
| FY 2018 | 7,243,179 |
| FY 2019 | 6,414,367 |
| FY 2020 | 6,706,157 |
| **FY 2021** | **7,091,453** |

## UNNEGOTIATED CHECKS

**Authorizing Legislation:** Section 201(m) of the Social Security Act and Section 152 of P.L. 98-21.

### PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

The purpose of this payment is to reimburse the OASI and DI Trust Funds for the value of interest on benefit checks cashed after 6 months or subsequently canceled.

**Table 1.12—Unnegotiated Checks: Budget Authority**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Budget Authority** | $5,000,000 | $5,000,000 | **$5,000,000** | *$0* |

This activity was originally established to reimburse the trust funds for uncashed benefit checks and accrued interest. Beginning October 1, 1989, Social Security checks, like those issued by other Federal agencies, are negotiable for only 12 months from their date of issue under the provisions of the Competitive Equality Banking Act (CEBA) of 1987 (P.L. 100-86). In the 14th month after issue, the Department of the Treasury prepares a listing of checks outstanding from each agency, cancels those checks, and refunds the value of checks canceled to the authorizing agencies. Under this "Limited Payability" procedure, the value of unnegotiated checks issued on or after October 1, 1989, are credited directly to the trust funds from Treasury's general fund when the checks are canceled, pursuant to P.L. 100-86. These funds do not pass through the PTF account. However, the interest adjustment must be paid through this account because CEBA made no provision for it.

This appropriation funds the estimated ongoing level of activity and represents the value of interest for unnegotiated OASDI benefit checks.

**Table 1.13—Unnegotiated Checks: Obligations**

| Fiscal Year | Obligations |
|---|---|
| FY 2013 | $3,082,985 |
| FY 2014 | $2,698,386 |
| FY 2015 | $2,989,099 |
| FY 2016 | $2,091,901 |
| FY 2017 | $2,028,629 |
| FY 2018 | $2,402,793 |
| FY 2019 | $2,941,121 |
| FY 2020 | $2,575,849 |
| FY 2021 | $1,523,486 |
| **FY 2022 Estimate** | **$5,000,000** |
| **FY 2023 Estimate** | **$5,000,000** |

The actual interest reflects the ongoing shift of benefit payments from paper checks to direct deposit. On December 21, 2010, the Department of the Treasury published a final rule amending 31 Code of Federal Regulations Part 208 to require recipients of Federal benefits and nontax payments to receive their payments by electronic funds transfer. People who apply for Social Security benefits on or after May 1, 2011, receive their payments electronically. Many people who previously received Federal benefit checks before May 1, 2011, have switched to electronic payments. As a result, the final rule has decreased the volume of unnegotiated benefit checks, and we expect this trend to continue. Benefits paid via direct deposit bypass the mechanism in which there is the possibility of an uncashed check. However, the effect of the growth in direct deposit participation on unnegotiated check interest is somewhat offset by increases in the number of beneficiaries and in the average monthly benefit payments. The following table summarizes the recent trend in the percentage of OASDI beneficiaries enrolled in the direct deposit payment program.

**Table 1.14—Direct Deposit Participation Rate**

| Fiscal Year | Direct Deposit Participation Rate |
|---|---|
| FY 2013 | 98% |
| FY 2014 | 99% |
| FY 2015 | 99% |
| FY 2016 | 99% |
| FY 2017 | 99% |
| FY 2018 | 99% |
| FY 2019 | 99% |
| FY 2020 | 99% |
| **FY 2021** | **99%** |

## RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

The FY 2023 request is for $5,000,000 to reimburse the OASDI trust funds for the value of interest on unnegotiated checks. The FY 2023 request is equal to the FY 2022 level.

**Table 1.15—Unnegotiated Checks: Budget Authority by Trust Fund**

| | FY 2022 Estimate |
|---|---|
| OASI Trust Fund | $3,000,000 |
| DI Trust Fund | $2,000,000 |
| **Total** | **$5,000,000** |

## COAL INDUSTRY RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS

**Authorizing Legislation**: Sections 9704 and 9706 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended by section 19141 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

### PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

The purpose of this payment is to reimburse the OASDI Trust Funds for work carried out under section 19141 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-486), which established the CIRHBA of 1992.

**Table 1.16—Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefits: Obligations**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **New Budget Authority** | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Obligations** | $0 | $50,000 | **$50,000** | $0 |

CIRHBA combined two existing United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) pension plans into a single fund and required that certain existing coalmine operators pay health benefit premiums for the new combined plan. The law directed the Commissioner of Social Security to:

- Search the earnings records of the group of retired coal miners covered by the combined plan;
- Determine which retirees should be assigned to which mine operators;
- Notify the involved mine operators of the names and Social Security numbers of eligible beneficiaries who have been assigned to them;
- Process appeals from operators who believe that assignments have been made incorrectly; and
- Compute the premiums based on a formula established in the Act.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

We have completed initial decisions and reviews on all of the retired miners covered under the provisions of the 1992 CIRHBA. In addition, we implemented the Coal Act provisions of the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-432), which significantly affected and restructured CIRHBA. We devoted considerable time and resources to comply with P.L. 109-432. All court cases challenging SSA's involvement in the Coal Act are now closed. We have also completed our obligation to provide yearly data on miner assignments to the UMWA Combined Benefit Fund. Our Office of the Chief Actuary continues to compute the beneficiary premiums on a yearly basis.

This account provides general fund reimbursement to the trust funds to the extent that the LAE account advances funds for SSA to carry out this work. We do not request additional funds for FY 2023 because the balance of the $10,000,000 per year appropriated in FY 1996 and in FY 1997 remains available until expended to reimburse the trust funds.

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# CONTENTS

## TABLES

## APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM

*For carrying out titles XI and XVI of the Social Security Act, section 401 of Public Law 92-603, section 212 of Public Law 93-66, as amended, and section 405 of Public Law 95-216, including payment to the Social Security trust funds for administrative expenses incurred pursuant to section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act, $48,828,722,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That any portion of the funds provided to a State in the current fiscal year and not obligated by the State during that year shall be returned to the Treasury: Provided further, That not more than $86,000,000 shall be available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act, and remain available through September 30, 2025.*

*For making, after June 15 of the current fiscal year, benefit payments to individuals under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for unanticipated costs incurred for the current fiscal year, such sums as may be necessary.*

*For making benefit payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act for the first quarter of fiscal year 2024, $15,800,000,000, to remain available until expended.*

*Note. – A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117–43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.*

## LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

The appropriation language provides us with the funds needed to carry out our responsibilities under the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. This includes the funds needed to pay Federal benefits, administer the program, and provide beneficiary services to recipients. The budget authority for these activities is made available until expended, providing us the authority to carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years. Furthermore, a portion of this funding is made available for us to conduct research and demonstration projects, which is available for three years, providing us the authority to carry over unobligated balances into the next two fiscal years.

In addition, the language provides us with indefinite authority beginning June 15, in the event Federal benefit payment obligations in FY 2023 are higher than expected, and we do not have sufficient unobligated balances to cover the difference. Consistent with previous years, the appropriation also includes an advance appropriation for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of FY 2024 to ensure the timely payment of benefits in case of a delay in the FY 2024 appropriations bill.

**Table 2.1—Appropriation Language Analysis**

| Language provision | Explanation |
|---|---|
| *“For carrying out titles XI and XVI of the Social Security Act… including payment to the Social Security trust funds for administrative expenses incurred pursuant to section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act, $48,828,722,000, to remain available until expended:”* | Appropriates funds for Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration projects under the SSI program. We may carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years. |
| *"Provided, That any portion of the funds provided to a State in the current fiscal year and not obligated by the State during that year shall be returned to the Treasury."* | Ensures that States do not carry unobligated balances of Federal funds into the subsequent fiscal year. Applies primarily to the beneficiary services activity. |
| *Provided further, That not more than $86,000,000 shall be available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act, and remain available through September 30, 2025.* | Specifies that not more than $86 million of the SSI appropriation is available for research and demonstration projects. We may carry over unobligated balances through September 30, 2025, at which point, funds are expired. |
| *"For making, after June 15 of the current fiscal year, benefit payments to individuals under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for unanticipated costs incurred for the current fiscal year, such sums as may be necessary.”* | Provides an indefinite appropriation to finance any shortfall in the definite appropriation for benefit payments during the last months of the fiscal year. |
| *"For making benefit payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act for the first quarter of fiscal year 2024, $15,800,000,000, to remain available until expended."* | Appropriates funds for benefit payments in the first quarter of the subsequent fiscal year. Ensures that recipients will continue to receive benefits during the first quarter of FY 2024 in the event of a temporary funding delay. |

## GENERAL STATEMENT

The SSI program guarantees a minimum level of income to financially needy individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled. The program was created in 1972 by Title XVI of the Social Security Act and payments began January 1974. It is Federally-administered and funded from general revenues.

Prior to the establishment of the SSI program, the Social Security Act provided means-tested assistance through three separate programs—Old-Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, and Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled. Federal law only established broad guidelines, with each State largely responsible for setting its own eligibility and payment standards. The SSI program was established to provide uniform standards across States.

**Table 2.2—Summary of Appropriations and Obligations[1]**
**(in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Appropriation | $60,058,768 | $60,058,768 | $64,428,722 | + *$4,369,954* |
| Obligations[2] | $60,245,189 | $65,901,300 | $64,498,510 | - *$1,402,790* |
| First Quarter Advance Appropriation for Subsequent Fiscal Year | $19,600,000 | $15,600,000 | $15,800,000 | +$200,000 |

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Eligibility Standards

As a means-tested program, individuals must have income and resources below specified levels to be eligible for benefits. Program rules allow some specific categories of income and resources to be either totally or partially excluded.[3] The process of evaluating eligibility and payment levels for the SSI program and addressing the accuracy of payments is inherently complex due to the program rules.

An individual's benefit payment is reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of his or her "countable income"—income less all applicable exclusions—in a given month. Income in the SSI program includes "earned income," such as wages and net earnings from self-employment and "unearned income," such as Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, deemed income from a spouse or parent, and the value of in-kind support and maintenance, such as food and shelter. Different exclusion rules apply for different types of income.

[1] Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) appropriation.
[2] Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional $18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President's Budget Appendix.
[3] The ABLE Act of 2014 created a new type of tax-advantaged account that has a limited effect on an individual's eligibility for the SSI program and other Federal means-tested programs.

## Supplemental Security Income Program

### Benefit Payments

We estimate we will pay $59.2 billion in Federal benefits to nearly 7.5 million SSI recipients in FY 2023. Including State supplementary payments, we expect to pay a total of $62.4 billion and administer payments to over 7.6 million recipients.

Federal benefit payments represent approximately 92 percent of Federal SSI spending. Administrative expenses represent about 8 percent of spending; beneficiary services and research and demonstration projects make up the remaining less than half a percent.

### Incentives for Work and Opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation

The SSI program is designed to help recipients with disabilities achieve independence by encouraging and supporting their attempts to work. The program includes a number of work incentive provisions that enable recipients who are blind or disabled to work and retain benefits. The program also includes provisions to help disabled beneficiaries obtain vocational rehabilitation and employment support services. These provisions were revised by legislation establishing the Ticket to Work program, which is discussed in more detail in the Beneficiary Services section.

### State Supplementation

Supplementation is mandatory for certain recipients who were on State rolls just prior to the creation of the Federal program on January 1, 1974. Otherwise, States are encouraged to supplement the Federal benefit and may elect to have us administer their State supplementation program. States that choose to have us administer their program reimburse us in advance and we make the payment on behalf of the State. Participating States also reimburse us for the cost of administering their program, based on a user fee schedule established by the Social Security Act. The user fee is $13.16 per SSI check payment in FY 2022 and is expected to increase to $13.79 in FY 2023. The Department of the Treasury receives the first $5.00 of each fee and we retain the amount over $5.00. Additional information regarding State supplementation can be found within the LAE section.

### Coordination with Other Programs

We play an important role in helping States administer Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Provisions in the SSI statute ensure that payments made by States or under the Social Security program are not duplicated by SSI benefits.

Generally, SSI recipients are categorically eligible for Medicaid. States may either use SSI eligibility criteria for determining Medicaid eligibility or use their own, provided the criteria are no more restrictive than the State's January 1972 medical assistance standards.

SSI recipients may also qualify for SNAP. Pursuant to section 11 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (P.L. 88-525, as amended through P.L. 116-260), we work with SSI applicants and recipients in a variety of ways to help them file for SNAP, including informing them of their potential benefits, making applications available to them, and in some cases helping them complete their applications in our field offices. We also share applicant data with a number of States in support of SNAP.

**Key Initiatives**

We continue to pursue efforts to ensure the proper management and stewardship of the SSI program. This includes a focus on reducing the major factors affecting payment accuracy, processing CDRs and non-disability redeterminations, combatting fraud, improving our debt collection tools, and using our data matching systems to detect changes in circumstances that could affect SSI eligibility. Further information on these programs can be found in our Improper Payments exhibit and the Program Integrity exhibit of the LAE section. Additional detail is also included in our Annual Performance Report (APR) and Agency Financial Report (AFR)[1].

**Outreach to People Facing Barriers**

During the pandemic, we experienced a reduction in applications for benefits, particularly SSI and disability benefits, and we are concerned that there may be many underserved Americans who needed our help but were unable to reach us due to certain pandemic operating procedures, such as field office closures to walk-in services. We have developed several initiatives to expand access to the program, including streamlining and digitizing the SSI application, enlisting the assistance of third parties who work with people facing barriers, promoting our programs through paid social media, television, and radio advertising, and sending out targeted mailers to groups most likely to be eligible for SSI. Further information on our efforts to reach underserved communities can be found in our Outreach Efforts to People Facing Barriers exhibit in the LAE section of this Congressional Justification. These outreach efforts also contribute to our strategic goal to improve equity in SSI through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities. (For additional information on the APG, please refer to page 148).

[1] Both the APR and AFR can be viewed online at https://www.ssa.gov/agency/budget-and-performance.html

## FY 2023 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST

The SSI appropriation includes funds for Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration projects. In total, the FY 2023 President's Budget request is $64,428,722,000. However, this includes $15,600,000,000 made available for the first quarter of FY 2023, requested in the FY 2022 President's Budget. The appropriation language provides us with our remaining appropriation for FY 2023, $48,828,722,000—the total amount requested for FY 2023 less the advance.

Similarly, in addition to the amount above, the request includes an advance appropriation of $15,800,000,000 for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of FY 2024. This advance is to ensure recipients continue to receive their benefits at the beginning of the subsequent fiscal year in case there is a delay in passing that year's appropriation.

**Table 2.3—Appropriation Detail [1,2]**
**(in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate[3] | FY 2023 Estimate | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Advance for Federal Benefits[4] | $19,900,000 | $19,600,000 | $15,600,000 | |
| Regular for Federal Benefits | $35,683,919 | $35,936,937 | $43,625,000 | |
| **Subtotal Federal Benefits** | **$55,583,919** | **$55,536,937** | **$59,225,000** | ***+ $3,688,063*** |
| Base Administrative Expenses | $3,004,410 | $3,281,036 | $3,489,786 | *+ $208,750* |
| Program Integrity (Base) | $225,207 | $198,235 | $239,000 | *+ $40,765* |
| Program Integrity (Adjustment) | $1,064,232 | $911,560 | $1,264,936 | *+ $353,376* |
| **Subtotal Administrative Expenses** | **$4,293,849** | **$4,390,831** | **$4,993,722** | ***+ $602,891*** |
| Beneficiary Services | $95,000 | $45,000 | $124,000 | *+ $79,000* |
| Research and Demonstration | $86,000 | $86,000 | $86,000 | *+ $0* |
| **Subtotal Advanced Appropriation** | **$19,900,000** | **$19,600,000** | **$15,600,000** | |
| **Subtotal Regular Appropriation** | **$40,158,768** | **$40,458,768** | **$48,828,722** | |
| Total Appropriation | $60,058,768 | $60,058,768 | $64,428,722 | *+ $4,369,954* |
| **Advance for Subsequent Year** | **$19,600,000** | **$15,600,000** | **$15,800,000** | ***+ $200,000*** |

1 Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplementary user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.
2 Totals may not add due to rounding.
3 Assuming a full-year continuing resolution in FY 2022, we will have to invoke indefinite authority to cover for appropriation shortage for Federal benefit payments. We estimate we will need approximately $3.3 billion in indefinite authority under a full-year continuing resolution level for FY 2022.
4 Amount provided or requested in the previous year's appropriation bill.

## BUDGETARY RESOURCES

The SSI annual appropriation consists of a regular appropriation made available by the current year's appropriation bill and an advance made available by the prior year's appropriation. This advance is for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of the subsequent fiscal year to ensure recipients continue to receive their benefits in case there is a delay in passing that year's appropriation bill. The FY 2023 President's Budget is $64,428,722,000, including $15,600,000,000, requested in the FY 2022 President's Budget.

**Table 2.4—Amounts Available for Obligation[1,2]**

**(in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regular Appropriation | $40,158,768 | $40,458,768 | $48,828,722 |
| Advanced Appropriation | $19,900,000 | $19,600,000 | $15,600,000 |
| **Total Annual Appropriation** | **$60,058,768** | **$60,058,768** | **$64,428,722** |
| Federal Unobligated Balance | $4,823,933 | $4,649,075 | $2,145,439 |
| Recovery of Prior-Year Obligations | $9,433 | $0 | $0 |
| Indefinite Authority[3] | $0 | $3,338,896 | |
| **Subtotal Federal Resources** | **$64,892,134** | **$68,046,739** | **$66,574,161** |
| State Supp. Reimbursements | $2,429,819 | $3,197,000 | $3,144,000 |
| State Supp. Unobligated Balance | $212,699 | $201,287 | $243,287 |
| **Total Budgetary Resources** | **$67,534,652** | **$71,445,026** | **$69,961,448** |
| **Federal Obligations[4]** | **$60,245,189** | **$65,901,300** | **$64,498,510** |
| State Supp. Obligations | $2,441,231 | $3,155,000 | $3,145,000 |
| **Total Obligations** | **$62,686,420** | **$69,056,300** | **$67,643,510** |
| Federal Unobligated Balance | $4,649,075 | $2,145,439 | $2,075,651 |
| State Supp. Unobligated Balance | $201,287 | $243,287 | $242,287 |
| Total Unobligated Balance | $4,850,362 | $2,388,726 | $2,317,938 |

[1] Does not include State supplementary user fees; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.
[2] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[3] Any portion of the Federal benefits carryover shown that results from indefinite authority will be returned to Treasury in the new year, as soon as the actual amount is determined.
[4] Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional $18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President's Budget Appendix.

## Supplemental Security Income Program

The SSI annual appropriation was $60.1 billion in FY 2021. The estimated FY 2022 appropriation is also $60.1 billion, reflecting the annualized level provided by the Further Additional Continuing Resolution, 2022 (P.L. 117-86). We have the authority to carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years for Federal benefit paymentsadministrative expenses, and beneficiary services because the amounts appropriated are made available until expended. We carried over approximately $4.6 billion in Federal unobligated balances into FY 2022. We expect to carry over approximately $2.1 billion into FY 2023.

In addition to these appropriated amounts, we have spending authority in the amount of the advance reimbursement we receive from States to pay their State supplementary benefits. Because States reimburse us in advance, we carry over the amount received for the October 1 payment, reimbursed at the end of September in the prior fiscal year, for use in the subsequent fiscal year.

## ANALYSIS OF CHANGES

The FY 2023 request represents an increase of over $4 billion from the FY 2022 level. Assuming an FY 2022 full-year continuing resolution, we plan to use indefinite authority and unobligated balances to partially fund Federal Benefit Payments. We also plan to use unobligated balances to partially fund beneficiary services, research and demonstration projects, and administrative expenses in FY 2022. In FY 2023, we plan to use unobligated balances to fund administrative expenses and research and demonstration projects. We plan to use approximately $2.5 billion in unobligated balances and recoveries in FY 2022 and approximately $70 million in FY 2023.

### Federal Benefit Payments

The FY 2023 request for Federal Benefit payments is nearly $3.7 billion more than the FY 2022 level. The increase in the request is due primarily to the FY 2022 annualized continuing resolution funding level. The increase is also bolstered by the the January 2022 COLA and partially offset by an increase in carryover spending and the impact of Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) COLAs on concurrent SSI/OASDI recipients. Since OASDI benefits are counted as income in the SSI program, the annual OASDI COLA decreases the SSI benefit payment for concurrent recipients.

Assuming a full-year continuing resolution for FY 2022, we will need to use $3.3 billion in indefinite authority[1] to cover for appropriation shortages for Federal benefit payments. We do not anticipate the need for any indefinite authority funding for FY 2023.
We estimate the first quarter advance for FY 2024 will be $200 million more than that of FY 2023. Monthly SSI benefit payments are made on the first of the month, unless the first falls on a weekend or Federal holiday. In that case, the payment is made on the prior business day at the end of the previous month. When October 1 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the payment is made in the prior fiscal year at the end of September. This timing of payments results in 11, 12, or 13 payments in a given fiscal year, and three or four in a given quarter. The

[1] Any portion of the Federal benefits carryover shown that results from indefinite authority will be returned to Treasury in the new year, as soon as the actual amount is determined.

first quarter in FY 2024 will only have three benefit payments, instead of the usual four payments because October 1, 2023, falls on a Sunday.

### Administrative Expenses

The FY 2023 request for administrative expenses is $603 million more than the FY 2022 level, and includes almost $1.3 billion in allocation adjustment funding for program integrity work in the SSI program. We expect to use $88 million in carryover funds in FY 2022 and $52 million in carryover funds in FY 2023 to cover estimated obligations. For details about program integrity funding and activities, please refer to the Program Integrity exhibit in the LAE section.

### Beneficiary Services

We are requesting $124 million in new authority for FY 2023. This is $79 million more than our FY 2022 estimate. Our estimate reflects the use of all carryover in FY 2022, a steady level of vocational rehabilitation reimbursement awards, and Ticket payments to Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work program. The FY 2023 request funds an estimated 5 percent increase in obligations above the FY 2022 level.

### Research and Demonstrations

The FY 2023 request for research and demonstration projects is identical to the FY 2022 level. We expect to use $12 million in carryover funds in FY 2022 and $18 million in FY 2023 in addition to our requested appropriation to cover our estimated obligations.

**Table 2.5—Summary of Changes[1,2]**
**(in thousands)**

| | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | **$60,058,768** | **$64,428,722** | ***+ $4,369,954*** |
| Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balances and Recoveries net of estimated carryover from appropriation | $2,503,636 | $69,788 | *- $2,433,848* |
| Obligations Funded from Indefinite Authority | $3,338,896 | | *- $3,338,896* |
| **Estimated Federal Obligations[3]** | **$65,901,300** | **$64,498,510** | ***- $1,402,790*** |

[1] Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.
[2] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[3] Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional $18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President's Budget Appendix.

**Table 2.6—Explanation of SSI Budget Changes from FY 2022 to FY 2023**
**(in thousands)**

| | FY 2022 Obligations | *Change* |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal Benefit Payments** | $55,536,937 | |
| • COLA – 4.3% beginning January 2023 | | +$3,567,000 |
| • Net change due to annualized closings and awards | | -$654,000 |
| • Net decrease due to adjustment back to 12 payments in FY 2023, down from 13 in FY 2022 | | -$4,142,000 |
| • Effect of OASDI COLA for concurrent SSI/OASDI Recipients | | -$897,000 |
| • October FY 2023 payment obligated during FY 2022 | | -$4,141,000 |
| • October FY 2024 payment obligated during FY 2023 | | +$4,286,000 |
| • Indefinite Authority | $3,338,896 | |
| **Federal Benefit Payments – Carryover** | $2,347,687 | |
| • Net change in obligations from carryover | -$17,520 | |
| **Administrative Expenses** | $4,390,831 | |
| • Increase in base funding | | +$602,891 |
| **Administrative Expenses –** Carryover | $88,334 | |
| • Decrease in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2022 | | -$36,209 |
| **Beneficiary Services** | $45,000 | |
| • Increase in base funding | | +$79,000 |
| **Beneficiary Services** – Carryover | $55,480 | |
| • Decrease in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2023 | | -$73,000 |
| • Transfer from Federal Benefits | $17,520 | |
| **Research and Demonstration** | $86,000 | |
| **Research and Demonstration –** Carryover | $12,135 | |
| • Increase in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2023 | | +$5,528 |
| **Total Obligations Requested, Net Change** | **$65,901,300** | **- $1,402,790** |

## NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS BY ACTIVITY

The table below displays budget authority and obligations for the five main SSI activities – Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, program integrity, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration.

**Table 2.7—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Activity[1,2] (in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate[3,4] | FY 2023 Estimate[5] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Federal Benefit Payments** | | | |
| Appropriation | $55,583,919 | $55,536,937 | $59,225,000 |
| Obligations | $55,717,175 | $61,206,000 | $59,225,000 |
| Monthly Check Payments | 12 | 13 | 12 |
| **Base Administrative Expenses** | | | |
| Appropriation | $3,004,410 | $3,281,036 | $3,489,786 |
| Obligations | $3,032,923 | $3,369,370 | $3,541,911 |
| **Program Integrity (Base)** | | | |
| Appropriation | $225,207 | $198,235 | $239,000 |
| Obligations | $225,207 | $198,235 | $239,000 |
| **Program Integrity (Adjustment)** | | | |
| Appropriation | $1,064,232 | $911,560 | $1,264,936 |
| Obligations | $1,064,232 | $911,560 | $1,264,936 |
| **Beneficiary Services** | | | |
| Appropriation | $95,000 | $45,000 | $124,000 |
| Obligations | $103,152 | $118,000 | $124,000 |
| **Research and Demonstration** | | | |
| Appropriation | $86,000 | $86,000 | $86,000 |
| Obligations[22] | $102,500 | $98,135 | $103,663 |
| **Total Appropriation** | **$60,058,768** | **$60,058,768** | **$64,428,722** |
| **Total Federal Obligations[6]** | **$60,245,189** | **$65,901,300** | **$64,498,510** |

[1] Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.
[2] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[3] We expect to use carryover of prior year unobligated balances and recoveries for FY 2022 obligations as follows: Federal benefits, $2,330 million; beneficiary services, $55 million; administrative expenses, $88 million; and research and demonstration, $12 million. We may require a transfer of $18 million from Federal unobligated balances for beneficiary services. We will reassess the transfer amount as we receive more data.
[4] SSA also expects to use $3.3 billion in indefinite authority for FY 2022 Federal benefit obligations. Any carryover that results from indefinite authority will be returned to Treasury in the new year, as soon as the actual amount is determined
[4] In addition to the FY 2023 President's Budget request, we expect to use carryover of prior year unobligated balances and recoveries for FY 2023 obligations as follows: administrative expenses, $52 million; and research and demonstration, $18 million.
[6] Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional $18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President's Budget Appendix.

## NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS BY OBJECT

In the table below, "Other Services" includes administrative expenses, program integrity, and beneficiary services.

**Table 2.8—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Object [1,2]**
**(in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Other Services[3] | | | |
| Appropriation | $4,388,849 | $4,435,831 | **$5,117,722** |
| Obligations | $4,425,514 | $4,597,165 | **$5,169,847** |
| Federal Benefits and Research | | | |
| Appropriation | $55,669,919 | $55,622,937 | **$59,311,000** |
| Obligations | $55,819,675 | $61,304,135 | **$59,328,663** |
| **Total Appropriation[4]** | **$60,058,768** | **$60,058,768** | **$64,428,722** |
| **Total Obligations[5]** | **$60,245,189** | **$65,901,300** | **$64,498,510** |

[1] Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.
[2] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[3] The administrative portion of these services includes the SSI's prorated share of unobligated LAE money that has been converted into no-year IT funds. It is not part of the annual administrative appropriation.
[4] Assuming a full-year continuing resolution in FY 2022, we will have to invoke indefinite authority to cover for appropriation shortage for Federal benefit payments. We estimate we will need approximately $3.3 billion in indefinite authority under a full-year continuing resolution level for FY 2022.
[5] Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional $18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President's Budget Appendix.

# BACKGROUND

## AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The SSI program is authorized by Title XVI of the Social Security Act. Section 1601 of the Act authorizes such sums as are sufficient to carry out the Title.

**Table 2.9—Authorizing Legislation**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | FY Amount Authorized |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Title XVI of the Social Security Act, Section 401 of P.L. 92-603 and Section 212 of P.L. 93-66, as amended, and Section 405 of P.L. 92-216[1] | $60,058,768,000 | $60,058,768,000 | **$64,428,722,000** | *Indefinite* |
| First Quarter Advance Appropriation for Subsequent Fiscal Year | $19,600,000,000 | $15,600,000,000 | **$15,800,000,000** | --- |

[1] Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

## APPROPRIATION HISTORY

The table below displays the President's Budget request, amounts passed by the House and Senate, and the actual amount appropriated, for the period FY 2012 to FY 2022. Indefinite budget authority is requested when actual Federal benefit payments exceed the amounts available for Federal benefit payments in a given fiscal year.

**Table 2.10—Appropriation History[1]**

| Fiscal Year | Budget Estimate to Congress | House Committee Passed | Senate Committee Passed | Enacted Appropriation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 Advance | $18,200,000,000 | | $18,200,000,000 | $18,200,000,000 |
| Current Year | $40,043,000,000[2] | - - -[3] | $40,043,000,000[4] | $32,782,991,000[5] |
| 2013 Total | $58,243,000,000[6] | | $58,243,000,000 | $50,982,991,000 |
| 2013 Rescission | | | | $32,779,347,000 |
| 2013 Sequester[7] | | | | |
| Q1 Advance | $19,300,000,000 | | $19,300,000,000 | $19,300,000,000 |
| Current Year | $40,737,000,000[8] | | $40,568,741,000[9] | $41,249,064,000[10] |
| 2014 Total | $60,037,000,000[11] | | $59,868,741,000 | $60,549,064,000 |
| Q1 Advance | $19,700,000,000 | | $19,700,000,000 | $19,700,000,000 |
| Current Year | $40,927,000,000 | | | $41,232,978,000[12] |
| 2015 Total | $60,627,000,000 | | | $60,932,978,000[13] |
| Q1 Advance | $19,200,000,000 | | | $19,200,000,000 |
| Current Year | $46,422,000,000 | $46,232,978,000[14] | $46,110,777,000[15] | $46,305,733,000[16] |
| 2016 Total | $65,622,000,000 | $65,432,978,000 | $65,310,777,000 | $65,505,733,000[17] |
| Q1 Advance | $14,500,000,000 | | | $14,500,000,000 |
| Current Year | $43,824,868,000 | $43,162,469,000[18] | $43,618,163,000[19] | $43,618,163,000[20] |
| 2017 Total | $58,324,868,000 | $57,662,469,000 | $58,118,163,000 | $58,118,163,000[21] |
| Q1 Advance | $15,000,000,000 | | | $15,000,000,000 |
| Current Year | $38,557,000,000 | $38,591,635,000[22] | $38,450,927,000[23] | $38,487,277,000[24] |
| 2018 Total | $53,557,000,000 | $53,591,635,000 | $53,450,927,000 | $53,487,227,000[25] |
| Q1 Advance | **$19,500,000,000** | | | $19,500,000,000 |
| Current Year | $41,208,000,000 | $41,251,000,000[26] | $41,390,721,000[27] | $41,366,203,000[28] |
| 2019 Total | $60,708,000,000 | $60,751,000,000 | $60,890,721,000 | $60,866,203,000[29] |
| Q1 Advance | **$19,700,000,000** | | | $19,700,000,000 |
| Current Year | $41,832,000,000 | $41,938,540,000[30] | - - -[31] | $41,714,889,000[32] |
| **2020 Total** | **$61,532,000,000** | $61,638,540,000 | | **$61,414,889,000[33]** |
| Q1 Advance | **$19,900,000,000** | | | $19,900,000,000 |
| Current Year | $40,308,177,000 | $40,172,492,000[34] | - - -[35] | $40,158,768,000[36] |
| **2021 Total** | **$60,208,177,000** | $60,072,492,000 | | **$60,058,768,000[37]** |

**Table Continues on the Next Page**

| Fiscal Year | Budget Estimate to Congress | House Committee Passed | Senate Committee Passed | Enacted Appropriation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 Advance | **$19,600,000,000** | | | $19,600,000,000 |
| Current Year | $46,210,256,000[38] | $46,167,573,000[39] | - - -[40] | |
| **2022 Total** | **$65,810,256,000** | **$65,767,573,000** | | - - -[41] |
| Q1 Advance | **$15,600,000,000** | | | |
| Current Year | $48,828,722,000 | | | |
| **2023 Total** | **$64,428,722,000** | | | |
| Q1 Advance | **$15,800,000,000** | | | |
| Current Year | | | | |
| **2024 Total** | | | | |

1 Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.
2 Of this amount, not more than $48,000,000 was for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
3 The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which included $39,335,614,000 for fiscal year 2013. Of this amount, not more than $8,000,000 was made available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110 and 1144 of the Social Security Act and to remain available until the end of fiscal year 2014. In addition, the draft bill included $19,300,000,000 for benefit payments for the first quarter of fiscal year 2014.
4 S. 3295.
5 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6).
6 The President's Budget proposed to provide $266 million in mandatory administrative funding in FY 2013. Of the $266 million, the SSI portion totals $106 million.
7 SSI was exempt from sequestration in FY 2013.
8 Of this amount, not more than $54,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
9 S. 1284.
10 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76).
11 The President's Budget proposed to provide $1.2 billion in mandatory administrative funding in FY 2014. Of the $1.2 billion, the SSI portion totals $587 million.
12 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).
13 Of this amount, not more than $48,000,000 is for research and demonstrations and not more than $35,000,000 is for early intervention demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
14 H.R. 3020.
15 S. 1695
16 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113).
17 Of this amount, not more than $101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110,1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
18 H.R. 5926.
19 S. 3040.
20 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31).
21 Of this amount, not more than $58,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
22 H.R. 3358.
23 S. 1771.

[24] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141).

[25] Of this amount, not more than $101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

[26] H.R. 6470.

[27] S. 3158.

[28] Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245).

[29] Of this amount, not more than $101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

[30] H.R. 2740.

[31] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which mirrored the FY 2020 President's Budget request for $41,832,000,000.

[32] Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94)

[33] Of this amount, not more than $101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

[34] H.R. 7614.

[35] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill but provided a draft showing $40,136,324,000.

[36] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260)

[37] Of this amount, not more than $86,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

[38] The FY 2022 Federal Benefit Payment total includes $18 million of SSI program effects related to the Afghan SIV and Liberian DED programs.

[39] H.R. 4502.

[40] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill but provided a draft showing $46,122,423,000.

[41] A full-year appropriation for FY 2022 was not enacted at the time the FY 2023 President's Budget was prepared. All FY 2022 figures for Administrative Expenses assume funding at the annualized funding level provided in FY 2022 under P.L. 117-86 – Further Additional Continuing Resolution, 2022, but Base Administrative Expenses does not reflect the President's Budget appendix amount. The FY 2022 Federal benefits numbers reflect the most recent estimates from SSA's Office of the Chief Actuary. FY 2022 funding for beneficiary services and research and demonstration reflect the FY 2022 President's Budget levels.

## FEDERAL BENEFIT PAYMENTS

**Authorizing Legislation:** Section 1602, 1611, and 1617 of the Social Security Act.

### PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

The SSI program was established to pay needy aged, blind, and disabled individuals a minimum level of income through Federally-administered monthly cash payments. In many cases, these payments supplement income from other sources, including Social Security benefits and State programs. In FY 2023, we estimate benefit payments will total approximately $59.2 billion for approximately 7.5 million Federal SSI recipients.

**Table 2.11—Federal Benefit Payments: New Budget Authority and Obligations[1] (in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | **$55,583,919** | **$55,536,937** | **$59,225,000** | ***+ $3,688,063*** |
| Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balance and Recoveries | *$0* | *$2,330,167* | *$0* | ***- $2,330,167*** |
| Indefinite Authority | $0 | $3,338,896 | $0 | ***- $3,338,896*** |
| **Obligations** | **$55,717,175** | **$61,206,000** | **$59,225,000** | ***- $1,981,000*** |
| Advance for subsequent fiscal year | $19,600,000 | $15,600,000 | $15,800,000 | *+ $200,000* |

### RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are requesting $59.2 billion in new budget authority for Federal benefit payments in FY 2023. We estimate benefit payments based on a number of interrelated factors including the number of SSI recipients, number of applications, award and termination rates, cost-of-living adjustments, maximum benefit rates, average payment amounts, and number of payments per fiscal year.

[1] Federal benefit numbers reflect the most recent estimates from our Office of the Chief Actuary.

## SSI RECIPIENT POPULATION

The number of Federal SSI recipients has decreased from 8 million in FY 2018 to an estimated 7.6 million in FY 2022, and is expected to decrease to 7.5 million in FY 2023. The estimated decrease in Federal recipients in FY 2023 represents a 1.4 percent decrease compared to the FY 2022 level. We estimate the number of SSI recipients by analyzing a number of factors including applications, award and termination rates, and funding for program integrity initiatives. Please refer to the Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility exhibit in the LAE section for additional information on how we are investigating this trend.

**Table 2.12—SSI Recipients, Actual [1]**
**(average over fiscal year, in thousands)**

| | FY 2018 | FY 2019 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aged | 1,119 | 1,114 | 1,109 | 1,076 |
| Blind or Disabled | 6,924 | 6,842 | 6,802 | 6,666 |
| **Total Federal** | **8,043** | **7,957** | **7,911** | **7,742** |
| ***Year-to-Year Change*** | ***- 0.7%*** | ***- 1.1%*** | ***- 0.6%*** | ***- 2.1%*** |
| State Supplement Only | 158 | 151 | 146 | 137 |
| **Total Federally Administered** | **8,202** | **8,108** | **8,057** | **7,879** |

In addition to Federal SSI recipients, we currently administer State supplementary payments for 20 States and the District of Columbia. We administer payments for approximately 1.4 million State supplement recipients, of which approximately 140,000 do not receive a Federal SSI benefit and only receive the State supplementary payment.

**Table 2.13—SSI Recipients, Projected [1]**
**(average over fiscal year, in thousands)**

| | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aged | 1,077 | 1,085 | *+ 0.7%* |
| Blind or Disabled | 6,496 | 6,384 | *- 1.7%* |
| **Total Federal** | **7,573** | **7,469** | ***- 1.4%*** |
| State Supplement only | 137 | 144 | *+ 5.1%* |
| **Total Federally Administered** | **7,711** | **7,613** | ***- 1.3%*** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.

## SSI Disabled vs. Aged Recipient Population

The number of Federal blind or disabled SSI recipients as a percentage of all Federal SSI recipients remains steady at 86 percent from FY 2018 to FY 2021 and is projected to decrease slightly to 85.8 percent in FY 2022 and 85.5 percent in FY 2023.

**Table 2.14—Blind or Disabled Recipients as a Percentage of Total [1]**
**(average over fiscal year, in thousands)**

| Fiscal Year | Total Federal | Aged | Blind or Disabled | Blind or Disabled as % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2018 | 8,043 | 1,119 | 6,924 | **86.1%** |
| 2019 | 7,957 | 1,114 | 6,842 | **86.0%** |
| 2020 | 7,911 | 1,109 | 6,802 | **86.0%** |
| 2021 | 7,742 | 1,076 | 6,666 | **86.1%** |
| **2022 Estimate** | **7,573** | **1,077** | **6,496** | **85.8%** |
| **2023 Estimate** | **7,469** | **1,085** | **6,384** | **85.5%** |

## Concurrent SSI/OASDI Recipients

SSI recipients also receiving Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) or DI benefits have their SSI benefit reduced, less applicable exclusions, by the amount of their OASDI benefit. Approximately 33 percent of all SSI recipients (including those only receiving a State supplement) also receive Social Security benefits.  Approximately 57 percent of the SSI aged and 29 percent of the SSI blind and disabled populations receive concurrent payments.

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.

## BENEFIT PAYMENTS

### Maximum Monthly Federal Payments

The maximum monthly Federal benefit rate (FBR) is increased each January when there are increases in the cost-of-living. There is a 5.9 percent cost of living increase in calendar year (CY) 2022. An increase of 4.3 percent is projected for January 2023. The FBR increased from $794 for an individual and $1,191 for a couple for CY 2021 to $841 for an individual and $1,261 for a couple in CY 2022. We estimate the FBR will increase to $877 for an individual and $1,315 for a couple in CY 2023. The COLA will be effective in January 2023, raising the maximum benefit rate to higher levels than the first 3 months of the fiscal year.

**Table 2.15—Maximum Benefit Rates**

| | FY 2022 | | FY 2023 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **First 3 Months** | **Last 9 Months** | **First 3 Months** | **Last 9 Months** |
| **Individual** | **$794** | **$841** | **$841** | **$877** |
| **Couple** | **$1,191** | **$1,261** | **$1,261** | **$1,315** |

### Average Monthly Benefit Payments

The amount actually paid to a recipient can vary from the FBR based on their income received (e.g., earnings and Social Security benefits) and the living arrangement of the recipient (e.g., residence in one's own home, the household of another person, or in a nursing home which meets Medicaid standards). The average monthly benefit is expected to increase from $591 in FY 2021 to $620 in FY 2022 and $651 in FY 2023. The increase in the average benefit payment is driven by COLAs and recipient population characteristics.

**Table 2.16—Average Monthly Benefit Payments**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aged | $431 | $456 | **$481** |
| Blind or Disabled | $617 | $648 | **$680** |
| All SSI Recipients | $591 | $620 | **$651** |

## Cost of Living Adjustments

When applicable, COLAs increase both the maximum and average monthly benefit payment. However, for concurrent SSI/OASDI recipients, increases in SSI benefit payments are partially offset by increases in Social Security benefits resulting from the same COLA. Social Security benefits are counted as income in the SSI program. Therefore, any increase in Social Security benefits resulting from the annual COLA increases countable income in the SSI benefit computation.

## Program Integrity Funding

Annual benefit payment estimates are dependent on us performing a certain level of SSI CDRs and redeterminations. Specifically, the FY 2023 estimate assumes we will conduct approximately 510,000 SSI CDRs and 2,200,000 non-medical redeterminations using both base and adjustment dedicated program integrity funds.For details about program integrity funding and activities, please refer to page ## (link to the LAE section – as the funds outlay from LAE and it provides a comprehensive picture).

## Timing of Monthly Benefit Payments

Monthly SSI benefit payments are made on the first of the month, unless the first falls on a weekend or Federal holiday. In that case, the payment is made on the prior business day at the end of the previous month. When October 1 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the payment is made in the prior fiscal year at the end of September. This timing of payments results in 11, 12, or 13 payments in a given fiscal year.

**Table 2.17—Check Payments by Fiscal Year**

| | Number of Check Payments | Federal Benefit Obligations |
|---|---|---|
| FY 2014 | 12 | $53,849,499,196 |
| FY 2015 | 12 | $54,706,388,183 |
| FY 2016 | 13 | $59,044,228,391 |
| FY 2017 | 12 | $54,729,471,841 |
| FY 2018 | 11 | $50,949,421,097 |
| FY 2019 | 12 | $55,590,534,196 |
| FY 2020 | 12 | $56,161,567,718 |
| FY 2021 | 12 | $55,717,174,588 |
| **FY 2022** | **13** | **$61,206,000,000** |
| **FY 2023** | **12** | **$59,225,000,000** |

## ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

**Authorizing Legislation:** Sections 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act.

### PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

Administrative expenses for the SSI program are funded from general revenues. Section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act provides that administrative expenses for the SSI program, including Federal administration of State supplementary payments, may be financed from the Social Security trust funds with reimbursement, including any interest lost, to the trust funds from general revenues.

This appropriation funds the SSI program share of administrative expenses incurred through the LAE account. Amounts appropriated are available for current year SSI administrative expenses, as well as for prior year administrative expenses that exceeded the amount available through this account for the prior year. If those excess prior year amounts were paid out of the Social Security trust funds, then current year SSI funds must be used to reimburse these trust funds with interest.

The legislative history of the 1972 amendments (which established this funding mechanism) indicates a desire to obtain economy of administration by giving us the responsibility for the SSI program because of its existing field office network and its administrative and automated data processing facilities. Because of the integration of the administration of the SSI and Social Security programs, it was desirable to fund them from a single source (the LAE account). This process requires that the trust funds and the SSI account pay their appropriate shares to the LAE account, which in turn manages the administrative expenses on behalf of the paying accounts. The determination is based on a Government Accountability Office approved method of cost analysis of the respective expenses of the SSI and Social Security insurance programs, and statute mandates a final settlement by the end of the subsequent fiscal year.

**Table 2.18—Administrative Expenses: New Budget Authority and Obligations (in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Appropriation** | **$4,293,849** | **$4,390,831** | **$4,993,722** | **+ *$602,891*** |
| Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balance | *$28,513* | *$88,334* | *$52,125* | ***- $36,209*** |
| **Obligations** | **$4,322,362** | **$4,479,165** | **$5,045,847** | **+ *$566,682*** |

## RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

Our administrative budget is driven by the programs we administer – both in terms of the amount of work performed and the number of people needed to process it – and by our continuing efforts to improve service, stewardship, and efficiency.

The FY 2023 request for SSI administrative expenses is $5 billion. This appropriation is used to reimburse the trust funds for the SSI program's share of administrative expenses. This amount includes $1.5 billion specifically for FY 2023 SSI program integrity activities.

These amounts exclude funding made available in the LAE account from State user fees for our expenses for administering SSI State supplementary payments. The LAE account assumes funding of up to $140 million in FY 2023 to administer SSI state supplementary payments.

## BENEFICIARY SERVICES

**Authorizing Legislation:** Sections 1148 and 1615(d) of the Social Security Act

### PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

Beneficiary services consist of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Ticket to Work (TTW) programs. The objective of the programs is to help disabled individuals return to work. The trust funds and general revenues fund beneficiary services. Section 222(d)(1) of the Social Security Act authorizes transfers from the OASI and DI trust funds to reimburse for reasonable and necessary costs of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals. The OASI and DI trust funds also fund payments to Employment Networks as part of the TTW program. The general revenues described in the request below fund beneficiary services for disabled Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients as described below.

**Table 2.19—Beneficiary Services: New Budget Authority and Obligations (in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate[1] | FY 2023 Estimate | *FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | **$45,000** | **$45,000** | **$124,000** | *+$79,000* |
| Prior-Year Unobligated Balances and Recoveries | $63,632 | $55,480 | $0 | *-$55,480* |
| Transfer from Unobligated Federal Benefit Payments[2] | $50,000 | $17,520 | $0 | *-$17,520* |
| **Total Budgetary Resources** | **$158,632** | **$118,000** | **$124,000** | *+$6,000* |
| **Obligations** | **$103,152** | **$118,000** | **$124,000** | *+$6,000* |

Under the VR program, we repay State VR agencies for the reasonable and necessary costs of services that successfully help disabled recipients return to work. VR agencies are successful when a disabled recipient performs substantial gainful activity (SGA) for a continuous period of 9 out of 12 months.[3] VR agencies can serve as Employment Networks (EN) in the TTW program or under our VR reimbursement program.

[1] A full-year appropriation for FY 2022 was not enacted at the time the FY 2023 President's Budget was prepared. All FY 2022 figures assume funding at the FY 2021 enacted level.

[2] Increased productivity in processing Ticket and VR payments is driving the estimated increase in FY 2022 obligations. We expect a continued increase in VR payments as we address the backlog of VR claims. We will reassess the transfer amount as we receive more data and we may require a reapportionment from OMB later in FY 2022.

[3] In 2022, we consider non-blind and blind disabled recipients to be performing SGA if they earn more than $1,350 and $2,260 per month, respectively.

Under the TTW program, authorized by the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-170), we pay ENs for providing vocational rehabilitation, employment, and other support services to disabled SSI recipients. These recipients select an EN, which we pay when EN services result in prescribed work milestones and outcomes that may reduce reliance on Federal cash benefits.

Ticket payments, unlike VR reimbursement awards, are not based on the costs of specific services provided by the EN. We pay ENs using either an outcome-milestone payment method or an outcome-only payment method.

We base Ticket payment amounts for SSI recipients on the prior year's average disability benefit payable under Title XVI. While we previously made Ticket payments only upon request, we now also initiate payments to ENs when information in our records indicates the recipient has achieved the prerequisite earnings and all other requirements qualifying the EN for a payment are met.

## RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are requesting $124 million in new budget authority for beneficiary services in FY 2023. The FY 2023 forecast is based on an econometric model which uses prior payments as well as historical economic and demographic characteristics to predict future spending. The FY 2023 request funds an estimated 5 percent increase in obligations above the FY 2022 level.

Automation of payments through TTW resulted in an initial increase in the amount paid to ENs and VRs. While the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the expected growth of TTW payments in FY 2020, our actual payments for FY 2021 increased by 6 percent over FY 2020. As a result, we expect the amount of TTW payments to continue to increase in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

The implementation of the Internet Ticket Operations Provider Support System (iTOPSS) resulted in an increase in the number of claims submitted by VR agencies, which led to an increase of backlogged claims awaiting payment. We expect to eliminate the backlog by FY 2023 once we have trained additional contractor resources to process the VR payment workload.

A new Ticket Program Manager (TPM) contract was awarded on September 1, 2021, which requires the TPM to process VR payments. In November 2021, we began training the contractor on VR payment processing. By June 2022, we expect the contractor to take over the VR case processing workload. By FY 2023, we expect the backlog to be eliminated and the contractor to process all VR payments within the contractually obligated timeframe of 30 days from receipt. The new contractor resources will result in an increase in the amount paid to VR agencies in FY 2022 and FY 2023. Considering all the factors above, and assuming that more beneficiaries will return to work, we estimate an increase in cost reimbursement awards and an increase in the number of milestone and outcome payments in FY 2023.

We continue our efforts to improve management and oversight of the VR and Ticket programs to ensure effectiveness. These efforts are solidified in the current EN agreements and include ongoing quality reviews of State reimbursement claims and internal audits of the agency's payment process. ENs and VR agencies help our beneficiaries attain higher levels of sustained employment success.

**Table 2.20—SSI VR Reimbursement and Ticket to Work Payments**[1]

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Vocational Rehabilitation** | | | |
| SSI Only Reimbursement Awards | 5,936 | 6,511 | 6,719 |
| SSI/DI Concurrent Reimbursement Awards | 3,464 | 3,800 | 3,921 |
| **Total Reimbursement Awards** | **9,400** | **10,311** | **10,641** |
| **VR Obligations** (in thousands) | **$88,429** | **$97,000** | **$100,100** |
| **Ticket to Work** | | | |
| SSI Only Milestone Payments | 4,795 | 6,839 | 7,784 |
| SSI Only Outcome Payments | 18,125 | 25,852 | 29,423 |
| SSI/DI Concurrent Milestone Payments | 6,108 | 8,712 | 9,915 |
| SSI/DI Concurrent Outcome Payments | 7,503 | 10,702 | 12,180 |
| **Total Ticket Payments** | **36,531** | **52,106** | **59,301** |
| **Ticket Obligations** (in thousands) | **$14,723** | **$21,000** | **$23,900** |
| **Total VR Awards & Ticket Payments** | **45,931** | **62,417** | **69,942** |
| **Total Obligations** (in thousands) | **$103,152** | **$118,000** | **$124,000** |

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON VR COST REIMBURSEMENT AND TICKET TO WORK PROGRAMS

The State VR agency may decide on a case-by-case basis whether to receive compensation under the longstanding VR cost reimbursement payment option or one of the two TTW payment methods described below. VR agencies have 90 days after they open a case (ticket assignment) to decide if they want to be reimbursed for their expenses under the Cost Reimbursement program or if they want to be paid under the Ticket program. Most agencies select cost reimbursement as the initial payment option and then switch to Ticket after further evaluation of a case. Regardless of the payment method the State VR agency chooses, the recipient must have agreed to use the Ticket with the State VR agency for the agency to be eligible for either type of payment.

Outcome-Milestone Payment Method:

- There are two phases of outcome-milestone payments. Phase I allows 4 payments, and Phase II allows 18 payments.

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.

- We begin paying the EN when the recipient successfully achieves certain predetermined work-related milestones while still receiving Federal benefits.

- We stop paying milestone payments and begin outcome payments when the recipient's monthly Federal cash benefits are not payable because of work and earnings.

Outcome-Payment Method:

- Outcome payments are payable for a maximum of 60 months (consecutive or otherwise).

- We begin issuing monthly outcome payments after the individual's monthly Federal cash benefit payments cease and the individual earns above the SGA level in a month.

- The dollar amounts of the monthly outcome payments are larger when the EN elects not to receive milestone payments while the recipient still receives benefits.

When a State VR agency provides services to a recipient under the cost reimbursement payment option, and the recipient later seeks support services from an EN, we may pay the State VR agency and the EN for sequential periods of service. However, the EN is not eligible for Phase I Ticket payments, since the State VR agency would have provided initial services.

## RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS, AND OUTREACH

**Authorizing Legislation:** Sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

### PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

We conduct extramural research, demonstrations, and outreach under Sections 1110, 1115, 1144, and 234 of the Social Security Act (Act). Projects funded under Section 234 are essential to our demonstration portfolio, but we are not including them in our appropriations request since they are part of the mandatory budget. We currently fund a range of Section 1110 and 234 projects designed to:

- Help us keep pace with advancements in medicine and technology;
- Modernize our vocational rules;
- Evaluate the impact of early intervention efforts;
- Test work support models;
- Analyze program trends, gaps, and inconsistencies; and
- Measure the public's understanding of the program, as well as the impact of program changes.

**Table 2.21 - Research, Outreach, and Demonstration Projects: Budget Authority and Obligations (in thousands)**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Appropriation** | **$86,000** | **$86,000** | **$86,000** | ***$0*** |
| Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balance and Recoveries | $67,818 | $51,318 | $39,183 | *-$12,135* |
| **Total Budgetary Resources** | **$153,818** | **$137,318** | **$125,183** | ***-$12,135*** |
| **Total Obligations** | **$102,500** | **$98,135** | **$103,663** | ***$5,528*** |
| Total Unobligated Balance | $51,318 | $39,183 | $21,520 | *-$17,663* |

Section 1110 of the Act provides the Commissioner of Social Security the authority to conduct broad-based, cross-programmatic projects for the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability (OASDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. This section provides for waiver authorities for the SSI program, as well as projects dealing with specific SSI issues. Under Section 1110, we fund a range of extramural projects: disability and retirement policy research, demonstration projects to test creative and effective ways to promote greater labor force participation among people with disabilities (including early intervention rehabilitation strategies), evaluations of proposed or newly enacted legislative changes, and projects to maintain and improve basic data about our programs and beneficiaries.

Many of our Section 1110 projects support our fiscal years (FY) 2022-2026 Learning Agenda and our annual Evaluation Plans that are required under the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018. Our Learning Agenda describes our evidence-building roadmap to support the goals in our FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan (ASP). We identified 10 priority questions for our Learning Agenda that correspond to the ASP goals. The priority questions include short-term and long-term questions related to our mission, strategic plans, and agency operations. We expect that answers to our priority questions will provide valuable information about our agency's performance and promote evidence-based decision-making, informing our efforts to improve service delivery, enhance the customer experience, and advance equity. Our FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plan describes the most significant evidence-building activities that we will complete during the fiscal year. We define significant activities as those that are required by law, address the President's priorities, or support the goals in our FYs 2022–2026 ASP. Performance documents are available here Agency Strategic Plan | SSA

Section 1144 requires us to conduct outreach to individuals with Medicare who are potentially eligible for State-administered Medicaid programs or Medicare prescription drug subsidies under Medicare Part D. We identify these potential beneficiaries, inform them about these programs, and notify State Medicaid agencies. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, within Health and Human Services (HHS), oversees both the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Section 1115 provides the Secretary of HHS with the funding and authority to waive compliance with Medicaid requirements to enable States to participate in our specific research and disability demonstration projects. There are currently no research projects funded under this section.

Section 234 gives the Commissioner of Social Security the authority to conduct research and demonstration projects testing alternative Disability Insurance (DI) benefit rules. We use trust fund dollars, which are permanently appropriated and not part of our request, to conduct various demonstration projects, including projects that examine alternative program rules for treating work activity of individuals entitled to DI benefits. Section 234 covers both applicants and current beneficiaries of the program. Our authority to initiate new projects under Section 234 expired on December 31, 2021, and we are required to complete our remaining Promoting Opportunity Demonstration, and Ohio Direct Referal Demonstratrion projects under this authority by December 31, 2022.

## RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are committed to improving the quality, consistency, and timeliness of our disability decisions; maximizing efficiencies throughout the disability program; and enhancing employment support programs to create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to the workforce. Our research activities are critical to our efforts in all three areas.

In FY 2023, we estimate that we will need $86 million in new budget authority for traditional research activities under Sections 1110 and 1144.

Our FY 2023 budget request builds upon the progress we have made in previous years with initiatives like our data collection and analysis efforts regarding the Occupational Information

System (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT) project. Our advisory services contract with the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Health and Medicine Division (HMD) will help us identify ways to strengthen our disability policy. In addition, Work Disability - Functional Assessment Battery (WD-FAB) studies will help us evaluate the usefulness of the WD-FAB to our continuing disability review (CDR) process. Our demonstration portfolio provides evidence on the effectiveness of potential policies and programs for our current and potential beneficiaries.

### *Extension of 234 Authority*

In addition to the Section 1110 and 1144 projects, we are interested in working with Congress to extend Section 234 authority in order to provide sufficient time to conduct ongoing and new demonstrations.

The table and discussion that follows provides more details on the research and outreach efforts we plan to fund in FY 2023.

**Table 2.22—Major Research Areas, Outreach, and Demonstration Obligations and New Budget Authority** (in thousands)[1,2]

| | Obligations[3] | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **FY 2021 Actual** | **FY 2022 Estimate** | **FY 2023 Estimate** |
| **Improving the Way We Do Business** | **$80,248** | **$73,247** | **$78,918** |
| Advisory Services to Assist SSA with Disability Issues | $2,453 | $4,607 | $5,980 |
| Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW) | $300 | $450 | $450 |
| Beyond Benefits Study (previously Exits from Disability) Evidence Study | $2,743 | $0 | $0 |
| Blanket Purchase Agreement for Time Sensitive Research Projects | $1,439 | $2,000 | $2,000 |
| Disability Analysis File (DAF) | $885 | $1,323 | $1,237 |
| Disability Perceptions Survey | $63 | $69 | $5,000 |
| Disability Research Survey | $0 | $14,000 | $0 |
| Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP) | $4,326 | $6,080 | $9,080 |
| National Beneficiary Survey (NBS) | $227 | $56 | $77 |
| New and Emerging Research – Disability | $0 | $1,285 | $2,000 |
| National Institutes of Health Research on Data Analytics and the Functional Assessment Battery Development | $4,195 | $4,299 | $4,300 |
| Occupational Information Systems (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT) | $30,150 | $39,078 | $41,794 |

[1] Does not include funding authorized under Section 234.
[2] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[3] This amount includes obligations funded from prior-year unobligated balances.

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) | $31,932 | $0 | $0 |
| Supported Employment Demonstration (SED) | $1,535 | $0 | $0 |
| Ticket to Work Evaluation | $0 | $0 | $7,000 |
| **Deliver Services Effectively** | **$5,890** | **$8,721** | **$8,723** |
| Data Development in an Enterprise Business Platform | $2,000 | $2,000 | $2,000 |
| Understanding America Study (UAS) Enhancements | $3,000 | $5,000 | $5,002 |
| Medicare Outreach (1144) | $890 | $1,721 | $1,721 |
| **Ensuring Stewardship** | **$16,362** | **$16,167** | **$16,022** |
| Census Surveys | $950 | $750 | $750 |
| Data Development | $1,267 | $1,262 | $1,117 |
| Health & Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement | $4,155 | $4,155 | $4,155 |
| Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC) | $9,990 | $10,000 | $10,000 |
| **Total Research Obligations[1]** | **$102,500** | **$98,135** | **$103,663** |
| **New Budget Authority** | **$86,000** | **$86,000** | **$86,000** |

## Improving the Way We Do Business

*Advisory Services to Assist SSA with Disability Projects/National Academy of Sciences Multi-Year Contract*

***Current Multi-Year Contract with National Academy of Sciences***

We are engaged in a five-year contract, initiated in FY 2019, with the NAS-HMD to conduct research and answer specific questions related to medical and vocational assessment at steps three, four, and five of the sequential disability evaluation process[2]. Information from HMD assures our disability evaluations reflect the latest knowledge and practice in a wide range of medical disciplines, and supports data-driven changes to our regulations and policies. The current contract provides for Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)-compliant Consensus Committees of medical and other experts to evaluate the effectiveness of our disability programs for adults and children. Per our requirements, the NAS will establish and manage FACA compliant consensus study committees; organize and lead workshops with subject matter experts; and plan and organize outreach conferences with members of the public. With the first task order awarded under this contract, HMD established a standing committee of medical, vocational, and other experts to assist with policy issues. We also awarded a task order for a consensus study committee to identify and investigate impairments likely to improve with treatment.

In FY 2021, we awarded task orders to:

[1] This amount includes obligations funded from prior-year unobligated balances.
[2] See DI 22001.001 for a description of the sequential evaluation process.

- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals to discuss the current state of stem cell-based treatments. This is a rapidly evolving field of medicine; the most up to date information in this arena will provide us with valuable insight with which we can enhance our medical evidence and documentation policies.
- Create a consensus committee to provide information on new or improved diagnostic or evaluative techniques. This information will enhance our ability to effectively evaluate the severity of impairments, particularly in the CDR process.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals to discuss recent advances in the utilization of tele-presence and videoconference technology to deliver remote healthcare services. We are interested in learning about current and future capabilities of medical professionals to perform physical and mental examinations through videoconferencing equipment, including various issues and limitations related to this technology. This information will enable us to consider whether to expand use of telehealth and videoconference technology as a way to perform consultative examinations.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals and researchers to explore and discuss the emerging evidence on long-term effects of Coronavirus Disease 2019, (COVID-19). This workshop will provide us information about the long-term health effects of COVID-19, the effectiveness and availability of treatments, how to best evaluate the long-term impact of the virus on survivors' ability to work, and whether additional agency-sponsored research is needed.

In FY 2022, we are considering task orders to:

- Create a consensus committee on the long-term health effects of COVID-19 as it relates to our disability program. This committee will enable us to comprehensively consider the latest findings and research data related to COVID-19. The information we gather will assist our agency in responding to changing pressures on our service delivery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also enable us to provide guidance to adjudicators for accurately and efficiently deciding cases involving effects from a COVID-19 infection.
- Create a consensus committee on infants with extremely low birth weight and infants who are small for gestational age. This information will enable us to increase our accuracy and consistency when assessing functional limitations in children with low birth weight that may have affected their development.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop bringing together experts on health disparities for people facing barriers. This workshop would offer a synthesis of information on the health consequences of barriers to service from a health science perspective as well as other social determinants of health. This information will allow our agency to effectively consider and address systemic issues in the provision of health services that take place prior to our agency's involvement.

***New Multi-Year Contract with The National Academy of Sciences***

In FY 2023, we plan to award a five-year contract to the NAS to continue their work on research into disability issues, particularly at steps three, four, and five of the disability sequential evaluation process. The NAS will establish and manage FACA compliant consensus study committees, organize and lead workshops with subject matter experts, and plan and organize outreach conferences with members of the public.

In FY 2023, we are considering task orders to:

- Create a new standing committee of medical, vocational, and other experts to assist our agency with disability policy issues. The committee members will survey medical literature and clinical practices to keep us informed and assist us in addressing disability issues identified by our agency.
- Create a consensus committee on newly emerging psychological treatment modalities, including recently developed and approved psychotropics medications, and how they relate to the long-term outlook for people with otherwise intractable mental illness. This information will allow us to issue the most relevant and timely guidance possible to our adjudicators.

*Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)*

The ARDRAW program supports young and emerging scholars pursuing careers in public policy research who have a special interest in our beneficiaries' quality of life and disability program issues, challenges, and outcomes. We recruit graduate students, faculty, and administrators of accredited programs with an academic emphasis in public health, social work, economics, occupational medicine, vocational and rehabilitation counseling, public policy and administration, sociology, psychology, education, medicine, and law.

In FY 2021, we awarded the fifth ARDRAW cohort grants and received final project papers from the fourth ARDRAW cohort. We granted no-cost extensions that will extend beyond FY 2021 to a few participants in our fourth ARDRAW cohort, due to COVID-19 disruptions to their project plans. ARDRAW was originally a five-year program, but we extended the current ARDRAW grant agreement by one year. With the additional year, in FY 2022, we will award the sixth and final ARDRAW cohort and receive final project papers from the fifth ARDRAW cohort. In FY 2023, we will receive final project papers from the sixth ARDRAW cohort and close out the existing ARDRAW grant agreement.

The purpose of the one-year extension is to provide additional time to plan for recompete of the ARDRAW program. In FY 2022, we will conduct a competition for a grants management organization to oversee the small grant program. In FY 2023, we will conduct start up activities for the new grant agreement and request applications for the first cohort of the new program.

The new ARDRAW will be similar to the current ARDRAW. It will support young and emerging scholars pursuing careers in public policy research who have a special interest in our beneficiaries' quality of life and disability program issues, challenges, and outcomes, with additional emphasis on access and equity issues. We are increasing the grant amounts to cover an increase to the student stipend amount from $300,000 to $450,000.

For more information, please see the ARDRAW website: https://ardraw.policyresearchinc.org.

## Supplemental Security Income Program

*Beyond Benefits Study (formerly known as Exits from Disability Evidence Study)*

We terminate the benefits of thousands of DI beneficiaries and SSI recipients based on medical improvement each year. However, many individuals whose benefits are terminated later return to disability programs. About 30 percent of adult SSI-only recipients and 20 percent of DI-only working beneficiaries who stop receiving benefits because of medical improvement return to these programs within 8 years. Among the working DI beneficiaries whose benefits stop, few maintain employment or work above common thresholds of self-sufficiency.

In FY 2021, we awarded a contract and finalized the study schedule to collect information about the service, medical, and employment needs of working-age adults (i.e., 18 to 64 years of age) exiting Social Security disability programs because of medical improvement, including age-18 redeterminations. In this study, we will gather evidence through surveys, focus groups, and other means on the barriers to employment and other needs of this population.

In FY 2022, we obtained generic Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance and began qualitative data collections (i.e., focus groups with professional, practicing motivational inviewers and interviews with 30 people who no longer collect disability payments [“exiters”] or may lose disability payments soon [“possible exiters”] due to medical improvement in their disabiling impairment). These data will inform the process plan for a small motivational interviewing pilot program that is scheduled next. The small, non-random motivational interviewing pilot will accomplish two goals. First, it will help provide a sense of the duration and intensity of supports that are necessary for such an intervention. Second, it will assist data-gathering efforts by providing additional context to the needs of the former DI beneficiary population. The information gained from this counseling will provide information on how providing motivational support for individuals terminated from the disability programs may facilitate their attempts work. All data collected in FY 2022 will be used to inform the development of a survey to be conducted with 4,000 exiters and possible exiters in FY 2023.

We expect to complete all qualitative data collection and conduct most survey activities by the end of FY 2023 and receive a final report by FY 2024.

*Blanket Purchase Order Agreement for Time Sensitive Research Projects*

In FY 2018, we awarded a blanket purchase agreement (BPA) to provide an alternate research channel for policy and program assessments and studies related to social science, medical, or vocational rehabilitation topics. The BPA allows for multiple research projects to occur simultaneously in relatively short timeframes. We can expect deliverables in the range of 4 to 6 months, which is considerably quicker than the 18-plus months expected from traditional contracts. We build an interactive process with the contractors as the projects proceed, allowing us to course-correct as the work progresses. By drawing on our research methods’ expertise and content knowledge, we produce effective research objectives and relevant data analysis. The BPA also provides the option to contract with a trusted agent to develop and assess research questions, provide subject matter expertise, and evaluate research products to support policy decisions. The use of a trusted agent is optional and is considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon the nature or sensitivity of the research topics. The BPA remains in effect today.

In FY 2021, we funded three research study awards.

- We secured the consulting services of an industrial/organizational psychology expert to help our agency: (1) utilize Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) data; and (2) identify areas where the survey elements which are not reported by Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), particularly some physical and mental/cognitive requirements, could be either estimated from current publicly reported results or better measured in the future to best meet the needs of our disability program. This task order award includes an option year that can be exercised in FY 2022 if continued support is needed through FY 2023.
- We awarded study for a comprehensive assessment of the Program Data Disclosure Review Board public use file disclosure limitation methods and requirements. Given rapidly changing technology, coupled with the proliferation of publicly and privately available data sources, the nature of disclosure risk is constantly changing. To respond to this evolving disclosure risk, we seek to review the current disclosure checklist and identify potential updates to strengthen the methodology of disclosure control and confidentiality protection of our agency's public use files (PUF).
- We awarded a study aimed at developing and updating the OASDI and SSI PUFs. This project addresses the need for high quality up-to-date data for research that at the same time protects the confidentiality of individuals included in the PUFs. Results from these projects will be available at the end of the 12-month period of performance.

In FY 2022, we have three new projects planned along with the second year of the consulting work from the industrial/organizational psychologist that began in FY 2021.

- We plan to secure expert insight on how the functional profiles we define from BLS/ORS would be supported by particular conditions or findings in the medical evidence we consider.
- Another study will be the review of Work Smart system effectiveness to identify beneficiaries completing their Trial Work Period or engaging in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA).
- The final planned study is a review of the Quick Disability Determinations (QDD) process. We developed the QDD process in order to expedite claims from a fragile population whose severe medical conditions clearly meet the agency's disability standards. The QDD process uses a computer-based predictive model to screen initial applications to identify cases where a favorable disability determination is highly likely and medical evidence is readily available. By identifying QDD claims early in the process, we prioritize that workload and expedite case processing. The purpose of this study is to ensure the equity of the QDD model and process by reviewing the current QDD process to identify any potential bias within the system. An investigation concerning the presence of bias within the QDD process will allow us to identify unintended inequity among disability applicants.

In FY 2023, we plan to continue studies in support of the Occupations Information System Initiative. We are also in the planning phase regarding possible FY 2023 research topics in support of *Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.*

*Disability Analysis File (DAF)*

Our administrative systems contain the data that underly and support our programs. Our data are generally available to researchers in raw, unformatted, and undocumented extracts. Administrative data are critical to our understanding of beneficiaries with disabilities, providing details on the entire population and allowing for the analysis of small subpopulations which we cannot generally study with survey data based on population samples. The DAF takes data from our 10 most relevant administrative files and creates an annual, formatted database that is ready for analysis, easy to use, and well-documented. We create two versions of the DAF each year—a restricted use version for SSA staff, grantees, contractors, and federal partners, and a de-identitied public use (PUF) version available to the public through our website. The DAF focuses on data needed to answer questions about disability and work. It complements the National Beneficiary Survey (NBS), which provides information that is not available from our administrative sources, such as veterans status, interest in work, barriers to work, hours of work, wages, and how disability affects activities. When combined, the DAF and NBS provide a complete picture of demographics, benefits, work, and work attitudes for all SSI and DI beneficiaries with disabilities.

We use the DAF for internal research, to support demonstration development and evaluation, and to answer any questions that may arise. For example, we use the DAF to examine the costs and benefits of the Ticket to Work (TTW) program, the effectiveness of TTW mailings, and the characteristics associated with successful return to work by beneficiaries. We use the DAF to model and forecast payments to Employment Network and Vocational Rehabilitation under the TTW program. We also use the DAF to support oversight by the Social Security Advisory Board, our Office of the Inspector General, OMB, Congress, the Government Accountability Office, and others. Additionally, we allow non-SSA researchers to use the DAF, primarily through the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC), and through a public use version of the DAF available at www.data.gov.

Since we first published public use data from the DAF in November 2018, there has been significant interest in using this file, with 55 downloads per month on average. Since its launch, the DAF-PUF has consistently been a popular data download. In the last year, downloads of the DAF data user's guide averaged 37 per month while downloads of NBS data user's guide averaged nine per month over the same period. Twelve research papers put forth in 2020, and five in 2021, utilized either the public or restricted versions of the DAF for their analysis. We awarded a competitive contract in FY 2022 to continue building the DAF for FYs 2022-2026. Over this period, we are transitioning from mainframe administrative data files to a cloud server environment for storage and processing. In FY 2022, we will begin to transition DAF construction from mainframe to cloud storage and processing and expect to complete most DAF construction in the cloud environment in FY 2023. As part of this transition, we will explore opportunities for streamlining the DAF construction process and/or shortening the DAF construction timeline. We expect the cloud environment will make DAF more accessible to a broader range of users beginning in FY 2023.

*Disability Perceptions Survey (DPS)*

In FY 2020, we awarded a contract for a DPS that will gather information on knowledge, perceptions, and opinions working adults have about the DI program. We will use data from the survey to assess whether individuals' current knowledge of DI affects future decisions to seek benefits. We expect the survey will also provide information about the anticipated need for future DI benefits among working age adults and insight into the most effective ways to communicate with the public about the DI program. In FY 2021, we finalized the survey and sampling plan, received OMB approval to conduct a pre-test, and submitted a system security plan for review. We anticipate fielding this survey in August 2022. We may award a contract for a second round of the DPS in FY 2023.

*Disability Research Surveys (DRS)*

In FY 2021, we developed a new survey platform, the DRS, that will broaden the scope of information we collect about beneficiaries. The DRS will include three separate surveys. We will fund and award task orders for each survey separately.

The first of the three DRS surveys will be an additional round of the NBS. It was awarded in FY 2022 and will be fielded in FY 2023. The New Applicant Survey will be the second survey developed under the DRS, will help us better understand DI and SSI applicants' experiences, their use of services, and the pathways they take before and after application. We will fund the New Application Survey in FY 2022 and field it in FY 2025.

We will determine the final new survey in the future based on topics of greatest interest at that time. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, beneficiaries at transition ages, veterans, and underserved populations. We anticipate funding the third survey in FY 2024 and fielding it in FY 2026.

*Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)*

The ICAP encourages employment of individuals with disabilities through cooperative agreements with States, private foundations, and other stakeholders who have an interest in and ability to identify, operate, and partially fund interventional research.

The research and interventions under this program target the increased employment and self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities (whether beneficiaries, applicants, or potential applicants of the DI or SSI programs). This includes interventions that may demonstrate a reduction in DI or SSI participation or focus on policies that improve the administration and effectiveness of programs carried on or assisted under the Social Security Act. This program provides a process through which we can systematically review demonstration proposals from outside organizations and enter into collaboration agreements. The program complements our own demonstration projects and coordinate with our own projects. The ICAP is distinct from our other research grant programs – ARDRAW and the RDRC – which focus on "observational" research as contrasted with "experimental" research.

The awards for the ICAP will be tiered, with funding eligibility and funding level based upon the level of evidence that exists for the proposed intervention. Feasibility studies with little or no existing causal evidence would be eligible for much smaller awards than studies that are based on or will produce causal evidence.

In FY 2021, we awarded our first two cooperative agreements. We awarded $3 million to the Kessler Foundation to conduct a randomized controlled trial of a Vocational Resource Facilitation Demonstration employment intervention for adults who have experienced a brain injury or spinal cord injury. This project will promote self-sufficiency by helping people who want to work enter, stay in, or return to the labor force. We awarded $1,3 million to the State of Georgia's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to conduct a feasibility study of the implementation of the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery model in county jails with inmates with serious and persistent mental illness across the state. This project will help to assist claimants in underserved communities learn about their eligibility and apply for DI and SSI benefits.

In FY 2022, we will conduct start-up activities with the initial FY 2021 awardees, including setting up data sharing agreements and completing Paperwork Reduction Act packages for OMB clearance. We will also solicit applications for additional projects.

In FY 2023, we will continue with the FY 2021 projects for which we have secured data sharing agreements and obtained OMB approval. We will also conduct start-up activities for the FY 2022 projects, including setting up data sharing agreements and completing Paperwork Reduction Act packages for OMB clearance. We will also solicit applications for a third round of projects.

*National Beneficiary Survey (NBS)*

The NBS collects data from a nationally representative sample of DI beneficiaries and SSI recipients on a wide range of topics not available in our administrative data or in other public databases. The data include health and functional status, health insurance coverage, interest in work, barriers to work, use of services, work history, income, and experience with Social Security programs. The collection of this data improves our ability to conduct useful analysis regarding factors that facilitate DI beneficiary and SSI recipient employment and conversely, factors that impede their efforts to maintain employment.

Our researchers and analysts, along with researchers at other Federal agencies, research organizations, and academic institutions, use NBS data extensively to evaluate the TTW program and other DI and SSI work incentive programs and policies.

The NBS gathers information through three samples.

- One is a nationally representative sample of DI beneficiaries and SSI recipients called the Representative Beneficiary Sample (RBS), which collects information on their health and well-being, employment-related goals and activities, and use of programs and services.

- In 2017, we added a Successful Workers Sample (SWS) to the NBS, which focuses on beneficiaries who have experienced employment success as demonstrated by their attainment of earnings at amounts sufficient to have their benefits suspended due to work.
- The 2019 NBS contains both the RBS and SWS components and also includes a longitudinal sample of successful workers who were part of the 2017 SWS.

We developed PUFs and associated documentation conveying the results of the 2017 NBS in FY 2020, and produced various quality reviews and data reports on the 2019 NBS results. In FY 2021, we compiled data files, for both restricted access and public use, codebooks, and a user's guide conveying information and results from the 2019 NBS. We posted the NBS PUFs and associated documentation on our website at the end of 2021. In FYs 2022 and 2023, the NBS contractor will estimate final statistical weights for prior survey rounds and will then develop final data files and documentation covering all rounds of the NBS in preparation for contract closeout. Future rounds of the NBS will be included in the Disability Research Surveys project.

Reports and public use files containing data from prior rounds of the NBS are available on our website at: http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/nbs.html.

*New and Emerging Research – Disability*

Given the size and scope of our research agenda, this category allows us the flexibility to cover unanticipated cost increases and the development of new research projects due to changes in laws, regulations, policy, and agency or administration priorities. Projects under this category typically include studies of program policy issues and the identification of trends in the disability program.

The "New and Emerging Research – Disability" line item allows us to allocate funding to cover the costs of small initiatives or initial project development for larger initiatives. If we assess that a project will translate into a larger, multi-year initiative, the project will receive its own line item in future budget planning activities. Factors that determine this transition include project scope, duration, and cost.

*NIH Research on Data Analytics and the Work Disability-Functional Assessment Battery (WD-FAB)*

Under an Interagency Agreement, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center provides in-depth analysis of our existing data and supports testing the WD-FAB in our CDR process. The WD-FAB aims to provide uniform information about individuals' self-reported functional ability that we can use to inform our disability data collection and determination processes.

In FY 2021, NIH continued their WD-FAB related work by providing an analysis of WD-FAB data collected during the Supported Employment Demonstration (SED), along with other SSA administrative data, to analyze how WD-FAB scores change over time. NIH also continued development of natural language processing (NLP) methods to identify functional terminology within the unstructured text of medical evidence. Specifically, NIH developed methods to compare medical records information to residual functional capacity assessment information by extracting physical exam and other body function information from the records. These research methods will help us to identify, extract, and analyze medical records information as data to inform adjudicator decision support projects. In addition, NIH continued its work to expand and update a version of the functional terminology ontology[1] originally delivered to us at the end of FY 2019.

In FY 2022, NIH will conduct the initial analysis of the FY 2022 WD-FAB data collected under the WD-FAB Data Collections contract. This analysis will assist in evaluating the value and feasibility of incorporating the WD-FAB into our CDR business process. NIH will also finalize its analysis and evaluation of WD-FAB data collected during the SED. NIH will initiate research efforts to explore the use of additional data sources to identify characteristics of beneficiaries most likely to return to work to inform ongoing TTW program efforts, and will continue its NLP work identifying functional terminology within medical evidence to expand the associated functional terminology ontology.

In FY 2023, NIH will finalize and deliver the analysis comparing WD-FAB data to our CDR predictive model scores, responses to CDR Mailer (Form SSA-455) questions, and CDR full medical review outcomes for participating study beneficiaries. Once received, we will use the evidence and findings in the report to evaluate the value and feasibility of incorporating the WD-FAB into our CDR business process. NIH will also expand upon its work to develop NLP methods to assist us in identifying functional terminology within the unstructured text of medical evidence and based on analysis of our administrative data, NIH will continue its efforts to identify characteristics of beneficiaries most likely to return to work.

*Occupational Information System (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT)*

In 1991, the Department of Labor (DOL) stopped updating the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) and replaced it with the Occupational Information Network, a system that was developed as a career exploration tool. We are developing a new Occupational Information System (OIS) that could replace the DOL's DOT as the primary source of occupational information in our disability adjudication.

We began collaborating with DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in FY 2012 on development of the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) to collect updated information on the requirements of work in the national economy. We will use the ORS data, along with information from other occupational sources, to create the new OIS. The OIS will classify occupations using the Federally mandated Standard Occupational Classification system and include data elements to measure the physical demands, environmental conditions, and mental and cognitive requirements of work, as well as the education and training needed to gain average proficiency in a job. We will house, access, and operationalize the OIS through the Vocational Information Tool (VIT), a web-based information technology platform.

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[1] A functional terminology ontology groups similar terms into functional domains. For example, the ontology would group similar terms like walking and ambulating into the Mobility domain since both terms relate to mobility.

In FY 2021, BLS completed the third year of Wave 2 data collection, began collecting the fourth year, and published estimates from the second year of Wave 2. SSA analyzed Wave 1 and 2 microdata to determine the number of workers in the national economy who fulfill combinations of RFC and Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP)[1] elements, to identify the most prevalent occupations of those workers and to evaluate mental/cognitive ORS requirements. VIT development included upgrading the system's architecture to comply with our new user experience framework and conducting detailed user experience testing.

In FY 2022, BLS will complete the fourth year and begin the fifth and final year of Wave 2 data collection. In November 2021, BLS published the data from the third year of Wave 2. SSA and BLS will assess the results of BLS testing and research on previously proposed third wave measurement changes. We will work with BLS to develop the Wave 3 sample design methodology and continue our analysis of the ORS microdata.

In FY 2023, BLS will complete Wave 2 data collection, begin collecting the first year of Wave 3 and publish data from the fourth year of Wave 2.

*Ticket to Work (TTW) Evaluation*

To meet the continued obligations in the *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999*, P.L. 106-170, for on-going evaluations and to assess the current landscape of the TTW program, we are undertaking an evaluation of the TTW program operations and experiences of TTW users. This evaluation will include consumer and provider experiences for both the Employment Networks (EN) and the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects.

In FY 2023, we will solicit applications to conduct an evaluation using surveys, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, an analysis of program data, and other data collection methodologies, as appropriate. The topics and questions we intend to answer with this evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- **Program Effectiveness and Opportunities for Improvement:** To what extent are the TTW and WIPA programs working effectively and efficiently? In what areas can we improve? What additional services or program improvements can be helpful to beneficiaries? To what extent are beneficiaries aware of the programs? Why do beneficiaries use the programs? Why do they not? What role does SSA play in the TTW program and what, if any, changes to that role might improve service delivery and program outcomes?
- **Consumer Characteristics:** Who is using TTW and WIPA services? What services are most effective for different demographic groups?
- **Service Provision:** To what extent are services keeping up with modern technological changes? Who are the effective service providers and what do they do differently from less effective service providers?

[1] SSA defines SVP as the amount of time required to learn the techniques, acquire information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job-worker situation. See POMS DI 25001.001A.77, effective 01/28/22.

- **Service Equity:** Are the TTW services broadly available to everyone or are there disparities between which populations have access to these services? What barriers exist, if any, to service provision, including service market provider entry, in economically disadvantaged, racially diverse, and rural communities? How do program rules, such as the Ticket payment system, affect service availability?

We expect to award an evaluation contract to answer these questions in FY 2023. The contractor will design an evaluation study, field the data collection activities, and produce reports on its findings. This evaluation will supplement findings from the previous TTW evaluation. In FYs 2023 and 2024, we expect to work with the contractor to finalize the evaluation design and obtain approval for data collection activities. We expect to field the data collection activities in FYs 2025 and 2026 and expect a final evaluation report in FY 2027.

***Project Updates (no funding required)***

*Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE)*

PROMISE is a joint pilot demonstration project with the Department of Education and DOL. The goal is to test interventions that improve the health, education, and post-school outcomes of children who receive SSI, including the completion of postsecondary education and employment. We also hope to improve family or household outcomes through improved services and supports, such as education and job training for parents.

In FY 2013, we awarded a contract to evaluate the PROMISE model demonstration projects. In FY 2019, we released an interim services and impact report showing that the individual projects increased the receipt of youth-based transition services and family receipt of services and increased youth employment. From FY 2019 through FY 2021, we conducted a survey of participants in the project. We expect to produce a final evaluation report, including a cost-benefit analysis in FY 2022.

*Promoting Work through Early Interventions Project (PWEIP)*

The PWEIP is a joint undertaking with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within HHS. The project will identify, select, and evaluate programs likely to improve the employment and economic outcomes of individuals who have not yet applied for SSI and have little or no work history, current or foreseeable disabilities, and ties to U.S. safety net programs. Evaluations of programs will include impact assessments and implementation research. A select number of evaluations will also include a cost analysis.

In FY 2019, we developed and entered into a jointly financed cooperative arrangement with ACF and transferred $25 million to support the evaluation and/or service provisions of selected intervention programs. In FY 2020, we worked with ACF to engage in site assessment and selection activities for programs to participate in an evaluation under ACF's Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) and Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies (NextGen) projects.

We approved nine programs that will participate in BEES or NextGen and will be supported with our agency's transferred funds. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY 2020 and its continuation into FY 2021 has led to delays in, or suspension of, some study activities. Depending on the trajectory of the pandemic and continued implications for selected programs, by the end of FY 2022 we anticipate all programs will have launched study enrollment and will be actively engaged in study activities. These activities will continue beyond FY 2022, given study enrollment periods vary by program and the potential for continued study delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Demonstration*

RETAIN is a joint demonstration with DOL. The demonstration is developing, implementing, evaluating, and scaling effective stay-at-work and return-to-work early intervention strategies to support injured or ill workers in employment, including workers with COVID-19-related illnesses.

In FY 2019, DOL awarded eight States (California, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, Vermont, and Washington) up to $2.5 million for 24-month pilot grants as Phase 1 of the project. DOL extended the Phase 1 pilot grants and increased the duration of the Phase 2 grants to allow more time for enrollment activities and increased the evaluation contract period of performance by an equivalent number of months. In early FY 2021, the evaluation contractor produced assessment reports to aid DOL in selecting a subset of the Phase 1 States for full-implementation. In FY 2021, DOL awarded Phase 2 grants to Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Vermont to improve the coordination of health care and employment-related supports and services to new geographic areas and larger populations within these States. DOL will maintain a technical assistance contract to support RETAIN grantees, and we will maintain a contract for conducting a rigorous evaluation of the projects.

Phase 2 grantees began recruiting participants into the full program in FY 2022. In FY 2022, the evaluation contractor began administering surveys to both enrollees and service providers. Grantees will enroll participants through the spring of FY 2024 and provide services through the summer of FY 2025. The evaluation contractor will produce an interim impact report in FY 2025 and the final impact evaluation report in FY 2026.

*Supported Employment Demonstration (SED)*

While many demonstrations for existing DI beneficiaries have shown positive results (e.g., increased earnings), they have not identified interventions that would return beneficiaries to substantial and sustained employment. Research indicates that health problems materialize in advance of complete disability onset and that earnings begin to decline well before DI benefits are awarded. The SED evaluates whether offering evidence-based packages of vocational, medical, and mental health services to recently denied DI and SSI applicants (ages 18 to 50 with a mental impairment) can reduce the demand for DI benefits. The SED provides participants with long-term employment services and intensive behavioral health and related services beyond what is available through their existing health plans.

**Supplemental Security Income Program**

We awarded a contract to implement and evaluate the SED in August 2016. The contractor completed enrollment in FY 2019. In FY 2020, all sites delivered interventions and the contractor conducted regular monitoring and fidelity site visits that included ethnographic observations and interviews with key informants and participants. In FY 2021, the study moved to virtual activities and data collection processes due to COVID-19 restrictions as full interventions continued. In FYs 2020 and 2021, participants began transitioning out of the study after 3 years of services; transitions continue until March 2022 when interventions end. The timeline for the study was extended by four months (from August to December 2022) to accommodate COVID-19-associated delays and earlier start-up delays. We released a special topics report, presenting and analyzing effects of innovative enrollment and study retention strategies developed for the study Supported Employment Demonstration Enrollment Analysis Report. We will receive the final evaluation reports (impact and cost-benefit analyses) and data files for the SED in the first quarter of FY 2023. The study ends December 31, 2022.

_TTW Notice Optimization_

We mail notices of TTW eligibility to beneficiaries approximately 2 months after we award disability benefits and at the 12 month and 36 month anniversary dates post-award. The TTW Notice Optimization project seeks to increase participation in the TTW program by developing an evidence-based approach to targeting outreach to eligible beneficiaries. The project will test changes to TTW notices including the types of notices we send, the language we use, and the timing of our notices.

In FY 2019, we analyzed administrative data to identify patterns of responses to past mailings and characteristics associated with TTW participation and work. We also worked with the General Services Administration's (GSA) Office of Evaluation Sciences to develop prototype notices. In FY 2020, we worked with GSA to develop the evaluation design and finalize the notice prototypes to send beneficiaries (upon award, one year after award, and two years after award). We modified the system needed to randomize notice mailings and began mailing out notices in September 2020.

In FY 2021, we tested prototype notices and conducted data analyses. We extended the mailings from 9 months to 18 months. We will continue to send the revised notices through March 2022. Along with GSA, we will conduct the final analyses of the new mailings in FY 2023.

**Deliver Services Effectively**

_Data Development in an Enterprise Business Intelligence (EBI) Platform_

EBI provides advanced analytics and data integration tools for efficient access and analysis of our records to support data driven decision-making. Section 1110 funds support a subset of activities to enhance research and statistical functions, primarily the publication of statistics from administrative records.

Some of our legacy processes used for producing statistics still require significant manual intervention. We generate reports and data files monthly, quarterly, yearly, and on an ad-hoc basis. We are improving the report and data production efficiency and accuracy by modernizing and automating the application processes that we use to create statistical data, tables, and reports for research.

Our FY 2021 work included:

- Modernizing and automating processes including validating and streamlining business processes for the OASDI publication data development and monthly statistical publication reports.
- Modernizing and automating manual SSI Yearly data files processing. We use the files in SSI annual publications.
- Maintaining the automated publication process for Windfall Elimination Provision – Government Pension Offset (WEP-GPO), SSI, Earnings Geography (GEO), Earnings Publication, and Representative-Payee data.
- Using EBI tools to support the production of statistics or data extracts for ongoing publications and critical ad-hoc research projects

FY 2022 work will focus on:

- Developing automation processes for the OASDI statistical summary data development and yearly statistical publication reports generation.
- Maintaining the automated publication process for WEP-GPO, SSI, GEO, Earnings Publication, and Representative Payee data.
- Using EBI tools to support the production of statistics or data extracts for ongoing publications and critical ad-hoc research projects.

In FY 2023, we will build tools to enhance our research and statistical reports. We will replace obsolete data collecting methodologies in the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS). Additionally, FYs 2022 and 2023 work will include:

- Modernizing and automating Cell Suppression methods for OASDI and SSI files.
- Streamlining the business process for our Fast Facts Figures publication.
- Computerizing end-to-end validation process of OASDI and SSI statistical publication tables and reports using modern SAS statistical tools.
- Maintaining and upgrading the publication process for: WEP-GPO, SSI, GEO, Earnings Publications, and Representative Payee data from SAS 9.4 M5 version to SAS 9.4 M7/SAS Viya.

*Understanding America Study (UAS) Enhancements*

UAS is an innovative, nationally representative longitudinal internet panel funded through a jointly financed cooperative agreement with the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Our support will allow the grantee to maintain and expand the sample size to 20,000 panel members by the end of the grant.
The planned improvements to the UAS will allow us to make informed decisions about initiating new policies, procedures, and educational products to enhance retirement security and administer the program. For example, we used longitudinal data to inform updates to the *Social Security*

*Statement* and its supplemental fact sheets that were released online in the *my* Social Security portal and by mail in FY 2021. In FYs 2022 and 2023, we will use the longitudinal data from the UAS to assess whether the redesigned *Social Security Statement* and new supplemental fact sheets improve the public's understanding of our programs. The UAS data set is also available for external researchers to use in addressing research questions. For example, researchers used UAS data to explain financial literacy and financial behavior at older ages (Clark, Mitchell & Lusardi, 2021)[1], build life-cycle models of consumption, savings, labor supply, and Social Security claiming decisions (Bairoliya & McKiernan, 2021)[2], and evaluate the potential impact of policies to reduce Social Security funding shortfalls on consumers (Perez-Arce, Rabinovich, & Yoong, 2021)[3]. Lastly, we will use the UAS data to publish research papers on changes in Social Security program knowledge, retirement savings behavior, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*<u>Medicare Outreach – Section 1144</u>*

We target outreach to income-tested, Medicare-eligible beneficiaries and those who have experienced a decrease in income under the Medicare Prescription Drug, Modernization, and Improvement Act of 2003, P.L. 108-173, which expanded outreach requirements of Section 1144, and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, P.L. 110-275, which deemed every Extra Help application filed with our agency to be a protective filing for the State-administered Medicare Savings Programs (MSP), unless the claimant objects. We send outreach letters to beneficiaries with incomes below 135 percent of the poverty level. These letters provide help with "traditional" Medicare and include information about Extra Help, when appropriate. Rather than notify all potentially eligible beneficiaries each year, we annually notify 20 percent of those who previously received an outreach letter, have not received the benefits, and continue to meet the income test.

In addition, we share lists of individuals potentially eligible for cost sharing with State Medicaid agencies. The major objective of these projects is to increase the enrollment of eligible low-income individuals into programs that assist Medicare beneficiaries with their out-of-pocket medical expenses, including prescription drug coverage premiums. HHS fully reimburses our costs in an amount not exceeding $3 million per year.

In FY 2021, we mailed approximately 1.6 million outreach letters to those who potentially qualified for MSP or Extra Help. In FYs 2022 to 2024, we anticipate mailing a similar number of outreach letters each year. However, we factor in a contingency amount for possible increases in enrollment, for beneficiaries who experience a decline in income, and other expected costs such as an increase in postage.

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[1] Clark, R. L., Lusardi, A., & Mitchell, O. S. (2021, May). Financial Fragility During the COVID-19 Pandemic. In *AEA Papers and Proceedings* (Vol. 111, pp. 292-96).

[2] Bairoliya, N., & McKiernan, K. (2021). Revisiting Retirement and Social Security Claiming Decisions. *Available at SSRN 3896031*.

[3] Perez-Arce, F., Rabinovich, L., & Yoong, J. (2021). The Potential Impact of Policies to Reduce Social Security Funding Shortfalls on Consumers' Expected Benefits and Behavior. *Journal of Pension Economics & Finance*, *20*(4), 482-495.

## Ensuring Stewardship

*Census Surveys*

The Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is the foundation for much of our policy analysis and modeling efforts. We support efforts to improve the quality and content of the Census Bureau's SIPP data to improve the ability to match SIPP data to our administrative data on benefits and earnings. We rely upon SIPP data matched to our records to study OASI, DI, SSI, and related programs and to analyze the effect of changes to these programs on individuals, the economy, and program solvency.

We developed new questions, which the Census Bureau integrated into the existing SIPP content, beginning with the 2021 SIPP data collection. This new content will be repeated in the annual SIPP interviews conducted in 2022 and beyond, but our annual cost will decline because there will be no need to test new data collection instruments.

*Data Development*

One of the main objectives of our extramural research program is to provide information for decision-makers on the OASI, DI, and SSI programs. We develop and maintain a series of detailed, statistical databases drawn from our major administrative data systems and prepare a broad range of statistical tables. We also publish statistical compilations and develop information for research, evaluation, and modeling that relies on survey data collected by our agency, other Federal agencies, and Federally-sponsored institutions.

In FY 2021, we entered into a new agreement with the Census Bureau for the "Ask US" Panel (i.e., Census Address-and Probability-Based Online Panel). The focus of the interagency agreement is to collaborate on designing, building, and maintaining an address-based, probability-based, online research panel that will be available for the Federal Statistical System to conduct robust public opinion and methodological research. The Census Bureau, in collaboration with several agencies, has entered into a cooperative agreement with RTI International to build this panel. In FY 2022, we continue to support the Census Bureau's efforts to build the panel. Our partnership allows the use of a readily available, vetted, and Government-wide online research platform to conduct regular as well as rapid-response surveys, thereby avoiding the continual process and costs of selecting outside vendors to fulfill our survey research needs. Additionally, the partnership will facilitate longitudinal probability-based research that many Government agencies are interested in conducting.

As part of our efforts related to the President's Executive Order on racial equity, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, (E.O. 13958), we want to use our programmatic data on race and ethnicity for research. Our challenge is to determine whether we have sufficiently reliable, quality program data on race and ethnicity. In FY 2022, we are assessing the quality of our data, developing metrics and thresholds for reliability, enhancing the data through statistical imputations and other techniques, and publishing statistics and research on those segments of our populations for which we have adequate data on race and ethnicity. In FYs 2023 and 2024, we plan to develop research data files for use by agency researchers and others, to produce statistical data products related to equity, race, and ethnicity. For more information on our equity efforts, please see the Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility exhibit in the LAE section.

As part of data development, we are providing support to the Committee on National Statistics of the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to improve statistical methods and information. Recent Committee topics include redesigning the Consumer Expenditure Surveys and improving healthcare cost projections for the Medicare population.

*Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement*

The University of Michigan's HRS surveys more than 22,000 Americans over the age of 50 every 2 years and provides an ongoing source of longitudinal data for research on retirement and aging. The study provides data on health and economic well-being after retirement that is not available in our program data. HRS data helps us assess a wide range of issues, including pre-retirement saving, health insurance, employment and retirement patterns, and projected benefits of disabled and retired workers. Through jointly financed cooperative agreements with the NIA, we have supported the HRS from its inception. HRS has become the premier source of data on the retirement-age population, especially when linked with our administrative records on benefits and earnings.

We use the HRS for research by our staff or for projects funded through the RDRC regarding disability, pension participation, differences in contributions to tax-deferred savings accounts among different birth cohorts, and retirement income resources of near-retirees. For example, in FY 2021, our researchers continued to use the HRS for a study analyzing the accuracy of our *Income of the Aged Population* publications and for a study measuring total retirement resources (wealth and income) from 1998-2016, including in-kind transfer payments. The HRS data we support is also available for external researchers to better understand the American population aged 50 and older, including measuring income, poverty, and wealth for black and white elderly households.

*Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC)*

The RDRC is a key tool for maintaining a strong capability to produce a large body of policy-relevant research on our programs. The RDRC comprises four competitively selected research centers based at the University of Michigan, Boston College, the National Bureau of Economic Research, and the University of Wisconsin. We broadly charge these research centers with planning, initiating, and maintaining a high quality, multidisciplinary research program that covers retirement, disability, and Social Security program issues. The centers perform valuable research and evaluation of retirement and disability policy, disseminate results, provide training awards, and facilitate the use of our program data by outside researchers.

We awarded the current set of five-year cooperative agreements for the RDRC at the end of FY 2018. The next set of five-year cooperative agreements will be awarded in FY 2023 following a competition open to all research organizations, universities, and associations of research organizations and universities in the United States.

The RDRC is actively used to support the agency's equity initiatives, including two ongoing training programs co-administered by an HBCU (Howard University) and an MSI/AANAPSI (the University of Illinois Chicago), and various research projects that include scholars from an HBCU/MSI and/or focus on a topic relating to racial or ethnic disparities. For example, eight of the FY 2021 projects include scholars from HBCUs or MSIs, including at Bowie State University, Howard University, Spelman University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, among others. We continue to strongly encourage the four RDRC centers to expand their collaborations with these institutions and to consider equity in all of their research activities.

FY 2021 funding supported 64 projects to be conducted by the end of FY 2022 on a variety of topics. In FYs 2022 and 2023, we anticipate funding around the same number of projects annually. Focal areas for projects to be conducted in FY 2022 include: trends in population health, functional ability, and disability; work in the modern economy; disabled beneficiaries and return-to-work; informing the economic and demographic assumptions underlying trust fund projections; improving our communication and outreach; the economic security of our beneficiaries; understanding disparities by race and ethnicity; and improving service delivery. Within each topic, we provided the centers with specific research questions to consider when developing their research proposals.

In addition to supporting research activities, the RDRC will continue to prepare future experts on retirement and disability issues and policy through research training fellowships, dissertation support, pre- and post-doctoral fellowships, early investigator grants, and junior scholar workshops. This includes three new training programs introduced in FY 2021 that target junior scholars affiliated with minority serving institutions and/or scholars whose research focuses on issues of equity among historically disadvantaged populations.

## RELATED FUNDING SOURCES

The Commissioner of Social Security has the authority to conduct research and demonstration projects under Section 234 of the Act. We use trust fund monies to conduct various demonstration projects, including alternative methods of treating work activity of individuals entitled to DI benefits. These demonstration projects, authorized under the 1999 Ticket to Work Act and the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2015, are funded from the trust funds and are not part of the annual research appropriation request. OMB apportions Section 234 funds. The BBA provided authorization to initiate such projects until December 31, 2021, and to carry out such projects through December 31, 2022.

*Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND)*

BOND tests the effect of a $1-for-$2 offset of benefits for DI beneficiaries when earnings are above the SGA level. We published the final evaluation report in FY 2019. We are providing work incentive counseling services to the remaining BOND participants who are eligible to use the offset until December 31, 2022.

*Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD)*

Section 823 of the BBA amended Section 234 of the Act and instructed us to carry out a demonstration project testing a $1-for-$2 benefit offset. This project differs from BOND in several ways. Among these differences, POD applies a monthly offset to earnings above either a standard threshold (the Trial Work Period level) or an itemized Impairment Related Work Expenses level. Participation is voluntary, and individuals can withdraw from the project at any time.

Participation for beneficiaries in the POD ended June 2021, and all participants returned to current law rules as of July 1, 2021. In FY 2021, we released the Interim Evaluation Report. We also completed the final survey of participants in FY 2021, and we will complete the evaluation in FY 2022.

The effects of COVID-19 on POD will affect the interpretation of the final 2020 impact estimates due to the resulting economic recession and increased unemployment rate.

**Table 2.23—Current Research Projects Obligations through FY 2021 (in thousands)**

| | Years | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Improving the Way We Do Business** | | **$481,175** |
| Advisory Services to Assist. SSA with Disability Issues | 2008-2021 | $32,324 |
| Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation and Work: A Small Grant Program (ARDRAW) | 2016-2021 | $1,800 |
| Beyond Benefits Study (previously Exits from Disability) Evidence Study | 2001 | $2,743 |
| BPA Time Sensitive (previously Research and Innovation Lab) | 2018-2021 | $5,361 |
| Disability Analysis File (DAF) | 2008-2021 | $16,780 |
| Disability Perceptions Survey | 2020-2021 | $1,147 |
| Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP) | 2021 | $4,326 |
| National Beneficiary Survey | 2008-2021 | $19,850 |
| New and Emerging Research Disability | 2008-2021 | $7,131 |
| NIH Research on Data Analytics and the FAB | 2008-2021 | $32,829 |
| Occupational Information System and Vocational Info Tool | 2012-2021 | $205,832 |
| Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) | 2019-2021 | $74,662 |
| Supported Employment Demonstration (SED) | 2016-2021 | $76,390 |
| **Deliver Services Effectively** | | **$48,521** |
| Enterprise Business Platform | 2015-2021 | $11,449 |
| Understanding America Survey | 2009-2021 | $20,698 |
| Medicare Outreach (1144) | 2008-2021 | $16,374 |

| | Years | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Ensuring Stewardship** | | **$205,288** |
| Census Surveys | 2008-2021 | $10,500 |
| Data Development [1] | 2008-2021 | $6,936 |
| Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement | 2008-2021 | $56,817 |
| Retirement and Disability Research Consortium[2] | 2008-2021 | $131,035 |
| **Total Section 1110 and 1144 Obligations** | | **$734,984** |
| Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) | 2008-2021 | $135,341 |
| Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD) | 2016-2021 | $49,074 |
| **Total Section 234** | | **$184,491** |

## ADMINISTRATION OF OUR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Our primary research components are housed within the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy (ORDP). ORDP is responsible for all major activities in the areas of strategic and program policy planning, policy research and evaluation, statistical programs, and overall policy development, analysis, and implementation. Within ORDP, the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support, the Office of Disability Policy, and the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics, share the responsibility of administering projects funded under our research appropriation.

**Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support (ORDES) -** ORDES conducts research and analysis related to the DI and SSI programs. ORDES implements demonstration projects to test changes to the disability programs primarily aimed at improving program administration and supporting employment. It also conducts research, analysis, evaluations, and statistical modeling that support our goals to strengthen our disability programs and improve program integrity. The Associate Commissioner for ORDES is our Evaluation Officer[3].

**Office of Disability Policy (ODP) -** ODP oversees and supports the planning, development, evaluation, and issuance of substantive regulations, policies, and procedures for our disability programs; development and promulgation of policies and guidelines for use by State, Federal, or private contractor providers who implement the disability provisions of the Social Security Act; and evaluation of the effects of proposed legislation and legislation pending before Congress to determine the impact on disability programs. ODP uses research to identify opportunities for policy improvement and for keeping medical, vocational, childhood, disability, and CDR policies up to date.

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[1] Data Development now reflects total obligations for current research projects only.

[2] The Disability and Research Consortium (DRC) and the Retirement Research Consortium (RRC) were separate grant programs until FY 2017.

[3] As described in M-19-23, the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act of 2018 requires CFO-Act agencies to designate a senior staff member with authority and responsibility for providing leadership over the agency's evaluation and learning agenda activities.

**Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (ORES) -** ORES is a statistical unit responsible for the production and dissemination of research and data on our programs. ORES produces findings on our retirement, disability, and SSI programs from research and microsimulation projects supported through intramural and extramural programs. As a principal statistical unit of the agency, ORES develops program and survey data to support our research and statistical objectives. In addition, ORES maintains a schedule of research and statistical publications. ORES statisticians and researchers provide reliable data about our key program variables, information about the design of social insurance programs around the world to support comparative research, as well as social and behavioral research related to our programs. ORES also provides policymakers and stakeholders with research on retirement security. The Associate Commissioner for ORES is the agency's Chief Statistical Officer[1].

### Implementation of the Evidence Act

The Foundations for *Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) of 2018* requires us to develop a Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment. For more information on our implementation of the Evidence Act, please see the 2023 Agency Evidence Submission exhibit following this exhibit, and documents posted on https://www.ssa.gov/data.

## RESEARCH INVESTMENT CRITERIA

We support research that fosters a better understanding of the socio-economic status and other characteristics of Americans under the program we administer; how changes in demography and the economy might alter the well-being of the program and those it covers; the interrelationships between the program and other private and public programs; and the impact of the program on the overall economy. Within this framework, our extramural program places the best available evidence into the hands of policymakers to inform policy development and program administration. We have established guidelines for developing, managing, and vetting projects for inclusion in our long-term research and demonstration agenda. We employ a variety of methods to ensure we meet the funding requirements of the sections of the Act that authorize our extramural research and demonstration activities and our extramural research activities meet high standards for relevance, quality, and performance.

*Relevance*

The primary purpose of our extramural research is to support evidence-building to inform the improvement of our programs, especially for individuals facing barriers to economic security. We seek to support research and demonstrations that clearly connect with this goal. A fundamental step in our review is assuring that each project responds to issues facing the OASDI and/or SSI programs, with priority towards contemporaneous challenges, such as advancing equity. Our review process includes obtaining the advice and recommendations of researchers with technical expertise, program managers, and agency executives. We also receive input on

[1] Chief Statistical Officer, Katherine Bent, Associate Commissioner, Office of Research, Demonstration and Employment Support, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy.

our research program from the Social Security Advisory Board**.** The extramural research budget undergoes both our careful scrutiny and that of external monitoring authorities.

Internal reviews also help to ensure that funded activities reflect our strategic goals and objectives and help us respond to legislative requirements and address high-priority issues. Many of our extramural research activities are directed toward providing policymakers and the public with the analytical and data resources they need to assess our current programs and the implications of reform proposals.

Our budget request reflects our support of the ongoing goals to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to maximize their self-sufficiency through work and to increase the American public's basic financial management skills. For example, through the RETAIN project, we are working collaboratively with DOL to test interventions that will improve the ability of individuals to remain in the labor force when they acquire an illness or injury.

We are also working with DOL and with HHS' Administration for Children and Families to test early intervention and return-to-work services for individuals who may be potential future applicants for DI or SSI.

Finally, in support of the Administration's commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities we participate in cross-agency working groups, as appropriate. We are supportive of exploring ways to leverage our data and research portfolio to buttress these efforts.

*Quality*

Our extramural program provides access to analysts at top research institutions from around the country to expand our base of expertise to produce the best evidence in support of our program. We use a competitive, merit-based, peer reviewed procurement process to ensure that our extramural research program selects the most appropriate individuals and techniques to produce high quality results. We award our extramural research projects conducted by private-sector organizations through competitive contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements. As a result, our extramural program features internationally recognized scholars including many that have held important Federal posts (e.g., Council of Economic Advisors) and received significant recognition for their research contributions (e.g., the John Bates Clark Medal).

We also use Technical Expert Panels to review projects while they are in progress to provide feedback and suggestions to the agency. These panels include internal experts in relevant disciplines, such as statistics, economics, and survey design. They help ensure that our sponsored research projects are methodologically sound and consistent with professional standards. The research projects we sponsor through the RDRC are often discussed in formal seminars or workshops, as well as published in top peer-reviewed scientific journals.

*Performance*

We carry out our extramural research and evaluation projects primarily through contracts, jointly funded cooperative agreements, and grants that identify specific deliverables and timetables.

## Supplemental Security Income Program

The agency has sent a strong message to contractors that they must complete projects on time and within budget. Contracting officers, contracting officer's representatives, analysts, and senior executives monitor the progress of all research contracts and agreements. These agreements are also subject to audits by the Office of the Inspector General.

Consistent with the Administration's encouragement to support evidence-based evaluations, we produce reports and data files for each research and evaluation project in an effort to determine whether existing or proposed programs work as designed. Where appropriate, we make these reports publicly available or announce their availability in the *Social Security Bulletin* and online.[1] The RDRC also disseminates output at annual meetings, online, and through a variety of publications, workshops, and conferences. Finally, our research projects are widely cited in both peer-reviewed publications and the press. For example, the *Expenditures of the Aged Chartbook* was referenced in the Bloomberg article, "Health, Housing Hit Budgets of Older Americans Even Before Covid" and the research paper, "Immigrants' Economic Assimilation: Evidence from Longitudinal Earnings Records" was cited in the journal, *American Sociological Review*.

[1] Our extramural partners often publish supported research in scholarly journals. Recent examples include, but are not limited to: Rennane, Stephanie (2020). "A Double Safety Net? Understanding Interactions between Disability Benefits, Formal Assistance, and Family Support." Journal of Health Economics, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2019.102248; Börsch-Supan, Axel, Tabea Bucher-Koenen, and Felizia Hanemann (2020) "Early Determinants of Work Disability in an International Perspective." Demography, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13524-020-00902-7; Coile, Courtney, Mark Duggan, and Audrey Guo (2020) "To Work for Yourself, for Others, or Not at All? How Disability Benefits Affect the Employment Decisions of Older Veterans." Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22261; Quinby, Laura D., Alicia H. Munnell, Wenliang Hou, Anek Belbase and Geoffrey T. Sanzenbacher (2020) "Participation and Pre-Retirement Withdrawals in Oregon's Auto-IRA." The Journal of Retirement, https://doi.org/10.3905/jor.2020.1.069; Munnell, Alicia H., Abigail N. Walters, Anek Belbase, and Wenliang Hou (2020). "Are homeownership patterns stable enough to tap home equity?" The Journal of the Economics of Ageing, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeoa.2020.100277; Maurer, Raimond and Olivia Mitchell (2020). "Older peoples' willingness to delay social security claiming." Journal of Pension Economics and Finance, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474747219000404; Been, Jim, Susann Rohwedder, and Michael Hurd (2020). "Does Home Production Replace Consumption Spending? Evidence from Shocks in Housing Wealth in the Great Recession," The Review of Economics and Statistics, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7597678; Haurin, Donald, Stephanie Moulton, Cäzilia Loibl, Julia K Brown (2020). "Debt Stress and Debt Illusion: The Role of Consumer Credit, Reverse and Standard Mortgages," The Journals of Gerontology, https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa167; Loibl, Cäzilia, Stephanie Moulton, Donald Haurin & Chrisse Edmunds (2020) "The role of consumer and mortgage debt for financial stress." Aging & Mental Health, https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2020.1843000.

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## TABLES

**Limitation on Administrative Expenses**

## APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE/BACKGROUND

### AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The LAE account is authorized by section 201(g) of the Social Security Act. The authorization language makes available for expenditure, out of any or all of the Trust Funds, such amounts as Congress deems appropriate for administering Title II, Title VIII, Title XVI, and Title XVIII of the Social Security Act for which we are responsible and Title XVIII of the Act for which the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services is responsible.

**Table 3.1—Authorizing Legislation**
(Dollars in thousands)

| | 2021 Amount Authorized | 2021 Enacted[1,2] | 2022 Amount Authorized | 2022 Estimate[3,4] | 2023 Amount Authorized | 2023 Estimate[5,6] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Title II, Section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act** | Indefinite | $12,930,945 | Indefinite | $12,930,945 | Indefinite | $14,773,300 |

[1] The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260), appropriated this amount. The total includes $45,000,000 to remain available until expended for IT modernization, including related hardware and software infrastructure and equipment, and for administrative expenses directly associated with IT modernization. The total includes $50,000,000 in available funding through September 30, 2022, for activities to address the hearings backlog within the Office of Hearings Operations. The total includes $1,575,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,302,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps, as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available until March 31, 2022. P.L. 116-260 allows SSA to transfer up to $11.2 million of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated cooperative disability investigations units.

[2] The total includes up to $135,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

[3] We assume the enactment of a full-year continuing resolution, at an annualized rate equal to enacted FY 2021 appropriations. We assume the FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act level of program integrity ($1,575,000,000) will be provided and made available through March 31, 2023. This funding level also includes $45,000,000 for IT modernization and $50,000,000 to address the disability hearings backlog.

[4] The total includes up to $135,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

[5] We take seriously our responsibilities to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and to safeguard the integrity of benefit programs to better serve recipients. The FY 2023 Budget requests $1,799,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including a $1,511,000,000 allocation adjustment to remain available until March 31, 2024. Dedicated program integrity funding allows SSA to conduct CDRs and SSI redeterminations to confirm that participants remain eligible to receive benefits, and it supports anti-fraud CDI units and special attorneys for fraud prosecutions. The Budget proposes transferring up to $15.1 million of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units.

[6] The total includes up to $140,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

## Limitation on Administrative Expenses

### APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

*For necessary expenses, including the hire and purchase of passenger motor vehicles and charging or fueling infrastructure for zero emission passenger motor vehicles, and not to exceed $20,000 for official reception and representation expenses, not more than $14,632,300,000 may be expended, as authorized by section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act, from any one or all of the trust funds referred to in such section: Provided, That not less than $2,750,000 shall be for the Social Security Advisory Board: Provided further, That unobligated balances of funds provided under this paragraph at the end of fiscal year 2023 not needed for fiscal year 2023 shall remain available until expended to invest in the Social Security Administration information technology and telecommunications hardware and software infrastructure, including related equipment and non-payroll administrative expenses associated solely with this information technology and telecommunications infrastructure: Provided further, That the Commissioner of Social Security shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate prior to making unobligated balances available under the authority in the previous proviso: Provided further, That reimbursement to the trust funds under this heading for expenditures for official time for employees of the Social Security Administration pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 7131, and for facilities or support services for labor organizations pursuant to policies, regulations, or procedures referred to in section 7135(b) of such title shall be made by the Secretary of the Treasury, with interest, from amounts in the general fund not otherwise appropriated, as soon as possible after such expenditures are made.*

*From funds provided under the first paragraph, $1,799,000,000, to remain available through March 31, 2024, is for the costs associated with continuing disability reviews under titles II and XVI of the Social Security Act, including work-related continuing disability reviews* *to determine whether earnings derived from services demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity, for the cost associated with conducting redeterminations of eligibility under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for the cost of co-operative disability investigation units, and for the cost associated with the prosecution of fraud in the programs and operations of the Social Security Administration by Special Assistant United States Attorneys: Provided, That, of such amount, $288,000,000 is provided to meet the terms of a concurrent resolution on the budget, and $1,511,000,000 is additional new budget authority specified for purposes of a concurrent resolution on the budget: Provided further, That, of the additional new budget authority described in the preceding proviso, up to $15,100,000 may be transferred to the "Office of Inspector General", Social Security Administration, for the cost of jointly operated co-operative disability investigation units: Provided further, That such transfer authority is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: Provided further, That the Commissioner shall provide to the Congress (at the conclusion of the fiscal year) a report on the obligation and expenditure of these funds, similar to the reports that were required by section 103(d)(2) of Public Law 104–121 for fiscal years 1996 through 2002: Provided further, That none of the funds described in this paragraph shall be available for transfer or reprogramming except as specified in this paragraph.*

*In addition, $140,000,000 to be derived from administration fees in excess of $5.00 per supplementary payment collected pursuant to section 1616(d) of the Social Security Act or section 212(b)(3) of Public Law 93–66, which shall remain available until expended: Provided, That to the extent that the amounts collected pursuant to such sections in fiscal year 2023 exceed $140,000,000, the amounts shall be available in fiscal year 2024 only to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts.*

**Limitation on Administrative Expenses**

*In addition, up to $1,000,000 to be derived from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act, which shall remain available until expended.*

*Note—A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, the budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of P.L. 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.*

## LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

The Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) appropriation language provides us with the funds needed to administer the Old Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI), Disability Insurance (DI), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs, and to support the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in administering their programs. The LAE account is funded by the OASI, DI, and Medicare trust funds for their shares of administrative expenses, by the General Fund of the Treasury for the SSI program's share of administrative expenses, and through applicable user fees. The language provides the limitation on the amounts that may be expended, in total from these separate sources, for our administrative expenses.

We take seriously our responsibilities to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and to safeguard the integrity of benefit programs to better serve recipients. We are requesting $1,799,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including a $1,511,000,000 allocation adjustment. We conduct continuing disability reviews (CDRs) to ensure that only beneficiaries who still qualify to receive benefits under the OASDI and SSI programs continue to receive these benefits (includes both medical and work CDRs). For those receiving SSI, we also perform non-medical redeterminations to determine whether recipients continue to meet the program's income and resource limits. The funding also supports anti-fraud Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units and the prosecution of fraud by Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys (SAUSA). In FY 2023, the Budget provides for a $15,100,000 transfer from the program integrity adjustment to the Inspector General (OIG) CDI unit related costs. Following expiration of the discretionary caps in 2021, the Budget includes an allocation adjustment for FY 2023. This adjustment is shown in the Budget for use in the congressional budget process, pursuant to the Congressional Budget Act. In addition to the appropriated amounts, we are requesting to spend up to $140,000,000 in SSI State Supplement user fees and up to $1,000,000 in non-attorney representative fees.

**Table 3.2—Appropriation Language Analysis**

| Language Provision | Explanation |
|---|---|
| "*For necessary expenses, including the hire and purchase of passenger motor vehicles and charging or fueling infrastructure for zero emission passenger motor vehicles…*" | In support of the President's goal of transitioning to a fully Zero Emission Vehicle Federal fleet, the request includes $1,200,000 for zero emission vehicle (ZEV - battery electric, plug-in electric hybrid, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles) acquisitions and deploying necessary vehicle charging and refueling infrastructure. These acquisitions are a significant step towards eliminating tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) from our fleet and aligning fleet operations with the goal of achieving a fully ZEV federal fleet. ZEV acquisitions may include vehicles for both agency-owned and GSA-leased segments of our vehicle fleet, including incremental costs of leased vehicles and lease |

| Language Provision | Explanation |
|---|---|
| | payments to GSA for conversion of agency-owned vehicles to GSA's leased fleet where appropriate. |
| *"Provided further, That unobligated balances of funds provided under this paragraph at the end of fiscal year 2023 not needed for fiscal year 2023 shall remain available until expended to invest in the Social Security Administration information technology and telecommunications hardware and software infrastructure, including related equipment and non-payroll administrative expenses associated solely with this information technology and telecommunications infrastructure: Provided further, That the Commissioner of Social Security shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate prior to making unobligated balances available under the authority in the previous proviso…"* | The language allows us to carryover unobligated balances for non-payroll automation and telecommunications investment costs in future fiscal years. |
| *Provided further, That reimbursement to the trust funds under this heading for expenditures for official time for employees of the Social Security Administration pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 7131, and for facilities or support services for labor organizations pursuant to policies, regulations, or procedures referred to in section 7135(b) of such title shall be made by the Secretary of the Treasury, with interest, from amounts in the general fund not otherwise appropriated, as soon as possible after such expenditures are made.* | The language provides that the general fund of the United States Treasury will reimburse the Social Security trust funds, with interest, for the portion of official expenses attributable to the trust funds. |

| Language Provision | Explanation |
|---|---|
| *From funds provided under the first paragraph $1,799,000,000 , to remain available through March 31, 2024, is for the costs associated with continuing disability reviews under titles II and XVI of the Social Security Act, including work-related continuing disability reviews to determine whether earnings derived from services demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity, for the cost associated with conducting redeterminations of eligibility under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for the cost of co-operative disability investigation units, and for the cost associated with the prosecution of fraud in the programs and operations of the Social Security Administration by Special Assistant United States Attorneys: Provided, That, of such amount, $288,000,000 is provided to meet the terms of a concurrent resolution on the budget, and $1,511000,000 is additional new budget authority specified for purposes of a concurrent resolution on the budget: Provided further, That, of the additional new budget authority described in the preceding proviso, up to $15,100,000 may be transferred to the "Office of Inspector General", Social Security Administration, for the cost of jointly operated co-operative disability investigation units: Provided further, That such transfer authority is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: Provided further, That the Commissioner shall provide to the Congress (at the conclusion of the fiscal year) a report on the obligation and expenditure of these funds, similar to the reports that were required by section 103(d)(2) of Public Law 104–121 for fiscal years 1996 through 2002: Provided further, That none of the funds described in this paragraph shall be available for transfer or reprogramming except as specified in this paragraph.* | The language appropriates $1,799,000,000 of dedicated program integrity funding, to remain available through March 31, 2024, for full medical CDRs, redeterminations, work related CDRs, CDI units, and fraud prosecutions by Special Assistant United States Attorneys. In FY 2023, we may transfer up to $15,100,000 from the program integrity allocation adjustment to the Inspector General (OIG) to fund CDI unit activities. Additionally, this language prohibits the transfer or reprogramming of program integrity funding, except for the $15,100,000 transfer to OIG. For additional information, please refer to the Program Integrity section. |

**Limitation on Administrative Expenses**

| Language Provision | Explanation |
|---|---|
| *In addition, $140,000,000 to be derived from administration fees in excess of $5.00 per supplementary payment collected pursuant to section 1616(d) of the Social Security Act or section 212(b)(3) of Public Law 93–66, which shall remain available until expended: Provided, That to the extent that the amounts collected pursuant to such sections in fiscal year 2023 exceed $140,000,000, the amounts shall be available in fiscal year 2024 only to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts."* | The language makes available up to $140,000,000 collected from States for administration of their supplementary payments to the SSI program. This assumes the fee will increase from $13.16 per check in FY 2022 to $13.79 in FY 2023 according to increases established by statute. We receive the amount collected above $5.00 from each fee. |
| *"In addition, up to $1,000,000 to be derived from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act, which shall remain available until expended."* | The language provides for the use of up to $1,000,000 derived from fees charged to non-attorneys who apply for certification to represent claimants. |

## SIGNIFICANT ITEMS IN APPROPRIATION COMMITTEE REPORTS

The table below includes the significant items set forth in reports accompanying H.R. 4502 and S. 3062. We will provide updates on our implementation of the recently passed Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L.117-103), as required.

**Table 3.3—Significant Items in Appropriations Committee Report**

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| **Administrative Appeals Hearings** |
| The Committee considers the Final Rule ‘‘Hearings Held by Administrative Appeals Judges of the Appeals Council’’ (85 Fed. Reg. 73138, December 16, 2020) to be an unjustified erosion of due process for individuals who are appealing a denial of Social Security or SSI benefits. As part of a beneficiary’s right to an impartial appeal process, an on-the-record hearing, conducted by an impartial judge with decisional independence, must be conducted in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to ensure due process, without agency interference, or political bias. Replacing this appeals step and the role of independent administrative law judges (ALJs) with SSA employees jeopardizes the independence of the process. In light of the harm that would be caused by this policy change, the Committee strongly urges SSA not to exercise this authority. |
| **Administrative Law Judge Selection** |
| The Committee continues to be deeply concerned about the impact of Presidential Executive Order 13843 (July 10, 2018) on the judicial independence of administrative law judges (ALJs). The Order eliminates the competitive hiring process for ALJs and has the potential impact of converting independent adjudicators to political appointees, undermining longstanding principles of fair and unbiased consideration of matters of vital importance to the American people. ALJs must be independent decision-makers and it is the Committee’s expectation that SSA maintain the highest standards for appointment of ALJs. |
| **Disability Case Processing System (DCPS)** |
| The Committee requests regular updates on the implementation of DCPS as additional States enter new phases of production and rollout schedules. The updates should include cost data and anticipated timelines for the project. The Committee urges SSA to engage stakeholders throughout the process to understand any remaining barriers to implementation. |
| **Disability Determinations** |
| The Committee is concerned about the time it takes SSA to effectuate favorable SSI and/or SSDI disability determinations and directs SSA to submit a report to the Committee within 180 days of enactment of this Act, on SSA’s procedures for paying past-due and ongoing benefits after a claimant has been found disabled. The report should include the average number of calendar days from the date of the favorable decision to the date of the first monthly payment, and the average number days from favorable decision until retroactive benefits are paid (the first installment, for SSI payable in installments) for SSI, SSDI, and concurrent claims for each of the past five years plus the current year to date. The report should also discuss trends in effectuation time with respect to monthly benefits and past due benefits for claims awarded upon initial application and at other stages of appeal, the number of claimants who died between award and |

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| effectuation each year, and any performance goals or initiatives SSA has regarding effectuating favorable decisions with respect to monthly benefits and past due benefits. |
| **Evaluation and Statistics Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC)** |
| The Committee supports the interdisciplinary extramural research program being conducted at the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium and is particularly interested in the RDRC conducting more studies on financial insecurity, the role of social insurance and how public programs can better address wealth and income inequality facing vulnerable families. The Committee provides an additional $4,000,000 to increase funding at all four centers by $1,000,000 to allow for an increase in the number of projects across the RDRCs. |
| **Guardianship Report** |
| The Committee is concerned about the sharp rise in fraud perpetrated against senior citizens who are wrongly brought under guardianship or have their assets, including Social Security payments, mismanaged, or stolen. The Committee directs SSA to submit a report to the Committee, within 180 days of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, on the number of Social Security payments that are being diverted to non-family members as representative payees, and the number of cases of misuse of benefits by non-family members as representative payees, as identified by SSA directly or through the representative payee monitoring program authorized under section 101 of the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018, broken down by State. |
| **Information Technology** |
| The Committee continues to monitor the Information Technology (IT) Modernization Plan and encourages SSA to focus on improvements to customer service and efficiency improvements for customers and employees as it makes updates to the plan. In addition, SSA should take steps to automate manual processes to reduce human error and improve processing time. The Committee requests an update of the plan referenced under this heading in House Report 114–699. |
| **Legal Assistants** |
| The Committee understands that the Office of Hearings Operations (OHO) relies on legal assistants to conduct a broad range of work supporting hearings and reviewing work of its administrative law judges and is concerned about reports that OHO recently consolidated duties from several specialized legal assistants, causing affected employees to perform more duties without increased compensation. The Committee strongly urges SSA to examine the position descriptions of legal assistants, pay and actual work conducted since the consolidation, to ensure that job classifications, and compensation, are commensurate with current duties. |
| **Pilot Program Metrics** |
| The Committee expects SSA to continue to follow the guidance and directives under this heading in House Report 116–450 for fiscal year 2022, and to include descriptions of pilots and associated pilot program metrics in its fiscal year 2023 Congressional Budget Justification. |
| **Professional Representatives** |
| The Committee believes that quality representation in matters with SSA assists claimants and beneficiaries, and can also help SSA work more accurately and efficiently. The Committee continues to support direct payment of fees to representatives, encourages the Commissioner to |

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| raise and index the cap on fees payable via fee agreement, and requests that the Commissioner add a Performance Measure on timely and accurate payment of representative fees to the Fiscal Year 2022 and subsequent Annual Performance Plans. |
| **Report on LAE Expenditures** |
| The Committee continues to request that the data referenced under this heading in House Report 114-699 be included in future budget justifications. In addition, the Committee requests the fiscal year 2023 Congressional Budget Justification include a historical table of costs and fiscal year 2023 requests for personnel and benefits, by major SSA component to include Operations (field offices, teleservice centers, processing centers, and regional offices); Office of Hearings Operations; Systems; Office of Analytics, Review, and Oversight; and Headquarters. |
| **Service to the Public** |
| SSA uses Public Service Indicators to measure the agency's progress in meeting the needs of the public in local field offices and teleservice centers. The Committee understands that SSA has modified Public Service Indicators to reflect challenges due to the COVID–19 pandemic. The Committee directs SSA to submit to the Committee within 90 days of enactment of this Act a report on Public Service Indicators for field offices and teleservice centers, providing the indicators and performance for Fiscal Years 2016 to 2021 and describing how the agency sets and modifies indicators, any changes made by the agency due the pandemic, and any staffing needs and resources necessary in its field offices and teleservice centers to restore previous levels of public service. |
| **Telework** |
| The Committee reiterates its support for well-managed telework programs in the Federal workplace, which have demonstrated benefits for human capital as well as continuity of operations. The Committee expects SSA to implement telework policies that support these goals while also strengthening service to the American public, including in-person service in community-based field offices. The Committee directs SSA to submit a report within 90 days of enactment of this Act detailing the agency's telework policies and identifying any positions for which telework has not been provided or has been reduced from pre-October 2019 levels, along with the reasons for any telework reductions. |
| **Video Hearings** |
| The Committee understands that during the COVID–19 pandemic, SSA is providing claimants with the option of a video hearing, a telephone hearing, or a postponement if the individual would prefer to wait until an in-person hearing is available. The Committee expects that once the COVID–19 pandemic ends, SSA will resume in-person hearings. The Committee continues to encourage SSA to work with claimants who need additional flexibility by allowing a claimant to choose to use video and telephone hearings on a voluntary basis or to have an in-person hearing or proceeding if the party chooses to do so. |
| **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) and Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)** |
| The recommendation includes $23,000,000 for WIPA grants and $10,000,000 for PABSS. The Committee notes that Federal Protection and Advocacy (P&A) systems provide legal representation to people with disabilities in civil matters to protect and enforce their legal, civil, and human rights. The Committee understands that SSA recently changed security clearance |

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| requirements for staff that charge time to PABSS programs. Given the Federal and State laws required for P&A staff, the Committee urges SSA to reconsider changes that would require P&A staff to undergo any unnecessary SSA security clearances, so that they may be treated like any other attorney representing a person on SSA benefits. |
| **Delayed Disability Payments** |
| The delayed payment of Social Security Disability Insurance claims can create a significant burden on claimants. The Committee requests a briefing within 90 days of enactment on the issues that can result in delayed payments, and the polices SSA has implemented, or has considered, to streamline the disability payments' process. |
| **Disability Hearing and Initial Claims Backlogs** |
| The Committee commends SSA for the progress it has made reducing the average disability hearing processing time and the disability hearing backlog. The Committee recommendation combined with investments in recent years will help SSA stay on schedule to eliminate the backlog in fiscal year 2022 and further reduce the average disability hearing processing time. At the same time COVID–19 has created significant challenges for SSA, and has contributed to a growing backlog of initial disability claims. The Committee recommendation will support additional hires for Disability Determination Services to help address the growing backlog and an estimated increase in initial claims. The Committee requests a briefing within 60 days of enactment, and quarterly thereafter, on its progress towards reducing initial disability claim and hearings processing times and backlogs. |
| **Field Office Closures** |
| The Committee remains concerned about decisions to permanently close field offices and the impact on the public. The Committee encourages SSA to find an appropriate balance between in-person field office services and online services for beneficiaries. While the SSA's Inspector General reviews decisions to close field offices, the Committee directs SSA to take every action possible to maintain operations at the offices under review. |
| **Occupational Information System (OIS)** |
| The Committee is aware that SSA continues to operationalize OIS using BLS Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) data, O*NET, and other DOL-derived occupational statistics. The Committee commends SSA's progress in implementing OIS and directs SSA to provide an update in writing to the Committees on Appropriations and Finance within 60 days of enactment detailing the status of implementation, to what extent OIS is fully operational, a timeline for moving from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles entirely to OIS, and an action plan to accomplish said timeline. |
| **Social Security Advisory Board** |
| The Committee recommendation includes not less than $2,700,000 for the Social Security Advisory Board. This board advises the Commissioner of Social Security and makes recommendations to Congress and the President on policies relating to the OASI, DI, and SSI programs. |
| **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) and Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)** |

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| The Committee recommendation includes $23,000,000 for WIPA and $7,000,000 for PABSS, the same as the comparable fiscal year 2021 levels, respectively. These programs provide valuable services to help Social Security disability beneficiaries return to work. The Committee notes that delayed suitability determinations have in some cases significantly affected the ability of PABSS grantees to carry out their mission to protect the rights and best interests of individuals with disabilities. The Committee strongly encourages SSA to address any delays in the suitability determination process and to ensure that the process is consistent with government-wide practices. |
| **Combating Social Security Impersonation Scams** |
| There has been a significant increase in Social Security impersonation scams in recent years. According to the SSA OIG, in the first half of fiscal year 2021, the OIG received more than 400,000 allegations of Social Security-related and government imposter scams compared to only 15,000 in fiscal year 2018. The Committee commends the work that the OIG has done thus far to combat these scams, and encourages the OIG to continue to prioritize working with SSA to increase awareness of this scam and to pursue the criminals perpetrating this fraud. |

## IMPROPER PAYMENTS

We are committed to ensuring we issue correct payments to eligible individuals in the right amounts. We take seriously our responsibilities to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and to safeguard the integrity of benefit programs to better serve recipients. Our internal quality reviews, which are validated by a third-party auditor, indicate that our fiscal year (FY) 2020 Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) benefit payments were 99.83 percent free of overpayment, and 99.94 percent were free of underpayment. For the same year, 91.25 percent of all Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments were free of overpayment, and 98.67 percent were free of underpayment. FY 2021 data is not yet available.

While our payment accuracy rates, including both overpayments and underpayments, are high, even small error rates add up to substantial improper payment amounts given the magnitude of the benefits we pay each year. For instance, in FY 2020, we issued over $1 trillion in benefit payments. Our combined overpayments and underpayments for OASDI totaled approximately $3.11 billion. The combined overpayments and underpayments for SSI totaled approximately $5.76 billion. With each tenth of a percentage point in payment accuracy representing about $1.079 billion in OASDI and $56.9 million in SSI program outlays, we are focused on combatting the leading causes of improper payments and improving program integrity to protect taxpayer dollars.

We are improving the integrity of our programs by reducing overpayments through a variety of efforts such as streamlining our policies and procedures, automating our business processes, adding data exchanges, performing quality reviews, and promoting wage reporting. We are also continuing a multi-year initiative to modernize our Debt Management System to collect, store, monitor, manage, and report our program debt activity with increased accuracy and timeliness. It will also provide our beneficiaries with additional options for repaying their debts.

In FY 2021, we partnered with the Department of the Treasury to implement our first electronic remittance channel for programmatic overpayments using the Pay.gov website. In addition, we implemented the use of a lockbox service to add efficiencies in the agency's processing of programmatic remittances. Lastly, many banks, credit unions, and bill-pay services offer online bill payment, which allows individuals to make an electronic payment to a selected payee from a checking account, without having to complete and mail a paper check. An overpaid individual, who has an active overpayment in Recovery and Collection of Overpayment Process system will receive a billing notice that includes a remittance ID and a payment stub that provides information about using online bill pay through their financial institution. We will continue to modernize our remittance system and processes and plan to update our notices to inform individuals of our new online payment options.

We are investing in initiatives that help us ensure applicants and beneficiaries receive the correct benefit amounts and continue to meet our eligibility requirements. Please refer to the Program Integrity exhibit, our Annual Performance Report, our Agency Financial Report, and www.paymentaccuracy.gov for more information on our efforts.

## PILOT PROGRAMS

The following list satisfies the request for information on agency pilot programs pursuant to House Report 116-68 accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

### COMPLETED PILOTS

**1. United States Postal Service (USPS) Proof of Concept (PoC) for Digital Identity (pilot suspended)**

If a customer is unable to verify identity online for a *my* Social Security account, the customer may verify identity in-person to begin the registration process. This method is known as in-person proofing (IPP) and is currently available only at our field offices.

In 2018, we began exploring a partnership with USPS that would allow customers to verify their identity in-person at certain USPS facilities. The pandemic delayed the USPS proof of concept, which was originally planned for May 2020.

In recent years, the General Services Administration (GSA) expanded its Login.gov service. We have accepted Login.gov credentialing since May 2020. The GSA is collaborating with USPS on a similar in-person proofing concept. GSA is a current digital identity partner with SSA through its Login.gov service, and we believe that their efforts now make a separate PoC between USPS and SSA redundant. Therefore, we are suspending our pilot and plan to collaborate with the USPS through GSA. We will continue to work in coordination with GSA to promote a USPS registration process that is convenient for our customers.

**2. Office of Analytics Review and Oversight Hearing Recordings & Transcriptions Incubation (pilot completed with limited implementation)**

In FY 2021, building on our prior experience with Voice to Text (VTT), we evaluated and tested VTT software to determine if it could accurately transcribe hearing audio recordings into text for official agency court transcriptions of our disability hearings to support a disability case that has been appealed to a higher court.

Our Office of Hearings Operations (OHO) conducts our disability hearings. The Digital Recording and Processing (DRAP) system records the audio for disability hearings. In order to provide a written transcript of a hearing, a technician retrieves the audio file and copies it to a compact disc (CD). The technician then sends the CD to a contractor, who creates the transcript. Once the contractor has created the transcript, it is delivered to SSA, the SSA technician reviews, certifies, and submits the court transcript document to the courts.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, all transcription actions occurred in person, relying on manual, paper, and CD processes. Beginning in mid-March of 2020, when SSA limited physical access to its buildings, our Office of Appellate Operations (OAO), within OARO, changed its transcription business processes. Our contracted transcription typing services were also impacted. During this same period, the number of new cases filed in federal court also rapidly increased as a direct result of the agency's initiative to reduce the number of requests for administrative review pending before the Appeals Council, the final step of the administrative process. The combined effects of the pandemic-related disruptions in prior in-person processes, impacts on contracted transcription services, and the increase in new court filings, resulted in a number of recorded hearings pending transcriptions. OAO made efforts to find a more direct method of providing the audio files to the transcription contractors.

This pilot explored using technology to generate written transcripts from the previously recorded hearings. There was the potential for significant savings in time and resources for the agency by reducing and eliminating the need for burning hearing recordings to CDs, as well as reducing or eliminating external contractors to generate the transcripts for hearings.

In FY 2021, OAO temporarily transitioned employees to assist with the pilot. We considered the pilot to be a success with a transcript accuracy rate of close to 85 percent, although by comparison, less than 1 percent of contractor transcribed hearings require correction. Even with our achieved accuracy rate, we still found that the rough transcripts created by the software continued to require review, editing, and certification before being added to the file or shared with the public. Employees involved in the pilot returned to their normal duties, OAO has continued to leverage contract transcription services for the number of hearings requiring transcription for court purposes.

We have ended the pilot but will consider leveraging the software in the future. A limited number of previously trained employees continue to utilize the technology as needed to create transcripts for time sensitive court matters,

**3. Office of Quality Review (OQR) Group II Deficiencies Pilot (pilot completed)**

In an effort to deliver quality services to the public, the OQR conducts mandatory reviews to identify cases that do not comply with policy as either a Group I, Group II, or Technical Corrective Action deficiency. These include the Pre-Effectuation Review (PER), which is a review of 50 percent of all allowance cases, and a random Quality Assurance (QA) review of both allowance and denial cases. In 2018, the OIG identified 23 beneficiaries who had inaccurate entitlement dates resulting in $373,906 in improper payments. In FY 2018, the OQR cited 20,154 distinct cases with Group II deficiencies consisting of 4,404 documentation deficiencies and 15,750 decisional deficiencies. To address the OIG findings, we initiated a pilot to determine the feasibility of automatically identifying Group II deficient cases for overpayment or underpayment.

The ultimate goal of this pilot was to reduce improper payments by quickly identifying deficiencies and correctly coding cases with minimal human intervention using artificial intelligence via Intelligent Medical Analysis GENeration (IMAGEN) software. We identified three Group II scenarios and corresponding sample cases for evaluation within the pilot. We built a web application to correctly label deficient cases based on three scenarios: 1) decision errors made on CDR cessations; 2) adult childhood disability benefit claims; and 3) cases with established onset prior to denial period with well-defined results.

We successfully identified cases, compared those to policy for accuracy, and automatically identified improper payment deficiencies by leveraging the IMAGEN artificial intelligence software program. The pilot was completed successfully in 2021 as planned. We are now evaluating our ability to add the IMAGEN functionality into production and for use in quality review systems.

## ACTIVE PILOTS

### 4. Ticket to Work Notice Optimization

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 established the TTW program to provide Disability Insurance (DI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries and recipients with more options for receiving employment services. We provide DI and SSI beneficiaries and recipients with a Ticket to obtain vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, employment services, and other support services from ENs or State VR agencies of their choice. Goals of the TTW program include increasing exits from the DI and SSI programs due to work, expanding the availability of services for beneficiaries, reducing dependency on disability benefits, and obtaining benefit reductions that are greater than the cost we pay for services.

Participation rates are a key factor in the program's success. Though the program has served close to 1.2 million beneficiaries and recipients since 2000, participation in the program has been relatively low in relation to the total number of beneficiaries and recipients we serve; 28 percent of participants had at least one month of benefit reduction after ticket assignment for: the period after assignment through death, conversion to retirement benefits, termination for a non-work reason, or a subsequent assignment (based on a cohort of 2006 TTW participants tracked from 2006 through 2016). This project tests modified versions of the notices we send to beneficiaries and changes to the notice schedule to determine if the changes reduce the barriers to assigning a Ticket. The new notices provide simpler, plain language information about the Ticket program and the potential benefits of and process of assigning a Ticket. In FY 2020, we extended the time for mailing the new notices from 9 to 18 months due to the high unemployment rate and the economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will measure outcomes at 9 months post-mailing for each individual.

*Evaluation Plan/Timeline*

FY 2020:

- We worked with GSA to finalize the notice prototypes to send upon award of DI or SSI, and after 1 and 2 years of receiving benefits and to develop the evaluation design. We wrote the Good News notices – that individuals receive when awarded disability benefits – to comply with plain language guidelines and improve participation in the Ticket program. We also registered the study with the American Economic Association randomized study trial registry.
- We worked with the Office of Systems to modify the system needed to randomize notice mailings.
- We began mailing notices in September 2020.

FY 2021:

- We continued testing prototype notices and conducting data analyses.

FY 2022:

- We will work with GSA to conduct the final analyses of the new mailings.

FY 2023:

- Review final analysis of the mailings.

*Measure of Success/Metrics*

We will capture data on the number of beneficiaries assigned a Ticket, their monthly earnings, and Ticket payments. We will measure success based on increases in Ticket assignments. Currently, slightly more than 1 percent of individuals assign their Tickets within the first year after their award of disability benefits. Even a small increase in Ticket assignments could lead to cost savings. Secondary outcomes of interest include earnings above substantial gainful activity and Ticket payments.

**5. Video Interviews for Workloads**

During the pandemic, we limited in-person services for the public's and our employees' safety. Some customers have difficulties mailing their important original documents, and others are unable to use our online services. To bridge the gap, we piloted a new MS Teams service delivery option for certain Social Security replacement cards in November 2020 at 100 of our highest enumeration workload offices.

Through MS Teams, individuals can securely use a computer, tablet, or smartphone with internet service, to participate in a remote video interview with our employees. We send the individual a link to the MS Teams application; the individual does not need to download any software to participate in the interview. During the interview, our employee asks knowledge-based questions, views the individual's evidence—either a State-issued driver's license or identification card—and verifies the information from the evidence directly with the State Department of Motor Vehicles via an exchange with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

To evaluate Phase 1 of the MS Teams Pilot, we gathered the total number of successful MS Teams replacement card requests that resulted in the issuance of a replacement card, and overall processing time. While we found that, on average, the MS Teams process adds 6 minutes to the enumeration interview, we expect this number to decline as technicians become more familiar with the process. Because MS Teams allows us to serve more customers virtually and reduces the need for in-person visits, the increase in customer service flexibility outweighs the uptick in processing time.

In addition, we asked the participating pilot offices to complete a survey about any unsuccessful interviews to evaluate why an enumeration transaction was unsuccessful. Our survey results revealed the following reasons contributed to unsuccessful MS Teams interview requests:

- Applicant missed their appointment,

- A connectivity issue with the MS Teams Software (customer or SSA side),

- A technical issue during the MS Teams interview that caused the interview to terminate
- An inability to clearly view and inspect the applicant's evidence,
- An issue during the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators/ Driver's License Data Verification,
- Inability of the customer to provide the required evidentiary documents, or
- The technician could not authenticate the evidence.

We resolved our labor obligations for larger scale use and completed our MS Teams pilot. We are currently analyzing how to best use MS Teams as a service option moving forward to provide an alternative to requiring in-person service.

**6. SSA Mobile Wage Reporting**

SSA Mobile Wage Reporting (SSAMWR) is a mobile phone application available in the Apple and Google play stores for SSI recipients, their representative payees, and their deemors. SSAMWR allows individuals without a *my* Social Security account to report wages from a single employer using knowledge-based authentication. We continue to determine the viability of new technologies to replace the existing mobile wage reporting application with a hybrid application with the following business goals:

- Allow for knowledge-based authentication for users that cannot use *my* Social Security.
- Address poor reviews for user experience and unreliability in the Apple and Google play stores.
- Explore paystub imaging/processing including Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to reduce paper processing, technician keying, and follow-up calls.
- Serve as a prototype for future mobile applications.
- Use the latest technologies for testing (AWS Device Farm, an application testing service to help improve the quality of web and mobile applications by testing them across an extensive range of desktop browsers and real mobile devices).

*Evaluation Plan/Timeline*

FY 2022:

- Conduct Beta testing in March 2022.
- Continue to finalize capabilities and visual prototypes.
- Deliver a minimum viable product (MVP) by Summer 2022. An MVP for this release will replace the existing system functionality and include the OCR functionality.

*Measure of Success/Metrics*

We will capture data on the number of wage reporters who successfully transmit wages using the new application. We will measure success based on the increases in successful submissions.

Even a small increase in wage reporting will lead to fewer paper paystubs processed by the field office.

**7. OHO Hearing Recordings & Transcriptions Pilot**

OHO is conducting video disability hearings using MS Teams. Currently, the DRAP system records the audio for disability hearings. For this pilot, we are testing the MS Teams recording function to record disability hearings.

We will use MS Teams and Azure Video Analyzer for Media (AVAM) to create a text transcript of the disability hearing. By recording hearings in MS Teams, there is the potential for significant savings in time and resources for the agency. Additionally, MS Teams recordings would automate and simplify creation of official court hearing transcripts needed for disability hearing appeals.

*Evaluation Plan/Timeline*

FY 2022:

- Evaluate MS Teams, AVAM, MS Stream, and MS One Drive product recording functions, both current and future planned product releases, to determine how these could fit into our rollout strategy for this technology.
- Future releases of MS Teams, AVAM, MS Stream, and MS One Drive products expected to be delivered in early 2022 with these enhanced features.
- Test MS Teams and AVAM recordings for mock disability hearings to better identify and quantify product transcription attributes, such as speaker attribution and accuracy rates for automated transcripts created for MS Teams recordings.

*Measure of Success/Metrics*

We continue to determine our measurement of success as we use and evaluate the technology.

**8. Headquarters Mail Digitization Pilot**

In March 2021, we developed a 12-month pilot to digitize mail in seven headquarters components. In June 2021, using our Headquarters Mail Service Center (HQMSC), we sorted incoming mail and bulk shipped to our scanning vendor. The scanning vendor opened, prepared, scanned, and saved the images to a shared server. Participating components accessed the electronic mail from servers and processed workloads virtually.

*Evaluation Plan/Timeline*

FY 2021:

*First Quarter*

- Researched commercial off the shelf, HQMSC, and National Technical Information Service solutions for digitizing.
- Developed and released a request for information and analyzed results.
- Researched GSA advantage vendors.

*First Quarter and Second Quarter*

- Met with agency components to discuss requirements for service.
- Analyzed annual volumes of mail received.
- Completed a statement of work.
- Submitted requisition package.

*Third Quarter*

- Developed a business process.
- Submitted a call order in April 2021 and awarded in May 2021.
- Began 12-month pilot in June 2021.

FY 2022:

- Analyze and plan for expanding beyond the pilot.

<u>*Measure of Success/Metrics*</u>

We will determine the pilot is successful if:

- At least 95 percent of the mail sent to the vendor is scanned and uploaded to a shared server within 2 business days of receipt
- Less than 5 percent of the scanned images will require rescan due to quality;
- We gain efficiencies in processing scanned mail over manual processing, based on the components' needs;
- Ensure employees can process scanned mail remotely; and
- At least 80 percent of participants rate their experience in the pilot as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on a five-point scale, throughout the initiative.

Current results:

- 100 percent of mail has been scanned within two business days of vendor receipt
- 100 percent of scanned mail has met components' quality needs.
- Components have reported a 447 percent decrease in the amount of time spent processing digital mail over processing paper mail.
- We have experienced a 256 percent decrease in the number of in-office visits to process paper mail.
- 100 percent of respondents rated their experience in the pilot as "Very Satisfied".

## 9. Video Service Delivery (VSD) Expansion, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Test Expansion

SSA and DHS US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are conducting a test in which SSA will use its existing Video Service Delivery (VSD) Polycom units to conduct interviews as part of processing replacement SSN card applications for non-US citizens. Currently, we have over 900 convenient VSD locations across the country, with about 60 of those in third-party, non-SSA sites. VSD offers high-resolution magnification and black light capability, allowing for in-depth review of the security features and authenticity of the evidence presented. This test will provide an alternate way for SSA to safely deliver services through participating third-party sites (non-SSA locations) and between SSA offices. Through this test expansion, we will provide greater flexibility for customers and offices to:

- Share workloads between offices;
- Allow for customers visiting a third-party VSD site to handle SSA business; and
- Provide customers living in remote areas additional access to transact business with SSA offices.

We will gather data from this test expansion to determine future usage of VSD.

FY 2022:

- We will test using VSD for non-citizens requesting replacement cards, those with changes to their records (i.e. date of birth, immigration status, etc.), and for those individuals needing to resolve Numident discrepancies detected by E-Verify.
- We also plan to expand usage to US Citizens replacement cards with changes to their records.

FY 2023:

- Evaluate and determine permanency of using VSD in all sites.

## CONSULTATIVE EXAMS

In some cases, a claimant does not provide adequate evidence about their impairment(s) to determine whether they are disabled or blind. If we are unable to obtain adequate evidence from the claimant's medical source(s), we may request to purchase a physical or mental examination or test from a medical provider as evidence for the claim.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we implemented a temporary moratorium on scheduling in-person CEs to protect the safety of claimants and reduce the burden on the medical community. In May 2020, we updated our policy for the State Disability Determination Services (DDSs) to resume the process of scheduling in-person CEs on a voluntary basis. The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) issued a temporary easement of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) requirements for telehealth. Beginning May 2020, to alleviate barriers to processing cases that required a CE but could not be completed due to COVID-19, we allowed certain psychiatric and psychological CEs to be completed using telehealth platforms outside of the SSA network. We also expanded telehealth CEs to Speech and Language cases at the end of 2021. However, as of December 2021, we only identified about 5-6 percent of cases requiring a CE as telehealth eligible[1].

We continue to consider COVID-19 to be a valid reason for missing, cancelling, postponing, and rescheduling examinations. Therefore, cases where a CE is required but cannot be completed because of COVID-19 continue to age without a disability determination. However, the percentage of new cases where we can complete all required CEs has increased during the pandemic from 54% to 85%. DDSs may continue to process insufficient evidence determinations based on failure to attend a CE for reasons other than COVID-19. Still, scheduling CEs in a timely manner continues to be an ongoing issue as provider's appointment calendars are being filled at a faster rate.

While we manage our consultative examinations (CE) workload to an overall processing time goal for initial claims and reconsiderations, our systems do not capture the level of detail to identify the number of days for CE completion nationally or by State. DCPS2 is beginning to capture this information in states where the system is fully implemented.

**Table 3.4 – FY 2021 Consultative Examination Counts and Cost Data[2]**

| | Annual Number of Cases Completed with at Least One CE[1] | CE Rate[2] | CE Costs[3] | CE Costs per Case[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| National Total (DDS + Federal) | 1,089,423 | 32.10% | $306,001,751 | $280.88 |

[1] Only CEs for mental, psychological, or speech and language testing are eligible for telehealth CEs at this time.

[2] Extended Service Team (EST) CE data and costs are included in the State amounts (VA, AR, OK). Number of cases includes CEs for initial disability claims, disability reconsiderations, continuing disability reviews, and disability hearings.

| | Annual Number of Cases Completed with at Least One CE[1] | CE Rate[2] | CE Costs[3] | CE Costs per Case[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALL DDS | 1,088,016 | 33.20% | $305,621,044 | $281.16 |
| BOS | 32,954 | 24.00% | $8,555,475 | $259.62 |
| CT | 9,581 | 27.20% | $2,256,157 | $235.48 |
| ME | 4,082 | 27.30% | $1,046,856 | $256.46 |
| MA | 9,289 | 16.70% | $2,720,287 | $292.85 |
| NH | 3,575 | 32.00% | $870,746 | $243.57 |
| RI | 3,528 | 26.90% | $763,814 | $216.50 |
| VT | 2,899 | 39.80% | $897,615 | $309.63 |
| NYC | 132,843 | 47.20% | $31,949,687 | $240.51 |
| NJ | 24,953 | 37.00% | $7,074,607 | $283.52 |
| NY | 96,978 | 49.20% | $22,105,264 | $227.94 |
| PR[5] | 10,912 | 65.20% | $2,769,816 | $253.83 |
| PHL | 105,655 | 30.90% | $28,179,301 | $266.71 |
| DE | 1,889 | 24.80% | $484,055 | $256.25 |
| DC | 3,121 | 16.90% | $1,117,731 | $358.13 |
| MD | 13,342 | 31.00% | $5,744,785 | $430.58 |
| PA | 59,542 | 36.90% | $13,191,207 | $221.54 |
| VA | 15,507 | 19.10% | $4,382,662 | $282.62 |
| WV | 12,254 | 45.90% | $3,258,861 | $265.94 |
| ATL | 283,523 | 36.20% | $82,260,654 | $290.14 |
| AL | 25,754 | 35.60% | $7,629,422 | $296.24 |
| FL | 85,914 | 33.60% | $26,193,434 | $304.88 |
| GA | 36,147 | 40.70% | $14,558,497 | $402.76 |
| KY | 27,422 | 38.90% | $6,279,181 | $228.98 |
| MS | 19,717 | 39.00% | $3,951,028 | $200.39 |
| NC | 36,395 | 33.20% | $10,251,552 | $281.67 |
| SC | 19,499 | 31.90% | $4,419,601 | $226.66 |
| TN | 32,675 | 43.40% | $8,977,939 | $274.76 |
| CHI | 180,506 | 35.10% | $45,381,438 | $251.41 |
| IL | 39,781 | 39.50% | $8,807,304 | $221.39 |
| IN | 34,750 | 40.80% | $9,278,043 | $266.99 |
| MI | 36,578 | 33.90% | $7,397,786 | $202.25 |
| MN | 10,813 | 25.70% | $3,867,661 | $357.69 |
| OH | 43,698 | 32.80% | $11,610,970 | $265.71 |
| WI | 14,886 | 32.60% | $4,419,674 | $296.90 |
| DAL | 132,733 | 26.60% | $39,280,825 | $295.94 |

| | Annual Number of Cases Completed with at Least One CE[1] | CE Rate[2] | CE Costs[3] | CE Costs per Case[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AR | 14,765 | 22.20% | $3,785,937 | $256.41 |
| LA | 25,926 | 37.00% | $8,335,159 | $321.50 |
| NM | 4,944 | 25.60% | $2,337,822 | $472.86 |
| OK | 22,790 | 35.00% | $5,944,241 | $260.83 |
| TX | 64,308 | 26.10% | $18,877,666 | $293.55 |
| KCM | 42,243 | 29.50% | $11,955,337 | $283.01 |
| IA | 8,142 | 25.10% | $2,582,158 | $317.14 |
| KS | 6,560 | 40.80% | $2,059,058 | $313.88 |
| MO | 22,389 | 27.90% | $5,380,652 | $240.33 |
| NE | 5,152 | 35.50% | $1,933,469 | $375.29 |
| DEN | 25,883 | 30.30% | $11,304,826 | $436.77 |
| CO | 12,149 | 30.10% | $4,600,873 | $378.70 |
| MT | 2,530 | 30.30% | $839,484 | $331.81 |
| ND | 1,021 | 21.80% | $597,259 | $584.97 |
| SD | 1,704 | 21.10% | $1,257,880 | $738.19 |
| UT | 6,659 | 35.50% | $2,504,132 | $376.05 |
| WY | 1,820 | 35.40% | $1,505,198 | $827.03 |
| SFO | 121,836 | 31.80% | $35,293,924 | $289.68 |
| AZ | 17,380 | 29.80% | $5,969,426 | $343.47 |
| CA | 96,104 | 32.60% | $25,865,584 | $269.14 |
| HI | 1,800 | 20.10% | $1,320,278 | $733.49 |
| NV | 6,552 | 30.10% | $2,138,636 | $326.41 |
| SEA | 29,840 | 27.00% | $11,459,577 | $384.03 |
| AK | 820 | 29.20% | $758,798 | $925.36 |
| ID | 3,296 | 16.80% | $1,273,711 | $386.44 |
| OR | 9,843 | 25.40% | $3,422,407 | $347.70 |
| WA | 15,881 | 32.10% | $6,004,661 | $378.10 |
| FED[6] | 1,407 | 1.20% | $380,707 | $270.58 |

[1] Our systems track the number of cases with at least one paid CE, not the total number of CEs ordered and completed for any given case.

[2] CE rate is the number of cases for which at least one CE is ordered and paid compared to the total number of cases. This rate does not reflect the total volume of CEs ordered and paid. Our systems do not include the level of detail to identify if CEs were conducted by the treating medical provider.

[3] CE costs represent costs for all CEs, including if there were more than one CE per case.

[4] CE cost per case represents total CE costs divided by the number of cases with at least one CE.

[5] The Puerto Rico DDS pays CE costs for cases processed by the Puerto Rico Disability Processing Unit (DPU). The table removes the CE costs associated with these cases from Puerto Rico and applies them to the federal line of the table.

## APPROPRIATION HISTORY

The table below includes the amount requested by the President, passed by the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, and ultimately appropriated for the LAE account, including any rescissions and supplemental appropriations, for the last 10 years. The annual appropriation includes amounts authorized from SSI State Supplement user fees and non-attorney representative user fees.

**Table 3.5—Appropriation History Table**

| Fiscal Year | Budget Estimate to Congress | House Committee Passed | Senate Committee Passed | Enacted Appropriation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2013** | $11,760,000,000 [1] | - - - [2] | $11,736,044,000 [3] | $11,453,290,000 [4] |
| Rescission | | | | -$21,394,476 [5] |
| Sequestration | | | | -$386,329,494 [6] |
| Final | | | | **$11,045,566,321 [7]** |
| **2014** | $12,296,846,000 | - - - [8] | $11,697,040,000 [9] | **$11,697,040,000 [10]** |
| LAE | $11,069,846,000 [11] | | | |
| PIAE | $1,227,000,000 [12] | | | |
| **2015** | $12,024,000,000 [13] | - - - [14] | - - - [15] | **$11,805,945,000 [16]** |
| **2016** | $12,513,000,000 [17] | $11,817,945,000 [18] | $11,620,945,000 [19] | **$12,161,945,000 [20]** |
| **2017** | $13,067,000,000 [21] | $11,898,945,000 [22] | $12,481,945,000 [23] | **$12,481,945,000 [24]** |
| **2018** | $12,457,000,000 [25] | $12,392,945,000 [26] | $11,992,945,000 [27] | **$12,872,945,000 [28]** |
| **2019** | $12,393,000,000 [29] | $12,557,045,000 [30] | $12,951,945,000 [31] | **$12,876,945,000 [32]** |
| **2020** | $12,773,000,000 [33] | $13,071,945,000 [34] | - - - [35] | $12,870,945,000 [36] |
| CARES Act [37] | | | | $338,000,000 |
| Final | | | | **$13,208,945,000** |
| **2021** | $13,351,473,000 [38] | $12,970,945,000 [39] | - - - [40] | $12,930,945,000 [41] |
| Supplemental [42] | | | | $38,000,000 |
| Final | | | | **$12,968,945,000** |
| **2022** | $14,188,896,000 [43] | $14,066,945,000 [44] | - - - [45] | - - - [46] |
| **2023** | $14,773,300,000 [47] | | | |

[1] Total includes $1,024,000,000 in funding designated for SSI redeterminations and CDRs – $273,000,000 in base funding and $751,000,000 in additional funds. Includes up to $170,000,000 from user fees paid by States for Federal administration of SSI State Supplement payments and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[2] The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which included $10,684,414,000 for LAE.

[3] S. 3295.

[4] At the time we formulated the Budget we had not received a full year appropriation for FY 2013. We were operating under a 6-month CR (P.L. 112-175) that funded our operations at $11,520,000,000, if annualized. This represents a 0.612 percent increase from the FY 2012 enacted level. A full year CR (P.L. 113-6) reduced funding to the FY 2012 enacted level of $11,453,290,000.

[5] Per OMB Budget Data Request 13-19, we were subject to an Across-the-Board (ATB) Reduction/Rescission of .2

percent of LAE. Both base and cap program integrity funds were exempt from this reduction.

[6] Under P.L. 112-175, all non-SSI funding was reduced by 5 percent after sequestration was triggered by Congress.

[7] Our funding post-sequestration (P.L. 112-175) and ATB reduction (BDR 13-19) was $407,723,000 lower than the original CR funding level (P.L. 113-6).

[8] The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The LAE appropriation of $11,697,040,000 for FY 2014 was incorporated into H.R. 3547.

[9] S. 3533.

[10] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76). Total includes $1,197,000,000 designated for SSI redeterminations and CDRs. Includes up to $171,000,000 from user fees paid by States for Federal administration of SSI State Supplement payments and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[11] Total includes $273,000,000 in funding designated for SSI redeterminations and CDRs. Includes up to $173,000,000 from user fees paid by States for Federal administration of SSI State Supplement payments and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[12] The FY 2014 President's Budget included a legislative proposal to create a new Program Integrity Administrative Expenses (PIAE) account and provide a more reliable stream of mandatory program integrity funding. The FY 2014 PIAE request was $1,227,000,000. With the addition of $273,000,000 requested for program integrity as part of the LAE, the total program integrity request for FY 2014 was $1,500,000,000.

[13] Total includes $1,396,000,000 in dedicated funding designated for SSI redeterminations and CDRs – $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,123,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 (P.L. 112-25), as well as $131,000,000 from LAE to assist in program integrity work. Includes up to $124,000,000 from user fees paid by States for Federal administration of SSI State Supplement payments and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[14] The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

[15] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill.

[16] Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235). Total includes $1,396,000,000 designated for SSI redeterminations and CDRs. Includes up to $124,000,000 from user fees paid by States for Federal administration of SSI State Supplement payments and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[17] Total includes $1,439,000,000 in dedicated funding designated for SSI redeterminations and CDRs – $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,166,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BCA of 2011. Includes up to $136,000,000 from user fees paid by States for Federal administration of SSI State Supplement payments and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[18] H.R. 3020.

[19] S.1695.

[20] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113). Total includes $1,426,000,000 in funding designated for SSI redeterminations and CDRs. Includes up to $124,000,000 from user fees paid by States for Federal administration of SSI State Supplement payments and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[21] The FY 2017 request includes $1,819,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding for, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, cooperative disability investigation (CDI) units, and the prosecution of fraud by Special Assistant United States Attorneys (SAUSAs), comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,546,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2015 (P.L. 114-74). Additionally, the LAE account carves out funding to support the fully loaded costs of performing 1.1 million CDRs and approximately 2.8 million SSI redeterminations, $126,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected

pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L.108-203).

[22] H.R. 5926.

[23] S. 3040.

[24] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31). Total includes $90,000,000 in available funding through September 30, 2018, for activities to address the hearings backlog within the Office of Hearings Operations (formerly the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review). Includes $1,819,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,546,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available until March 31, 2018. Includes $123,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[25] The FY 2018 request includes $1,735,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,462,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74). Includes up to $118,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[26] H.R.3358.

[27] S. 1771.

[28] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141). Total includes $280,000,000 to remain available until expended for information technology modernization, including related hardware and software infrastructure and equipment, and for administrative expenses directly associated with information technology modernization. Total includes $100,000,000 in available funding through September 30, 2019, for activities to address the hearings backlog within the Office of Hearings Operations. Includes $1,735,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,462,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available for 18 months through March 31, 2019. Includes $118,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[29] The FY 2019 request includes $1,683,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,410,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available until March 31, 2020. Beginning in FY 2019, the Budget proposes that we may transfer up to $10,000,000 of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. Includes up to $134,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[30] H.R. 6470.

[31] S. 3158.

[32] Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245). Total includes $45,000,000 to remain available until expended for information technology modernization, including related hardware and software infrastructure and equipment, and for administrative expenses directly associated with information technology modernization. Total includes $100,000,000 in available funding through September 30, 2020, for activities to address the hearings backlog within the Office of Hearings Operations. Includes $1,683,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,410,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available for 18 months through March 31, 2020. Public Law 115-245 allows us to transfer up to $10,000,000 of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units in FY 2019. Includes $134,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected

pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[33] The FY 2020 Budget proposed that the total LAE budget authority request of $12,773,000,000 be offset by fees collected for replacement Social Security cards (estimated at $270 million). The total includes $1,582,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,309,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available until March 31, 2021. In FY 2020, the Budget proposed to transfer up to $10,000,000 of program integrity cap adjustment funds in the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. Includes up to $130,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the Social Security Protection Act (P.L. 108-203).

[34] H.R. 2740.

[35] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which provided the FY 2020 President's Budget request of $12,773,000,000.

[36] Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94). The total includes $45,000,000 to remain available until expended for IT modernization, including related hardware and software infrastructure and equipment, and for administrative expenses directly associated with IT modernization. The total includes $100,000,000 in available funding through September 30, 2021, for activities to address the hearings backlog within the Office of Hearings Operations. The total also includes $1,582,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,309,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available for 18 months through March 31, 2021. P.L. 116-94 allows us to transfer up to $10 million of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units in FY 2020. The total also includes $130,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

[37] The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) provided $300 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus, including paying the salaries and benefits of all employees affected as a result of office closures, telework, phone and communication services for employees, overtime costs, supplies, and for resources necessary for processing disability and retirement workloads and backlogs. It also provided $38 million for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering economic impact payments (EIPs) to qualifying individuals.

[38] The FY 2021 Budget proposed that the total requested LAE budget authority of $13,351,473,000 be offset by fees collected for replacement Social Security cards (estimated at $270 million). The total includes $1,575,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,302,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps, as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available until March 31, 2022. The Budget proposed allowing us to transfer up to $11.2 million of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units in FY 2021. The total includes up to $135,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

[39] H.R.7614.

[40] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which included $12,868,945,000 for LAE.

[41] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260). The total includes $45,000,000 to remain available until expended for IT modernization, including related hardware and software infrastructure and equipment, and for administrative expenses directly associated with IT modernization. The total includes $50,000,000 in available funding through September 30, 2022, for activities to address the hearings backlog within the Office of Hearings Operations. The total also includes $1,575,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including the costs associated with SSI redeterminations, full medical CDRs, work CDRs, CDI units, and the prosecution of fraud by SAUSAs, comprised of $273,000,000 in base funding and $1,302,000,000 in funds outside the discretionary caps as authorized by the BBA of 2015 (P.L.114-74) to remain available for 18 months through March 31, 2022. P.L.

116-260 allows us to transfer up to $11.2 million of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The total also includes $135,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

[42] The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260, Section 272, Division N) provided $38 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering a second round of EIPs first authorized under the CARES Act.

[43] The FY 2022 Budget proposes $1,708,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including a $1,435,000,000 allocation adjustment, to remain available until March 31, 2023. Dedicated program integrity funding allows us to conduct CDRs and SSI redeterminations to confirm that participants remain eligible to receive benefits, and it supports anti-fraud cooperative disability investigation units and special attorneys for fraud prosecutions. The Budget proposes transferring up to $12.1 million of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The total includes up to $138,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

[44] H.R. 4502.

[45] The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which included $13,937,945,000 for LAE.

[46] At the time we formulated the Budget we had not received a full year appropriation for FY 2022.

[47] The FY 2023 Budget proposes $1,799,000,000 in dedicated program integrity funding, including a $1,511,000,000 allocation adjustment, to remain available until March 31, 2024. Dedicated program integrity funding allows us to conduct CDRs and SSI redeterminations to confirm that participants remain eligible to receive benefits, and it supports anti-fraud cooperative disability investigation units and special attorneys for fraud prosecutions. The Budget proposes transferring up to $15.1 million of program integrity funds from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The total includes up to $140,000,000 for SSI State Supplement user fees, and up to $1,000,000 from fees collected pursuant to section 303(c) of the SSPA.

## SSA-RELATED LEGISLATION FROM MARCH 2021 TO MARCH 2022

**FY 2021**

***Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-40, enacted September 24, 2021)***

- The law amends the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2016 to require Federal agencies (except for those with budgets confidential by law) to post their congressional budget justifications on the agency website.
- SSA will follow Federal policies and guidance to produce and make available in accessible, user-friendly formats Congressional budget justification materials.

***Juneteenth National Independence Day Act (P.L. 117-17, enacted June 17, 2021)***

- The law requires June 19 to be a legal public holiday.

***ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 (P.L.117-3, enacted March 23, 2021)***

- The law amends the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 to change the criteria for eliminating the five-month waiting period for individuals with ALS to those eligible individuals who were approved for Disability Insurance benefits on or after July 23, 2020.
- The law was effective December 23, 2020.

***American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2, enacted March 11, 2021)***

- The law provides funding for COVID-19 testing, vaccine production and distribution, as well as economic relief for communities and businesses, and additional Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) for qualifying individuals. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) received appropriated funds to administer EIP payments, and SSA partnered with the IRS to provide outreach to our beneficiaries and respond to public inquiries about EIPs. In addition, SSA administered a data exchange with the IRS to help facilitate payments to SSA and SSI beneficiaries who do not file taxes.

***Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260, enacted December 27, 2020)***

- In addition to providing the agency with an FY 2021 annual appropriation, the law also provides $38 million in funding for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering EIPs.
    - As of September 30, 2021, we obligated $21.58 million of the $38 million received in support of the second round of EIPs.

**FY 2020 – UPDATE**

***Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136, enacted March 27, 2020)***

- The law includes provisions that provide relief to people and businesses affected by the novel coronavirus, including expanding unemployment benefits, creating a small business loan program, providing funding to hospitals, and issuing EIPs to qualifying individuals.
- The law also reduces Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes owed by certain employers and it delayed payment of the taxes for many individuals. The law ensures that Social Security's Trust Funds are not adversely affected by the delay in FICA payments.
- The law expands Telehealth programs and initiatives including Medicare Telehealth flexibilities. SSA's Disability Determination Services (DDS) provides expanded use of video telehealth technology for psychiatric consultative examinations (CE) and psychological CEs that do not require testing.
- The law provides $300 million in funding for SSA, available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, including paying the salaries and benefits of all employees affected as a result of office closures, telework, phone and communication services for employees, overtime costs, supplies, and for resources necessary for processing disability and retirement workloads and backlogs. The law also provides $38 million in funding for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering EIPs.
    - As of September 30, 2021, we obligated $300 million received for preventing, preparing for, and responding to coronavirus.
    - We obligated $36.15 million of the $38 million in support of EIPs.
- The law also designates the OASI Trust Fund as the recipient of any interest and other proceeds associated with loans, loan guarantees, and other investments made by the Department of Treasury to eligible businesses, States, and municipalities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,
    - As of September 30, 2021, we recorded $483 million received to the OASI Trust Fund under this law.

## GENERAL STATEMENT/BUDGETARY RESOURCES/PERFORMANCE

### LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES OVERVIEW

The LAE account funds our operating expenses and our programs: the OASI and DI programs, the SSI program, certain health insurance and Medicare prescription drug functions, and the Special Benefits for Certain World War II Veterans program. With these funds, we provide service to millions of Americans online at www.socialsecurity.gov, on the telephone, and through our field offices. The LAE account provides the funds we need to perform our core responsibilities, including deciding applications for benefits, conducting hearings and appeals to review disputed decisions, ensuring we distribute benefits properly, and maintaining the integrity of the trust funds.

Please see the Budget Overview for more information.

## KEY PRIORITIES

We formulated our budget to deliver high-quality services that are customer-centered and accessible to everyone who may be eligible. Our request includes increases of approximately $241 million for additional disability claims processing, $224 million for additional program integrity work, $431 million for information technology services, and nearly $1 billion for Federal payroll costs. These investments will improve our frontline operations, continue to modernize our information technology, strengthen our workforce, streamline our policies, and protect and strengthen our programs.

As reflected in the Overview, the Budget addresses the following key areas:

- Optimizing the customer experience, which includes:
    - Advancing equity in our programs,
    - Managing the projected increase in initial disability claims,
    - Eliminating the disability hearings backlog,
    - Enhancing online services,
    - Improving National 800 Number service,
    - Strengthening service in our field offices, and
    - Reducing processing center backlogs.
- Modernizing our information technology and enhancing our automation for our customers and technicians.
- Building an inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce.
- Stream-lining our policies and procedures, such as disability determination policies and SSI simplification administratively.
- Ensuring stewardship of our programs, including:
    - Supporting our cost-effective dedicated program integrity work, and our fraud prevention and detection activities,
    - Enhancing our payment accuracy efforts (see Social Security Improper Payments),
    - Addressing the climate crisis, and
    - Investing in cybersecurity to safeguard our data.

## SIZE AND SCOPE OF OUR PROGRAMS

Our administrative budget is driven by the programs we administer—both in terms of the amount of work performed and the number of people needed to process it—and by our continuing efforts to improve service, stewardship, and efficiency.

Between the three major programs we administer—OASI, DI, and SSI—benefit payment outlays totaled over $1.18 trillion in FY 2021; under current law, we expect benefit payment outlays to be over $1.27 trillion in FY 2022 and about $1.37 trillion in FY 2023. This includes the SSI State supplementary payments that we administer on behalf of some States. At about 1.1 percent of total benefit payment outlays currently estimated for FY 2023, our administrative expenses[1] continue to be a small fraction of overall program spending, demonstrating our cost-conscious approach to managing resources.

**Table 3.6—Benefit Outlays[2]**
(Dollars in billions)

| | FY 2021 Actuals | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Old-Age and Survivors Insurance | $982.7 | $1,067.5 | $1,158.9 |
| Disability Insurance | $140.6 | $140.0 | $147.3 |
| Supplemental Security Income[3] | $58.0 | $64.4 | $62.4 |
| **Total Outlays[4]** | **$1.181.2** | **$1,271.9** | **$1,368.6** |

Paralleling the growth in benefit payment outlays, we expect the total number of beneficiaries and recipients of the three major programs we administer, including those only receiving a SSI State supplementary payment, to increase from 72.8 million in FY 2021 to 73.3 million in FY 2022 and 74.3 million in FY 2023.

**Table 3.7—Beneficiaries[2]**
(Average in payment status, in millions)

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Old-Age and Survivors Insurance | 55.3 | 56.5 | 57.7 |
| Disability Insurance | 9.6 | 9.2 | 8.9 |
| Supplemental Security Income[5] | 7.9 | 7.7 | 7.6 |
| **Total Beneficiaries[6]** | **72.8** | **73.3** | **74.3** |

[1] Our calculation of discretionary administrative expenses excludes Treasury administrative expenses, which are mandatory outlays.

[2] Totals may not add due to rounding.

[3] SSI benefit payments include State supplementary payments of about $2.4 billion in FY 2021 and nearly $3.2 billion in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

[4] Benefit payment totals include $1.0 million for the Special Benefits for Certain World War II Veterans program in FY 2021 and less than $0.5 million in FY 2022 and FY 2023, which is not broken out separately.

[5] SSI recipients include about 140,000 each year who only receive a State supplementary payment.

[6] Beneficiary totals include approximately 2.6 million concurrent recipients who receive SSI as well as OASI or DI.

## FUNDING REQUEST

Our FY 2023 LAE budget request of $14.773 billion allows us to focus on our agency priorities of strengthening our services, improving the customer experience, protecting our workforce, modernizing our information technology, streamlining our policies, and ensuring stewardship of our programs.

**Table 3.8—Budgetary Request**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate [1] | FY 2023 Request |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Budget Authority, One-Year** (in millions) | | | |
| Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) [2, 3, 4] | $12,931 | $12,931 | $14,773 |
| *(Dedicated Program Integrity, Base and Adjustment, included in LAE)* [5] | *($1,575)* | *($1,575)* | *($1,799)* |
| Research and Demonstrations [6, 7] | $86 | $86 | $86 |
| Office of the Inspector General (OIG) [8] | $106 | $106 | $118 |
| **Total, Budget Authority** (in millions) [9] | **$13,122** | **$13,122** | **$14,977** |
| **Workyears (WY)** | | | |
| Full-Time Equivalents [10] | 59,402 | 58,501 | 59,518 |
| Overtime | 1,697 | 718 | 3,000 |
| Lump Sum Leave | 226 | 250 | 250 |
| **Total SSA Workyears** [11] | **61,325** | **59,469** | **62,768** |
| Disability Determination Services (DDS) | 13,758 | 13,581 | 14,272 |
| **Total SSA/DDS Workyears** | **75,083** | **73,050** | **77,040** |
| OIG | 505 | 493 | 538 |
| **Total SSA/DDS/OIG Workyears** | **75,588** | **73,543** | **77,578** |

[1] Our overall LAE funding level in FY 2022 assumes a full-year continuing resolution (CR). For information about what we can achieve in FY 2022 if we receive full funding at the FY 2022 President's Budget request, please see the Appendix.

[2] LAE funding includes $135 million in FY 2021, $135 million in FY 2022 under a full-year CR, and $140 million in FY 2023 for SSI user fees. While our funding request includes $135 million for FY 2022, the same as the FY 2021 enacted, we requested $138 million in the FY 2022 President's Budget. The LAE funding also includes $1 million in Social Security Protection Act (SSPA) user fees.

[3] The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) provided $300 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic, including paying the salaries and benefits of all employees affected as a result of office closures, telework, phone and communication services for employees, overtime costs, supplies, and for resources necessary for processing disability and retirement workloads and backlogs. It also

provided $38 million for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering economic impact payments (EIPs) to most individuals. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided an additional $38 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering a second round of EIPs first authorized under the CARES Act. This funding is not reflected in the LAE.

[4] P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided $50 million in dedicated funding to address the hearings backlog and $45 million in dedicated funding for IT Modernization.

[5] P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided FY 2021 program integrity funding availability for 18 months (through March 31, 2022). The FY 2023 Budget assumes appropriations similar 18-month authority to obligate program integrity funds in FY 2022 and 2023.

[6] These amounts include $7 million in base research funding classified as mandatory.

[7] Congress appropriated $86 million in FY 2021 (available through September 30, 2023) for research and demonstration projects. The FY 2023 President's Budget assumes $86 million in FY 2022 (available through September 30, 2024) and proposes $86 million in FY 2023 (available through September 30, 2025) for research and demonstration projects.

[8] P.L. 116-260 allows SSA to transfer $11.2 million in FY 2021 from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The FY 2022 CR continues this transfer in FY 2022 of up to $11.2 million. The FY 2022 Budget requests a $12.1 million transfer in FY 2022, and the FY 2023 Budget requests a $15.1 million transfer.

[9] Numbers may not add due to rounding.

[10] Full-time equivalents include those funded by the CDI unit program integrity transfer from the LAE account to the OIG.

[11] A workyear (WY) is a measure of time spent doing work or being paid for some element of time (e.g., leave). It is the equivalent of one person working for one year (2,080 hours) and may consist of regular hours, overtime, or lump sum leave, which is payment for unused annual leave upon leaving the agency. WYs include time spent in full-time or part-time employment. Full-time equivalents and overtime WYs include those funded from dedicated funding to reduce the hearings backlog, dedicated funding for IT modernization, and dedicated funding for program integrity. In addition, the WYs include those funded for the Medicare Low-Income Subsidy Program.

## ALL PURPOSE TABLE

### Table 3.9—All Purpose Table (APT)

(in thousands)

| | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Consolidated Appropriations Act[1,2] P.L. 116-260 | Estimate3 | President's Budget | FY 2023 +/- FY 2022 |
| **Payments to Social Security Trust Funds** | | | | |
| Pension Reform | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 | - |
| Unnegotiated Checks | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | - |
| **Total PTF** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** | **$11,000** | - |
| **Supplemental Security Income** | | | | |
| Federal Benefits Payment | 55,633,919 | 55,536,937 | 59,225,000 | 3,688,063 |
| Beneficiary Services | 45,000 | 45,000 | 124,000 | 79,000 |
| Research & Demonstration[4,5] | 86,000 | 86,000 | 86,000 | - |
| Administration[6] | 4,293,849 | 4,390,831 | 4,993,722 | 602,891 |
| **Subtotal SSI Program Level** | **60,058,768** | **60,058,768** | **64,428,722** | **4,369,954** |
| Advance from PY | (19,900,000) | (19,600,000) | (15,600,000) | 4,000,000 |
| **Subtotal Current Year SSI** | **$40,158,768** | **$40,458,768** | **$48,828,722** | **$8,369,954** |
| **New Advance SSI** | **$19,600,000** | **$15,600,000** | **$15,800,000** | **$200,000** |
| **Limitation on Administrative Expenses** | | | | |
| **Regular LAE** | | | | |
| OASDI Trust Funds | 5,497,536 | 5,188,882 | 6,127,571 | 938,689 |
| HI/SMI Trust Funds | 2,715,499 | 2,747,826 | 3,213,193 | 465,367 |
| Social Security Advisory Board | 2,500 | 2,500 | 2,750 | 250 |
| SSI | 3,004,410 | 3,280,737 | 3,489,786 | 209,049 |
| **Subtotal Regular LAE** | **$11,219,945** | **$11,219,945** | **$12,833,300** | **$1,613,355** |
| **Program Integrity Funding** | | | | |
| OASDI Trust Funds | 285,561 | 464,906 | 295,064 | (169,842) |
| SSI | 1,289,439 | 1,110,094 | 1,503,936 | 393,842 |
| **Subtotal Program Integrity Funding[7]** | **$1,575,000** | **$1,575,000** | **$1,799,000** | **$224,000** |
| *Base Program Integrity[7]* | *273,000* | *273,000* | *288,000* | *15,000* |
| *Allocation Adjustment[7]* | *1,302,000* | *1,302,000* | *1,511,000* | *209,000* |
| **User Fees** | | | | |
| SSI User Fee | 135,000 | 135,000 | 140,000 | 5,000 |
| SSPA User Fee | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | - |
| **Subtotal User Fees** | **$136,000** | **$136,000** | **$141,000** | **$5,000** |
| **Total LAE** | **$12,930,945** | **$12,930,945** | **$14,773,300** | **$1,842,355** |
| Non-PI LAE | 11,355,945 | 11,355,945 | 12,974,300 | 1,618,355 |
| **Office of the Inspector General** | | | | |
| Federal Funds | 30,000 | 30,000 | 33,000 | 3,000 |
| Trust Funds | 75,500 | 75,500 | 84,500 | 9,000 |
| **Total, OIG[8]** | **$105,500** | **$105,500** | **$117,500** | **$12,000** |
| **Total, Social Security Administration, New BA** | $68,512,364 | $64,715,382 | $74,536,800 | $9,821,418 |
| Federal Funds | $59,935,768 | $56,235,768 | $64,813,722 | $8,577,954 |
| Current Year | $40,335,768 | $40,635,768 | $49,013,722 | $8,377,954 |
| New Advance | $19,600,000 | $15,600,000 | $15,800,000 | $200,000 |
| Trust Funds | $8,576,596 | $8,479,614 | $9,723,078 | $1,243,464 |

1 P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided $50 million in dedicated funding (available through September 30, 2022) to address the hearings backlog and $45 million in dedicated funding for IT Modernization. It is included in regular LAE.

2 The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) provided $300 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic, including paying the salaries and benefits of all employees affected as a result of office closures, telework, phone and communication services for employees, overtime costs, supplies, and for resources necessary for processing disability and retirement workloads and backlogs. It also provided $38 million for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering economic impact payments (EIPs) to most individuals. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided an additional $38 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering a second round of EIPs first authorized under the CARES Act. This funding is not reflected in the LAE.

3 Our overall base LAE funding level in FY 2022 assumes the enactment of a full-year CR, at an annualized rate equal to enacted FY 2021 appropriations. If a full year CR is enacted, we assume the FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act level of program integrity ($1.575 billion) will be provided and made available for 18 months through March 31, 2023. New Advance SSI ($15.6 billion) reflects the current estimate in order to ensure timely FY 2023 first quarter benefit payments in the event of a delayed appropriation. The FY 2022 CR funding level also includes $45 million for IT modernization and $50 million to address the disability hearings backlog, which are both included in regular LAE. LAE program funding splits have been updated to reflect current information and will not match the FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act level.

4 These amounts include $7 million in base research funding classified as mandatory.

5 Congress appropriated $86 million in FY 2021 (available through September 30, 2023) for research and demonstration projects. The FY 2023 President's Budget assumes $86 million in FY 2022 (available through September 30, 2024) and proposes $86 million in FY 2023 (available through September 30, 2025) for research and demonstration projects.

6 Total SSI Administration reflects the sum of SSI regular LAE and SSI Program Integrity included in the LAE section.

7 P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided FY 2021 PI funding availability for 18 months (through March 31, 2022). The FY 2023 budget assumes appropriations language for FYs 2022 and 2023 will provide for similar 18-month authority to obligate PI funds.

8 P.L. 116-260 allows SSA to transfer $11.2 million in FY 2021 from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The FY 2022 CR continues this transfer in FY 2022 of up to $11.2 million. The FY 2022 Budget requests a $12.1 million transfer in FY 2022, and the FY 2023 Budget requests a $15.1 million transfer.

## SSI STATE SUPPLEMENTATION/IMPACT OF STATES DROPPING OUT

The SSI program was designed to provide a nationwide uniform floor of cash assistance to individuals who are aged, blind, and disabled, with limited income and resources. In recognizing that there were variations in living costs across the Nation, Congress added section 1618 to the Social Security Act to encourage States to supplement the Federal payment. This ensured that SSI recipients received the full benefit of each cost-of-living adjustment. States may administer their own State supplement programs or have us administer the programs on their behalf. States electing to have us administer their programs reimburse us monthly in advance for these benefit payments, and we make eligibility determinations and payments on behalf of the States.

**Table 3.10—State Supplement Payments**
(Dollars in millions)

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Federally Administered State Supplement Payments** | $2,441 | $3,155 | **$3,145** |
| **Offsetting Collections** | $2,430 | $3,197 | **$3,144** |

Participating States pay us user fees to administer their programs, based on a schedule established by the Social Security Act. The user fee was $12.49 per SSI check payment in FY 2021 and is $13.16 in FY 2022. We estimate that the user fee will increase to $13.79 per payment in FY 2023. The Department of Treasury receives the first $5.00 of each fee and we retain the amount over $5.00. This user fee is discretionary budget authority that supplements our LAE account.

**Table 3.11—SSI User Fee Collections**
(Dollars in millions)

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate | *FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SSA User Fee Collections** | $126 | $135 | **$140** | *+$5* |
| **Treasury User Fee Collections** | $84 | $89 | **$81** | *-$8* |
| **Total User Fee Collections** | $210 | $224 | **$221** | *-$3* |

## Impact of States Dropping Out of State Supplementation Program

Currently, we help administer the State supplementation for 20 States and the District of Columbia. However, participation in the State supplementation program is voluntary. States can opt out of the program but must provide notice to us at least 90 days in advance before dropping out. The result of States dropping out of the program is a loss of LAE authority in the current and possibly following fiscal year when it is too late to adjust our request. When a State drops out of the program, we use LAE to make up the difference in authority. We make adjustments to our estimates for the budget year and the outyears, when possible, to accommodate any changes. California and New Jersey are the two largest states for whom we administer State supplementation. If either State opted to administer their own State supplementation, our estimate would dramatically decrease.

**Table 3.12—Estimated SSA User Fee Collections by State**
(Dollars in thousands)

| State | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | * | * | * |
| California | $106,244 | $113,513 | $117,716 |
| Delaware | $48 | $52 | $54 |
| DC | $90 | $96 | $100 |
| Georgia | * | * | * |
| Hawaii | $220 | $235 | $244 |
| Iowa | $102 | $109 | $113 |
| Kansas | * | * | * |
| Louisiana | * | * | * |
| Maryland | * | $1 | $1 |
| Michigan | $980 | $1,047 | $1,086 |
| Mississippi | $1 | $1 | $1 |
| Montana | $65 | $69 | $72 |
| Nevada | $1,370 | $1,464 | $1,518 |
| New Jersey | $15,433 | $16,489 | $17,099 |
| Ohio | * | * | * |
| Pennsylvania | $422 | $451 | $468 |
| Rhode Island | $38 | $40 | $42 |
| South Dakota | * | * | * |
| Tennessee | $1 | $1 | $1 |
| Vermont | $1,341 | $1,432 | $1,485 |
| **Total** | **$126,355** | **$135,000** | **$140,000** |

* Less than $500

## BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS

The Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) account, our basic administrative account, is an annual appropriation and is financed from the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, as well as the General Fund. This account provides resources to administer the Social Security and SSI programs, as well as certain aspects of the Medicare program. We calculate the administrative costs attributable to each program using our Government Accountability Office approved cost analysis system. In FY 2009, we received additional funds from the General Fund of the Treasury, provided by the Recovery Act and the MIPPA. We also received $98 million funded incrementally from FY 2015 to FY 2018, of which $27 million is available until expended, for costs associated with the MACRA provisions. In FY 2020 and 2021, we received a total of $376 million to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

### CMS and SSA Cost Sharing Agreement Workgroup

The Social Security Administration's LAE account is funded by the Social Security trust funds, the General Fund, the Medicare trust funds, and applicable user fees. Section 201(g) of the Social Security Act provides that SSA determine the share of administrative expenses that should have been borne by the appropriate trust funds for the administration of their respective programs and the General Fund for administration of the SSI program. SSA and CMS are currently working together to evaluate the cost-sharing agreement that determines the portion of administrative expenses borne by the SSA and Medicare trust funds and the General Fund.

**Table 3.13—Budget Authority and Outlays [1]**
(Dollars in thousands)

| | FY 2021 Actual[2,3,4,5] | FY 2022 CR[3,4,6] | FY 2023 Estimate[7] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Budget Authority** | | | |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] In FY 2021, our administrative outlays were about 1.1 percent of the benefit payments we made.
[3] Congress appropriated $45 million in FY 2021 (available until expended) for IT modernization. The FY 2022 CR funding level also includes $45 million for IT modernization.
[4] Congress appropriated $50 million in FY 2021 (available through September 30, 2022) to address the disability hearings backlog. The FY 2022 CR funding level also includes $50 million to address the disability hearings backlog, which are both included in regular LAE.
[5] The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) provided $300 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic, including paying the salaries and benefits of all employees affected as a result of office closures, telework, phone and communication services for employees, overtime costs, supplies, and for resources necessary for processing disability and retirement workloads and backlogs. It also provided $38 million for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering economic impact payments (EIP) to most individuals. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided an additional $38 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering a second round of EIPs first authorized under the CARES Act.
[6] In FY 2022, our administrative outlays are about 1.1 percent of the benefit payments we plan to pay.
[7] In FY 2023, our administrative outlays are about 1.1 percent of the benefit payments we plan to pay.

### Limitation on Administrative Expenses

| | FY 2021 Actual[2,3,4,5] | FY 2022 CR[3,4,6] | FY 2023 Estimate[7] |
|---|---|---|---|
| OASI and DI Trust Funds | $5,783,097[1] | $5,653,788[2] | $6,422,635[3] |
| HI and SMI Trust Funds | $2,715,499 | $2,747,826 | $3,213,193 |
| SSA Advisory Board | $2,500 | $2,500 | $2,750 |
| SSI Administrative Expenses | $4,293,849 | $4,390,831 | $4,993,722[10] |
| SSI State Supplement User Fees | $135,000 | $135,000 | $140,000 |
| Non-Attorney Representative User Fees | $1,000 | $1,000 | $1,000 |
| CARES | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Section 272, Division N) | $38,000 | $0 | $0 |
| **Total Budget Authority** | **$12,968,945** | **$12,930,945** | **$14,773,300** |
| **Administrative Outlays** | | | |
| OASI and DI Trust Funds | $5,972,400[4] | $5,863,100[5] | $6,337,500[6] |
| HI and SMI Trust Funds | $2,801,500 | $2,847,800 | $3,169,200 |
| SSI Administrative Expenses | $4,279,500 | $4,556,400 | $4,923,600 |
| SSI State Supplement User Fees | $126,000 | $135,000 | $140,000 |
| Non-Attorney Representative User Fees | $1,000 | $1,000 | $1,000 |
| CARES | $40,000 | $0 | $0 |
| Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Section 272, Division N) | $17,600 | $0 | $0 |
| MIPPA – LIS | $0[7] | $5,800 | $5,800 |
| MACRA | $100 | $100 | $0 |
| Recovery Act – New NSC | $2,800 | $100 | $0 |
| **Total Administrative Outlays[8]** | **$13,240,900** | **$13,409,300** | **$14,577,100** |

[1] The total includes $3,293,891 in OASI and $2,489,206 in DI costs.
[2] The total includes $3,132,254 in OASI and $2,521,534 in DI costs.
[3] The total includes $3,541,842 in OASI and $2,880,793 in DI costs.
[4] The total includes $3,456,900 in OASI and $2,515,500 in DI costs.
[5] The total includes $3,249,000 in OASI and $2,614,100 in DI costs.
[6] The total includes $3,496,100 in OASI and $2,841,400 in DI costs.
[7] A total of $12,000 was outlaid in MIPPA-LIS.
[8] Due to variations in the reporting of outlays, these outlays will not match those included in the Budget Appendix.

## AMOUNTS AVAILABLE FOR OBLIGATION/ANALYSIS OF CHANGES

### Table 3.14—Amounts Available for Obligation[1,2]

(Dollars in thousands)

| | FY 2021[3,4] Actual | FY 2022[5,6] Estimate | FY 2023[7] Estimate | FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE)** | | | | |
| **Unobligated Balance, start-of-year** | $630,094 | $416,627 | $290,216 | -$126,411 |
| **Unrealized Non-Attorney User Fees** | -$831 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Unrealized SSI User Fees** | -$8,645 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **LAE Appropriation[8]** | **$12,968,945** | **$12,930,945** | **$14,773,300** | **$1,842,355** |
| **Subtotal LAE Resources** | **$13,589,563** | **$13,347,572** | **$15,063,516** | **$1,715,944** |
| **Total Obligations, LAE** | **$13,139,010** | **$13,207,356** | **$14,923,300** | **$1,715,944** |
| **Unobligated Balance, lapsing** | -$102,265 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Unobligated Balance, end-of-year (LAE Carryover)** | -$348,288 | -$140,216 | -$140,216 | $0 |
| **The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES)** | | | | |
| **CARES Appropriation** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |
| **CARES Unobligated Balances, start-of-year** | $30,687 | $0 | $0 | -$0 |
| **CARES Unobligated Balances, end-of-year** | -$1,851 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Obligations, CARES** | **$28,836** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |
| **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Resources (ARRA)[9]** | | | | |
| **National Support Center, Unobligated Balances, start-of-year** | **$2,966** | **$123** | **$0** | **$0** |
| **National Support Center Unobligated Balances, end-of-year** | -$123 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] Table does not include reimbursables.
[3] FY 2021 unobligated balances, end-of-year, include $125 million of Program Integrity 18-month carry-out, $24 million of Dedicated Hearings multi-year carry-out, and $199 million carryover/transferred from prior-year accounts.
[4] Includes $38 million in funding, available through September 30, 2021, for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering a second round of EIPs first authorized under the CARES Act.
[5] FY 2022 unobligated balance, start-of-year, includes $125 million of Program Integrity 18-month funds and $291 million transferred from prior-year accounts.
[6] FY 2022 assumes a Full-year CR.
[7] FY 2023 unobligated balance, start-of-year, includes $100 million of Program Integrity 18-month carried into FY 2023 and $150 million transferred from prior-year accounts.
[8] LAE Appropriation amounts displayed include $11.2 million for OIG CDI unit expenses in both FY 2021 and 2022 (CR level) and $15.1 million in FY 2023.
[9] SSA received a Presidential waiver from rescission allowing for the use of ARRA NSC funds until expended.

## Limitation on Administrative Expenses

| | FY 2021[3,4] Actual | FY 2022[5,6] Estimate | FY 2023[7] Estimate | FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Obligations, ARRA** | **$2,843** | **$123** | **$0** | **-$123** |
| **Medicare Savings Plan (MSP)** | | | | |
| **Unobligated Balances, start-of-year** | **$14,903** | **$14,903** | **$7,451** | **-$7,451** |
| **Unobligated Balances, end-of-year** | -$14,903 | -$7,451 | $0 | $7,451 |
| **Obligations, MSP** | **$0** | **$7,451** | **$7,451** | **$0** |
| **Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) - Low Income Subsidy (LIS)** | | | | |
| **Unobligated Balances, start-of-year** | **$11,524** | **$11,511** | **$5,756** | **-$5,756** |
| **Unobligated Balances, end-of-year** | -$11,511 | -$5,756 | $0 | $5,756 |
| **Obligations, MIPPA – LIS** | **$13** | **$5,756** | **$5,756** | **$0** |
| **State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)** | | | | |
| **Unobligated Balances, start-of-year** | **$1,975** | **$1,940** | **$970** | **-$970** |
| **Unobligated Balances, end-of-year** | -$1,940 | -$970 | $0 | $970 |
| **Obligations, SCHIP** | **$35** | **$970** | **$970** | **$0** |
| **Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA)** | | | | |
| **Unobligated Balances, start-of-year** | **$25,881** | **$25,750** | **$25,630** | **-$120** |
| **Unobligated Balance, end-of-year** | -$25,750 | -$25,630 | -$25,630 | $0 |
| **Obligations, MACRA** | **$131** | **$120** | **$0** | **-$120** |
| **GRAND TOTAL, OBLIGATIONS** | **$13,170,868** | **$13,211,776** | **$14,937,477** | **$1,715,701** |

## ANALYSIS OF CHANGES (SUMMARY OF CHANGE)

### Table 3.15 - Summary of Change in Administrative Obligations from FY 2022 to FY 2023

**Summary of Changes**
**(Dollars in thousands) [1,2]**

| | FY 2022[3] | | FY 2023 | | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Federal WYs** | **Obligations (thousands)** | **Federal WYs** | **Obligations (thousands)** | **Federal WYs** | **Obligations (thousands)** |
| **BUILT-IN INCREASES** – Built-in increases are year-over-year cost increases that are outside agency control, such as across-the-board Federal pay raises, changes in employee health benefit premiums, and the price of postage. These increases are not a result of changes in overall agency resources or agency program or policy changes. Most agency operational costs are captured in this category as payroll costs. | | | | | | |
| A1. **Payroll Expenses** | **59,083** | **$7,367,396** | **59,083** | **$7,862,914** | | **$495,518** |
| Increases due to periodic step increases, health benefits, and career ladder promotions | | | | $162,518 | | $162,518 |
| Three-month effect of Federal pay increase effective January 2022 – 2.7% | | | | $47,000 | | $47,000 |
| Nine-month effect of Federal pay increase effective January 2023 – 4.6% | | | | $236,000 | | $236,000 |
| Non-SES Awards | | | | $50,000 | | $50,000 |
| A2. **Non-Payroll Costs** - Mandatory growth in non-payroll costs, including costs of security, guard services, postage, rent, lease renewals, etc. | | **$1,431,091** | | **$1,496,787** | | **$65,696** |
| A3. **State Disability Determination Services** - Mandatory growth in state DDS costs, including pay raises and the costs of obtaining medical evidence | | **$2,308,798** | | **$2,379,189** | | **$70,391** |
| A4. **Mailed Social Security Statements** | | **$8,744** | | **$9,128** | | **$384** |
| **Subtotal, Built-In Increases** | **59,083** | **$11,116,028** | **59,083** | **$11,748,018** | | **$631,990** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.

[2] Figures include Program Integrity, IT Modernization, and CARES Act funding.

[3] FY 2022 estimates reflect an assumption of a full year continuing resolution.

## Limitation on Administrative Expenses

| | FY 2022[3] | | FY 2023 | | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Federal WYs | Obligations (thousands) | Federal WYs | Obligations (thousands) | Federal WYs | Obligations (thousands) |
| **PROGRAM CHANGES** – Program changes are year-over-year cost increases or decreases not captured in the section above. These result from changes in agency priorities, policy decisions, or dedicated funding. | | | | | | |
| **PROGRAM INCREASES** | | | | | | |
| B1. **Net Increase in Disability Determination Services[1]** | | | | **$170,811** | | **$170,811** |
| B2. **Payroll Increase - Net Increase in SSA WYs** | | | **3,300** | **$440,286** | **3,300** | **$440,286** |
| B3. **Information Technology (IT) - Base Funding** | | **$996,708** | | **$1,504,000** | | **$507,292** |
| B4. **OIG Reimbursable Transfer** | | **$11,200** | | **$15,100** | | **$3,900** |
| B5. **Non-Payroll Costs - Change in essential non-payroll costs** | | **$855,491** | | **$895,085** | | **$39,594** |
| **Subtotal, Program Increases** | | **$1,863,399** | **3,300** | **$3,025,282** | **3,300** | **$1,161,883** |
| **Subtotal, Gross Increases** | **59,083** | **$12,979,427** | **62,383** | **$14,773,300** | **3,300** | **$1,793,873** |
| **PROGRAM DECREASES** | | | | | | |
| C1. **IT Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balances** | | **$226,446** | | **$150,000** | | **- $76,446** |
| C2. **Carryover Decreases – Altmeyer, NSC, Construction** | | **$1,607** | | **$0** | | **-$1,607** |
| **Subtotal, Program Decreases** | | **$228,053** | | **$150,000** | | **-$78,053** |
| **Subtotal, Gross Decreases** | | **$228,053** | | **$150,000** | | **-$78,053** |
| **Total Obligations, Net** | **59,083** | **$13,207,480** | **62,383** | **$14,923,300** | **3,300** | **+ $1,715,820** |

[1] Funds an additional 691 workyears and increased processing in the DDSs in FY 2023.

## BUDGETARY RESOURCES BY OBJECT

**Table 3.16—Budgetary Resources by Object**
(Dollars in thousands)[1,2]

| | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel Compensation | | | |
| Permanent positions | $5,109,126 | $5,566,420 | $457,294 |
| Positions other than permanent | $74,283 | $82,752 | $8,469 |
| Other personnel compensation | $93,289 | $368,371 | $275,083 |
| Special personal service payments | $1,711 | $1,800 | $89 |
| **Subtotal, personnel compensation** | **$5,278,408** | **$6,019,343** | **$740,935** |
| Personnel Benefits | $2,111,485 | $2,310,134 | $198,649 |
| Benefits for former personnel | $3,000 | $3,000 | - |
| Travel and transportation of persons | $3,198 | $3,242 | $45 |
| Transportation of things | $6,433 | $6,523 | $90 |
| Rent, communications, and utilities | | | |
| Rental payments to GSA | $747,534 | $750,612 | $3,078 |
| Rental payments to others | $204 | $298 | $94 |
| Communications, utilities, misc. | $427,016 | $449,843 | $22,826 |
| Printing and reproduction | $20,954 | $21,246 | $292 |
| Other services (DDS, guards, etc.) | $4,234,731 | $4,899,750 | $665,019 |
| Supplies and materials | $18,215 | $18,470 | $255 |
| Equipment | $231,443 | $313,923 | $82,479 |
| Land and structures | $69,357 | $70,323 | $966 |
| Grants, subsidies, and contributions | $34,108 | $34,583 | $475 |
| Insurance claims and indemnities | $28,646 | $29,045 | $399 |
| Interest and dividends | $0 | $0 | - |
| Financial Transfers | $7,044 | $7,142 | $98 |
| **Total Obligations** | **$13,221,776** | **$14,937,477** | **$1,715,700** |
| Resources not being obligated in the current year (carrying over or lapsing) | $180,023 | $165,846 | ($14,177) |
| **Total Budgetary Resources** | **$13,401,799** | **$15,103,323** | **$1,701,524** |
| Payments to State DDS (funded from other services and Communications, utilities, and misc.) | $2,308,798 | $2,550,000 | $241,202 |

[1] Totals are shown in thousands, do not include reimbursables and may not add due to rounding.

[2] The obligations include the base LAE appropriation, MIPPA, LIS, SCHIP, MACRA, the Altmeyer Renovation, dedicated funding to address the hearings backlog, and for IT Modernization. Obligations in the table reflect FY 2022 and FY 2023 projections of spending by object class. SSA has the flexibility within the LAE account to modify projected spending during the budget execution process.

## ESTIMATED DISTRIBUTION OF AGENCY COSTS

The Estimated Distribution of Agency Costs exhibit displays SSA's workyears and costs by major component group.

The President's Budget funding level allows workyears to increase by almost 4,000 (3,300 SSA and ~700 DDS) from FY 2022 to FY 2023, 2,300 of which are represented by the increase in SSA overtime. A full freeze in FY 2022 challenges our ability to show an increase in staffing levels above FY 2021 levels. If we receive the President's budget funding levels in FY 2022, it will allow us to replace hires right away instead of waiting until FY 2023 to bring on over 8,500 new employees (5,200 SSA and 3,300 DDS). By the end of FY 2023, we will have nearly 60,000 employees on-duty in SSA and over 16,000 in our DDSs, which will bring the Agency above end of year FY 2021 levels.

**Table 3.17 - FY 2021 - Estimated Distribution of Agency Costs[1,2]**
**(Dollars in thousands)**

| Component | FTEs | Lump Sum | Overtime | Workyears | Payroll | Benefits | Other Objects | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Field Offices | 27,251 | 91 | 737 | **28,079** | $2,281,636 | $864,994 | $479,233 | **$3,625,863** |
| Teleservice Centers | 4,790 | 16 | 44 | **4,850** | $289,988 | $111,650 | $21,323 | **$422,961** |
| Regional Offices[3] | 1,281 | 9 | 15 | **1,305** | $156,885 | $58,890 | $309,896 | **$525,671** |
| **Subtotal, RC Field** | **33,323** | **116** | **796** | **34,235** | **$2,728,509** | **$1,035,535** | **$810,452** | **$4,574,495** |
| Program Service Centers and Office of Central Operations | 9,548 | 39 | 691 | **10,278** | $771,731 | $264,412 | $110,331 | **$1,146,473** |
| **Subtotal, Operations** | **42,871** | **155** | **1,487** | **44,513** | **$3,500,239** | **$1,299,946** | **$920,782** | **$5,720,968** |
| Office of Hearings Operations | 7,970 | 34 | 116 | **8,120** | $834,911 | $301,123 | $243,771 | **$1,379,804** |
| Office of Systems | 3,138 | 12 | 29 | **3,178** | $398,018 | $138,251 | $68,494 | **$604,763** |
| Office of Analytics, Review, and Oversight | 1,928 | 9 | 39 | **1,976** | $220,594 | $75,856 | $8,864 | **$305,314** |
| Office of General Counsel | 721 | 2 | 1 | **724** | $99,626 | $34,834 | $47,349 | **$181,809** |
| Headquarters[4] | 2,567 | 14 | 20 | **2,601** | $303,216 | $131,118 | $874,454 | **$1,308,788** |
| **Subtotal, SSA** | **59,195** | **226** | **1,691** | **61,112** | **$5,356,604** | **$1,981,127** | **$2,163,715** | **$9,501,447** |
| ITS | | | | | | | $1,423,081 | **$1,423,081** |
| DDS | 13,421 | 0 | 337 | **13,758** | | | $2,246,340 | **$2,246,340** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.

[2] Excludes Reimbursables (300 workyears in FY 2022 and FY 2023) and includes, NSC, LIS, SCHIP, MACRA, and dedicated funding for OHO, IT Modernization, and Altmeyer.

[3] Includes Field Office Guard Services in the Other Objects lines.

[4] Includes multiple items which cover expenditures for the entire agency. Examples include: Return to Work Incentives, Department of Interior Payroll IAA for the Agency, GSA Delegations, Data Exchanges, Sustainability and Reinvestigations, Facilities and Maintenance, Employee Health Services, and Headquarters Guard Services.

| Component | FTEs | Lump Sum | Overtime | Workyears | Payroll | Benefits | Other Objects | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total LAE** | **72,616** | **226** | **2,028** | **74,871** | **$5,356,604** | **$1,981,127** | **$5,833,136** | **$13,170,868** |

## Table 3.18 - FY 2022 - Estimated Distribution of Agency Costs[1,2]

**(Dollars in thousands)**

| Component | FTEs | Lump Sum | Overtime | Workyears | Salaries/OT | Benefits | Other Objects | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Field Offices | 26,781 | 91 | 259 | **27,131** | $2,247,659 | $927,393 | $498,333 | **$3,673,385** |
| Teleservice Centers | 4,618 | 16 | 44 | **4,678** | $287,369 | $114,348 | $22,000 | **$423,717** |
| Regional Offices[3] | 1,270 | 9 | 5 | **1,284** | $157,280 | $62,312 | $321,000 | **$540,592** |
| **Subtotal, RC Field** | **32,669** | **116** | **308** | **33,093** | **$2,692,308** | **$1,104,053** | **$841,333** | **$4,637,694** |
| Program Service Centers and Office of Central Operations | 9,497 | 44 | 271 | **9,812** | $740,761 | $283,673 | $110,708 | **$1,135,142** |
| **Subtotal, Operations** | **42,166** | **160** | **579** | **42,905** | **$3,433,069** | **$1,387,726** | **$952,041** | **$5,772,836** |
| Office of Hearings Operations | 7,681 | 35 | 84 | **7,800** | $820,369 | $313,247 | $279,309 | **$1,412,925** |
| Office of Systems | 3,112 | 18 | 12 | **3,142** | $400,349 | $148,384 | $72,716 | **$621,449** |
| Office of Analytics, Review, and Oversight | 1,864 | 12 | 19 | **1,895** | $215,428 | $79,632 | $10,599 | **$305,659** |
| Office of General Counsel | 711 | 3 | 0 | **714** | $100,013 | $37,107 | $54,231 | **$191,351** |
| Headquarters [4/] | 2,667 | 22 | 24 | **2,713** | $312,936 | $144,633 | $928,036 | **$1,385,605** |
| **Subtotal, SSA** | **58,201** | **250** | **718** | **59,169** | **$5,282,164** | **$2,110,729** | **$2,296,932** | **$9,689,825** |
| ITS | | | | - | | | | **$1,223,154** |
| DDS | 13,426 | | 155 | **13,581** | | | | **$2,308,798** |
| **Total LAE** | **71,627** | **250** | **873** | **72,750** | **$5,282,164** | **$2,110,729** | **$2,296,932** | **$13,221,777** |
| OIG Transfer | | | | - | | | | **($11,200)** |
| **Total, LAE and OIG Transfer** | **71,627** | **250** | **873** | **72,750** | **$5,282,164** | **$2,110,729** | **$2,296,932** | **$13,210,577** |

## Table 3.19 - FY 2023 - Estimated Distribution of Agency Costs[1,2]

**(Dollars in thousands)**

| Component | FTEs | Lump Sum | Overtime | Workyears | Salaries/OT | Benefits | Other Objects | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Field Offices | 27,106 | 91 | 1,637 | **28,834** | $2,599,192 | $1,003,916 | $512,990 | **$4,124,714** |
| Teleservice Centers | 4,790 | 16 | 44 | **4,850** | $319,701 | $129,067 | $22,392 | **$460,270** |
| Regional Offices[3] | 1,281 | 9 | 15 | **1,305** | $171,040 | $66,7241 | $321,860 | **$561,898** |
| **Subtotal, RC Field** | **33,177** | **116** | **1,696** | **34,989** | **$3,089,933** | **$1,199,707** | **$857,242** | **$5,146,882** |
| Program Service Centers and Office of Central Operations | 9,601 | 44 | 1,077 | **10,722** | $879,790 | $317,348 | $113,792 | **$1,310,930** |
| **Subtotal, Operations** | **42,778** | **160** | **2,773** | **45,711** | **$3,969,723** | **$1,517,055** | **$971,034** | **$6,457,812** |
| Office of Hearings Operations | 7,663 | 35 | 125 | **7,823** | $882,620 | $333,620 | $295,181 | **$1,511,421** |
| Office of Systems | 3,350 | 18 | 30 | **3,398** | $465,136 | $171,464 | $71,712 | **$708,312** |

## Limitation on Administrative Expenses

| Component | FTEs | Lump Sum | Overtime | Workyears | Salaries/OT | Benefits | Other Objects | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Office of Analytics, Review, and Oversight | 1,908 | 12 | 40 | **1,960** | $239,282 | $88,110 | $10,599 | **$337,991** |
| Office of General Counsel | 729 | 3 | 0 | **732** | $110,083 | $40,693 | $53,675 | **$204,451** |
| Headquarters[4] | 2,790 | 22 | 32 | **2,844** | $355,499 | $159,192 | $998,799 | **$1,513,490** |
| **Subtotal, SSA** | **59,218** | **250** | **3,000** | **62,468** | **$6,022,343** | **$2,310,134** | **$2,401,000** | **$10,733,477** |
| ITS | | | | | | | | **$1,654,000** |
| DDS | 13,872 | | 400 | **14,272** | | | | **$2,550,000** |
| **Total LAE** | **73,090** | **250** | **3,400** | **76,740** | **$6,022,343** | **$2,310,134** | **$2,401,000** | **$14,937,477** |
| OIG Transfer | | | | | | | | **($15,100)** |
| **Total, LAE and OIG Transfer** | **73,090** | **250** | **3,400** | **76,740** | **$6,022,343** | **$2,310,134** | **$2,401,000** | **$14,922,377** |

## WORKLOAD PROCESSING AND COST DISTRIBUTION ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

To provide additional transparency into how we spend resources, we are providing an example of how we process disability claims, one of our key workloads. This example demonstrates the movement of claims through multiple organizational components which handle various tasks required to complete the claim. Therefore, one claim or piece of work may incur costs in multiple components and cover a portion of our agency's fixed costs (e.g., overhead costs such as rent, guard services, information technology systems). These fixed agency level costs are applied after we assign direct component-level costs to a particular workload using generally accepted cost accounting principles of allocation.

This example follows a claim filed in a field office. However, applicants can also file a claim online and the remainder of the process is the same as in this example. An applicant may file a disability claim in a field office where our field office staff ensures proper documentation and evaluates non-medical eligibility factors. That same claim then goes to the Disability Determination Services (DDS) for a medical determination. If the DDS issues a favorable determination, the claim then goes back to the field office for processing. In some cases where there are complex issues, such as payment offsets due to workers' compensation or other benefits, or systems limitations that require manual processing, the Processing Center (PC) will effectuate the claim. Among other types of quality reviews, our Office of Quality Review may also conduct a pre-effectuation review (PER) of the DDS determination. We conduct these PERs to meet statutory requirements of the Act, which requires SSA to review at least 50 percent of favorable initial and reconsideration determinations on a pre-effectuation basis.

In this example, if the DDS issues an unfavorable determination, the applicant is eligible to request a hearing. The applicant will file the hearing request in a field office. The field office sends the case to our Office of Hearings Operations for a hearing by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). If the ALJ issues a favorable decision, the claim will then go to the PC where we calculate offsets, pay attorney fees, and initiate benefit payments. If the ALJ denies the claim, the applicant can appeal to the Appeals Council for a review and decision. Finally, if the Appeals Council denies the claim, the applicant has the final due process step available to appeal to the Federal Courts.

We assign the costs for these completed direct work activities to the agency-level workload that they support. Agency costs that benefit multiple workloads, such as human resources, financial, and policy support, also indirectly support the work we do, so we apply a portion of the overhead to each workload proportionally, based on the direct costs of doing the work.

The chart on the next page provides an organizational view of our disability waterfall to further illustrate this example of how work moves across components.

# An Organizational View of Our Disability Work Process

**Field Offices, Telephone Service, and Online**

- Claimants can file disability claims and appeals in field offices, over the phone, or online.
- We route cases to technicians in field offices and the workload support units (WSU) for review and processing.
- If claimants meet the non-medical eligibility requirements, we forward the case to the state disability determination services (DDS) for a medical determination.

**Disability Determination Services**

- Initial Disability Claims, Reconsiderations, Medical CDRs, and CDR Appeals.
- The DDS reviews the claimant's medical evidence to determine if they meet SSA's definition of disability.
- If the DDSs deny the initial claim, claimants can appeal for reconsideration, in which case a different DDS examiner will review the case and make a decision.
- 50% of all initial awards require review for accuracy.
- For allowed claims, we set a diary to establish the date for a medical CDR.

**Office of Hearings Operations and Office of Appellate Operations**

- Hearings and Appeals Council Reviews.
- If the claimant is denied at reconsideration, they can file for an administrative hearing with an Administrative Law Judge.
- If denied at the hearing level, claimants can appeal to the Appeals Council for review.

**Office of the General Counsel**

- Federal District Court
- If a claimant is dissatisfied with their Appeals Council decision, they may appeal to the Federal Court.
- OGC defends the agency's decisions in Federal Court proceedings.

**Processing Centers**

- Processing Centers (PCs)
- PCs effectuate payments to claimants as a result of decisions issued in the Hearings Offices, Appeals Council, or by Federal Courts (District and Circuit courts).
- PCs also issue payments of authorized attorney fees, and payments to authorized non-attorney representatives.

**Office of Quality Review (OQR)**

The Office of Quality Review completes a variety of required and special reviews to ensure continuous inline quality throughout the disability waterfall.

We have many staff components, primarily located at Social Security Headquarters, that support the people and work done in our front-line components. These components maintain and issue policy and technical workload guidance, manage facilities, formulate and execute the budget, provide actuarial analysis, issue communication plans, provide human resource services, communicate with external stakeholders on the Hill, and prevent fraud, among many other important tasks.

## PERFORMANCE TARGETS

The President's FY 2023 request will allow us to achieve the following key performance targets:

### Table 3.20—Key Performance Targets

| Workload and Outcome Measures | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Request |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Retirement and Survivor Claims**[1] | | | |
| Retirement and Survivors Claims Completed (thousands) | 6,082 | 6,615 | 6,534 |
| **Disability Claims**[2] | | | |
| Initial Disability Claims Receipts (thousands) | 2,009 | 2,231 | 2,570 |
| Initial Disability Claims Completed (thousands) | 2,011 | 1,986 | 2,350 |
| Initial Disability Claims Pending (thousands) | 740 | 939 | 1,159 |
| Average Processing Time for Initial Disability Claims (days)[3] | 165 | 185 | 164 |
| **Disability Reconsiderations** | | | |
| Disability Reconsiderations Receipts (thousands) | 571 | 576 | 682 |
| Disability Reconsiderations Completed (thousands) | 516 | 526 | 617 |
| Disability Reconsiderations Pending (thousands) | 193 | 228 | 293 |
| Average Processing Time for Disability Reconsiderations (days) | 147 | 187 | 168 |
| **Hearings** | | | |
| Hearings Receipts (thousands) | 383 | 376 | 472 |
| Hearings Completed (thousands) | 451 | 406 | 472 |
| Hearings Pending (thousands) | 350 | 320 | 320 |
| Annual Average Processing Time for Hearings Decisions (days)[4] | 326 | 375 | 335 |
| **National 800 Number** | | | |
| National 800 Number Calls Handled (millions)[5] | 31 | 33 | 36 |
| Average Speed of Answer (ASA) (minutes)[6] | 14 | 19 | 12 |
| Agent Busy Rate (percent) | 0% | 7% | 1% |
| **Program Integrity** | | | |
| Periodic Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR) Completed (thousands) | 1,616 | 1,721 | 1,800 |
| Full Medical CDRs (included above, thousands) | 511 | 621 | 700 |
| SSI Non-Medical Redeterminations Completed (thousands) | 2,367 | 1,928 | 2,166 |
| **Selected Other Agency Workload Measures** | | | |
| Social Security Numbers (SSN) Completed (millions) | 12 | 15 | 18 |
| Annual Earnings Items Completed (millions) | 277 | 284 | 288 |
| Social Security Statements Issued (millions)[7] | 12 | 15 | 15 |
| **Selected Production Workload Measures** | | | |
| Disability Determination Services Production per Workyear | 239 | 247 | 275 |
| Office of Hearings Operations Production per Workyear | 78 | 74 | 86 |
| Other Work/Service in Support of the Public-Annual Growth of Backlog (workyears) | N/A | (1,000) | (300) |

[1] Includes Medicare.

[2] The estimates for disability claims receipts and claims pending are highly variable due to COVID-19 and SSA's

evolving operational status since 2020.

[3] Average processing times for our initial disability claims and appeals workloads will be dependent on the ability to obtain timely medical evidence and effectively schedule consultative exams.

[4] Average processing time for hearings is an annual figure. In FY 2022, we plan to resume in-person hearings and prioritize individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing. As we work through those oldest cases, we anticipate a temporary increase in the average processing time. Projections for the end of year (September) processing time for hearings are 570 days and 270 days for FYs 2022 and 2023, respectively.

[5] National 800 Number Calls Handled data for FY 2021 does not include automated calls handled. There were approximately 2.7 million automated calls handled through May 21, 2021; data on automated calls handled from May 22 to date is still pending due to technical issues that occurred while transitioning to a new telephone system.

[6] The Agency Priority Goal target to improve the National 800 Number service achieves an Average Speed of Answer of less than 12 minutes, including implementation of estimated wait time and call back options, by September 20, 2023.

[7] The Social Security Statements Issued measure includes paper statements only. It does not include electronic statements issued. In FY 2021, *my* Social Security users accessed their Social Security Statements 64 million times. In FY 2021, we spent approximately $6.7 million to send statements to people aged 60 and over who were not receiving Social Security benefits. Consistent with FY 2021, in FY 2022 and FY 2023, we will send paper statements to people aged 60 and older who are not receiving Social Security benefits and who are not registered for a *my* Social Security account, at a cost of approximately $8.7 million in FY 2022 and $9.1 million in FY 2023.

Our budget is fully integrated with our Annual Performance Plan (APP), which is included as the second from last tab in this *Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, and online at our website. The budget estimates are linked to the key performance measures above and support all of the more detailed measures outlined in the APP.

## PROGRAM INTEGRITY

We take seriously our responsibilities to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and to safeguard the integrity of benefit programs to better serve recipients. We utilize dedicated program integrity (PI) funding to promote responsible spending of Social Security funds and ensure that the Agency is providing the correct benefit amounts only to those who qualify. We conduct continuing disability reviews (CDRs) to ensure that only beneficiaries who still qualify to receive benefits under the OASDI and SSI programs continue to receive them (includes both medical and work CDRs). For those receiving SSI, we also perform non-medical redeterminations (RZs) to determine whether recipients continue to meet the program's income and resource limits. The funding also supports Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units and the prosecution of fraud by Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys (SAUSAs).

The Budget includes $1.799 billion in dedicated funding for PI activities, including a $1.511 billion allocation adjustment. Total PI funding in FY 2023 is $224 million above the FY 2022 CR level.

Dedicated program integrity activities are funded as a subset of our total LAE funding. The Budget continues to assume 18-month availability for PI funding and also restricts us from using any non-PI LAE funding on PI activities.

The discretionary caps expired in 2021 and the 2023 discretionary SSA request includes an allocation adjustment for each year of the ten-year budget window. This adjustment is shown in the Budget for use in the Congressional budget process, pursuant to the Congressional Budget Act. Access to approximately $19 billion in discretionary funding over 10 years, including approximately $16 billion in allocation adjustments, would produce $75 billion in gross Federal savings ($51 billion from allocation adjustments), with net deficit savings of approximately $35 billion in the 10-year window and additional savings in the outyears (the Budget excludes funding for the now withdrawn proposed rule regarding increasing the number and frequency of CDRs). CDRs conducted in 2023 will yield an estimated ROI of about $8 on average in net Federal program savings over 10 years per $1 budgeted for dedicated program integrity funding, and the ROI for non-medical redeterminations conducted in 2023 is about $3 to $1. Table 3.23a provides additional information.

We achieved full CDR currency in FY 2018; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic we were unable to remain current as of FY 2020. The funding included in the FY 2023 Budget will enable us to regain currency in FY 2023 and remain current with dedicated program integrity workloads throughout the Budget window. Please refer to the Budget Process chapter in the *Analytical Perspectives* for more details on the Budget's approach to allocation adjustments and our activities.

In FY 2021, we completed 510,510 full medical CDRs and 2,367,391 RZs. We plan to complete 621,000 CDRs and 1.9 million RZs in FY 2022. In FY 2023, we anticipate completing 700,000 full medical CDRs, allowing us to regain currency by the end of FY 2023. The Budget also funds the completion of 2.166 million RZs.

**Table 3.21a—Program Integrity Workloads and Funding by Source**
(Dollars in millions)

| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 10-year Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Discretionary BA (non-add) | 1,511 | 1,583 | 1,393 | 1,509 | 1,582 | 1,629 | 1,686 | 1,771 | 1,803 | 1,836 | 16,303 |
| Discretionary Outlay Costs[1] | 1,516 | 1,579 | 1,405 | 1,502 | 1,577 | 1,626 | 1,683 | 1,765 | 1,801 | 1,834 | 16,288 |
| Mandatory Savings[2] | -112 | -1,776 | -3,142 | -3,992 | -4,885 | -6,021 | -6,289 | -7,440 | -8,242 | -8,981 | -50,880 |
| Net Effect | 1,404 | -197 | -1,737 | -2,490 | -3,308 | -4,395 | -4,606 | -5,675 | -6,441 | -7,147 | -34,592 |

[1] The discretionary costs are equal to the outlays associated with the budget authority levels presented for allocation adjustments. The costs for 2023 through 2032 reflect the costs to complete the anticipated dedicated program integrity workloads for SSA.

[2] The mandatory savings from allocation adjustment funding are included in the policy projections for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. SSA's Office of the Chief Actuary and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Office of the Actuary estimates the savings.

**Table 3.21b—Program Integrity Workloads and Funding by Source[1]**
(Dollars in millions)

| | FY 2021 Actuals | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Volumes | **Actuals** | | |
| Full Medical CDRs Completed | 510,510 | 621,000 | 700,000 |
| SSI Non-Medical RZs Completed | 2,367,391 | 1,928,000 | 2,166,000 |
| Funding[2,3] | | | |
| Unobligated Balance, start-of-year | $173 | $125 | $100 |
| Dedicated Program Integrity Funding | $1,575 | $1,575 | $1,799 |
| **Subtotal PI Resources** | **$1,748** | **$1,700** | **$1,899** |
| Less Unobligated Balance, end-of-year | -$125 | -$100 | -$100 |
| **Total PI Obligations[4]** | **$1,623** | **$1,600** | **$1,799** |
| OASI | $137 | - | - |
| DI | $202 | $487 | $295 |
| SSI | $1,146 | $1,113 | $1,504 |
| HI | $59 | - | - |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] Dedicated program integrity funds have 18-month availability. FY 2021 reflects the authorized cap adjustment level provided in BBEDCA, as amended by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-74). The Budget assumes funding to complete planned program integrity workloads in FY 2023, including through a base allocation and an adjustment.
[3] Includes annual transfers from LAE to the SSA's Inspector General (OIG) for the cost of jointly operated anti-fraud CDI units, including $11.2 million transfer in FY 2021 and at the FY 2022 CR level, and $15.1 million transfer in FY 2023.
[4] Totals include the combined costs of CDRs, SSI RZs, CDI units, and the SAUSAs.

| | FY 2021 Actuals | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| SMI | $70 | - | - |
| Medicare Part D | $9 | - | - |
| **Total PI Obligations[1]** | **$1,623** | **$1,600** | **$1,799** |

**Budgeting and Managing Program Integrity Workloads**

While we take many steps to ensure we analyze and budget for the costs of our CDR and SSI RZ workloads, we do not know actual costs until after the end of the fiscal year. The 18-month authority allows us the flexibility to obligate our dedicated program integrity funding responsibly. The individual unit costs of CDRs and RZs and the total number of these workloads processed, determine the actual total program integrity costs. Fluctuations in our PI unit costs occur throughout the year due to a variety of factors, such as:

- hiring and training, which can impact productivity in the work units where the PI work is done;
- information technology investments (e.g. timing of development and acquisitions);
- policy changes;
- business process changes;
- timing of work completion (e.g. work can start in prior fiscal year and clear in the next);
- the types of cases processed in a year (e.g. processing a greater number of more time-consuming types of CDRs in a year can increase unit costs in that year); and
- COVID-19 related disruptions due to our decision to protect beneficiaries and prioritize frontline services, and due to processing delays.

In addition to these items that add costs to the PI workloads, it can be difficult for the agency to control closely the volume of PI work that is completed. PI work occurs across the country in every field office, processing center, and State DDS. Some PI work must be done on demand when we become aware of an issue with a claimant's situation and cannot be planned. Therefore, it is difficult to predict exact workload processing targets in advance.

We track PI spending throughout the fiscal year, and we analyze and review cyclical trends in PI costs. However, the delay in actual costs challenges our ability to forecast spending and reconcile costs timely, and we must make a conservative estimate of total expected costs at the end of the year to stay within the total available program integrity funding.

We calculate the unit costs for PI workloads using data from our Cost Analysis System. This system allocates our administrative costs to all of our workloads, including CDRs and RZs. Changes in other agency workloads, as well as in other large agency cost categories such as information technology (IT), impact the overall total unit costs for PI workloads as well, which

[1] We project workload costs for DI and SSI spending but not for OASI, HI, SMI, or Medicare Part D. We report these costs with the actuals.

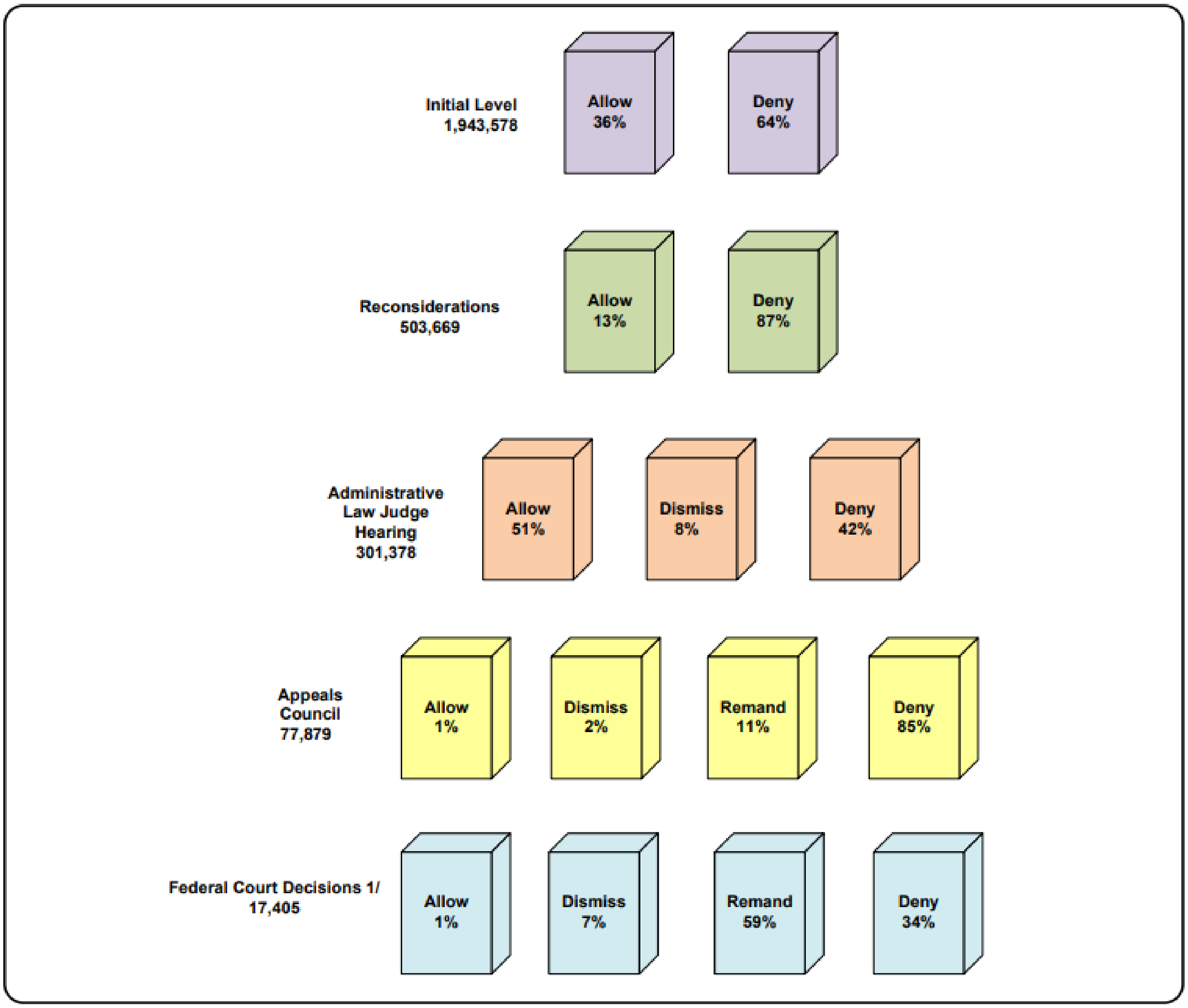
can make it difficult to predict end-of-year costs for CDRs and RZs prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Our PI unit costs can be broken down by direct payroll, direct other objects, information technology systems (ITS), and agency shared costs that include both payroll and other objects. Our direct payroll includes costs of our employees in the front-line workload processing components like our field offices, program service centers, and State DDSs. Other objects costs can be broken down to just direct other objects costs of our front-line workload processing components. ITS costs include all non-payroll costs associated with our IT investments. Lastly, agency shared costs include all other component costs, like headquarters components as well as a portion of rent, postage, and guards.

While we strive to hit all performance targets, we closely monitor and adjust our workload processing plans for PI workloads based on our real experience. We also continue to consider the effects of the cost factors described above in our ongoing analysis to pace this workload and to inform our spending decisions.

## FISCAL YEAR 2021 DISABILITY DECISION DATA

### Table 3.22 – Fiscal Year 2021 Disability Decision Data*




[1/] Federal Court data includes appeals of Continuing Disability Reviews.
Data Sources:

1. Initial and Reconsideration Data: SSA State Agency Operations Report
2. Administrative Law Judge and Appeals Council data: SSA Office Hearing Operations and SSA Office of Analytics, Review and Oversight (OARO)
3. Federal Court data: SSA Office of General Counsel

[*] Workload volumes for initial claims, reconsiderations, and hearings do not align with performance reported in our key performance measures table because the data definition captures broader activity.

Includes Title II, Title XVI, and concurrent initial disability determinations and appeals decisions issued in FY 2021, regardless of the year in which the initial claim was filed, and regardless of whether the claimant ever received benefits (in a small number of cases with favorable disability decision benefits are subsequently denied because the claimant does not meet other eligibility requirements.) Does not include claims where an eligibility determination was reached without a determination of disability. If a determination or appeals decision was made on Title II and Title XVI claims for the same person, the results are treated as one concurrent decision.

NOTE: Due to rounding, data may not always total 100%.
Prepared by: SSA, ODSSI (Office of Decision Support and Strategic Information)
Date Prepared: January 31, 2022

## PRIORITY GOALS

To ensure our accountability to the public we serve, and as required by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, our Agency Priority Goals (APG) help us achieve our overarching strategic goals and objectives set forth in our FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan.

Our FYs 2022–2023 APGs are:

1. Improve Initial Disability Claims. Improve the customer experience by reducing the average processing time for initial disability claims and by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for initial disability determinations.
    - By September 30, 2023, achieve an average processing time for initial disability claims of 164 days.
    - By September 30, 2023, decide 85 percent of pending initial disability claims that begin the fiscal year 180 days old or older.
2. Improve the National 800 Number Service. Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number.
    - By September 30, 2023, achieve an average speed of answer of less than 12 minutes, including implementation of estimated wait time and call back options.
3. Improve Equity in the Supplemental Security Income Program. Improve equity in our Supplemental Security Income program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities.
    - By September 30, 2023, increase the number of all SSI applications by 15 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline, restoring rates closer to pre-pandemic levels.
    - By September 30, 2023, increase the number of SSI applications from underserved communities by 25 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline.

We have specific performance indicators and milestones to monitor our progress, and our goals reflect our Enterprise Risk Management actions.  Additionally, through our quarterly internal review process, our executives have candid discussions regarding progress, any challenges we must overcome, and strategies that will support APG goal achievement.

Please see the FYs 2021-2023 Annual Performance Report and www.performance.gov for more information on our APGs.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

We administer the nation's largest Federal benefits program, which serves as a safety net for millions of individuals. Improving customer experience (CX) is one of our top priorities, and we are working to understand and improve how we design and deliver our services to ensure they are accessible to the people they are intended to serve. We are making efforts to reframe our approach to customer feedback and to examine how our policies, procedures, and systems may impact customer experiences.

Although we have solicited customer feedback through online, telephone, and mailed customer satisfaction surveys for years, our understanding of the customer's experience has been limited since we historically collect and manage feedback in different parts of the organization. To ensure our alignment on CX across components, the Office of the Chief Business Officer's CX management team is dedicated to coordinating enterprise-wide CX management practices and standards, in addition to supporting, guiding, educating, and enabling the organization at large to mature its customer centricity. In FY 2021, we acquired an enterprise-wide voice of the customer (VoC) feedback management platform for centralized collection, integration, and analysis of customer feedback. As part of this enterprise approach to customer feedback collection, the agency will standardize questions and apply standards set by OMB A-11 guidance.

In Executive Order 14058, *Transforming Customer Experience and Federal Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government*, we have five agency-specific commitments to improve customer experience.

1. Assessment of Services Requiring Physical Documentation or In-Person Appearance.
   By April 12, 2022, provide OMB a report that analyzes services that require original/physical documents or in-person visits as an element of identity or evidence authentication, and that identifies potential opportunities for policy and process reforms that could modernize service in cases where original/physical documentation or in-person appearance requirements can be removed. Based on statutory or strong policy rationale, some services will likely still require original/physical documentation or an in-person appearance.
2. Online Documentation Upload Solution
   We will develop an online and mobile-accessible process, likely through a service tool called eSubmit, that gives customers the ability to upload forms and documents to the agency and reduces the need for service-specific tools or in-person visits to field offices. Customers will be able to use a personal device, such as a computer, tablet, or smart phone to scan or take a picture of the form or document and submit it to us electronically.
3. eSignature Technology Neutrality
   We will provide an e-signature solution that maintains a public policy of technology neutrality with respect to acceptable forms of electronic signatures
4. Elimination of Physical Signatures
   We are examining agency regulations, forms, instructions, and other guidance (including the Program Operations Manual System) that require physical or "wet"

signatures to determine two things: 1) if we can remove the signature requirement entirely, and 2) if we cannot, whether we can establish an eSignature option. We are exploring options for alternatives where we cannot remove the signature requirement entirely, such as by potentially creating a technologically-neutral eSignature process, as described in commitment #3 or through the eSubmit project identified in commitment #2.

5. Cross-Program Benefit Eligibility

   We are reviewing our application intake processes, as well as our statutory and regulatory requirements, to determine ways to help customers identify and apply for benefits for which they may be eligible. In particular, we want to help customers leverage data they provide to us and others, so that individuals do not have to provide the same data to multiple agencies. This includes integrating Social Security Administration data and processes with those of other Federal and State entities whenever possible.

We are developing an implementation strategy to execute on the five commitments in a phased approach.

We have also identified the following priority service designations to focus our CX improvement efforts:

- Filing for Social Security Retirement Benefits
- Applying for a Replacement Social Security Card
- Filing for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Individual Adult (18–64) Disability payments

We are currently building out our Voice of the Customer (VoC) architecture to establish customer feedback collection for different touchpoints and service delivery channels across these designated journeys. As the agency's CX practices are still emerging, we are utilizing contractor support to aid in the facilitation of customer research, journey mapping, and service design efforts. We will create a journey map to better understand how customers interact with us, identify pain points, and find opportunities to improve the customer experience.

In FY 2022, we will expand the use of the internet Social Security Number Replacement Card (iSSNRC) to include name-change replacement cards in some states. We will also implement a new online service for persons not eligible to use iSSNRC. In FY 2023, we will begin formal engagement on customer research and journey mapping for the priority service "Applying for a Replacement Social Security Card."

In March 2022, we implemented a new online tool for the public to express interest in SSI benefits and establish a protective filing. We are exploring ways to streamline and simplify the SSI application and provide the application online. We will modify and improve the basic eligibility questions while striking a balance between collecting necessary information, meeting the public's accessibility expectation, and providing user-friendly plain language for a better customer experience. In FY 2022, we will complete usability research on the SSI customer journey enhancements, then begin developing those enhancements (IT, business and policy/legal) in FY 2023. Our work on the SSI customer journey and streamlining the SSI application aligns with the implementation strategies in our FYs 2022 – 2023 Improve Equity in our Supplemental Security Income Program Agency Priority Goal.

We are expanding digital services to provide convenient, user-friendly, and secure self-service options. For example, in March 2022, we released our *beta* site for ssa.gov that includes streamlined content and a redesigned home page and web template. The redesigned website will be more intuitive for customers to get to the information they need and successfully complete their tasks independently and efficiently. We will utilize customer feedback solicited from our online surveys and focus groups to make appropriate adjustments to the *beta* site. We plan to transition to the redesigned ssa.gov website in FY 2022.

For more information about our customer experience efforts, please see our FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan, FYs 2021–2023 Annual Performance Plan and Report, and www.performance.gov.

## ADVANCING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

We are committed to administering our programs in a way that promotes equity and treating all individuals who interact with us with fairness. We recognize that the design of our administrative system can pose barriers to people who need our programs the most. We are also committed to enhancing the diversity and richness of our workforce to cultivate and maintain an inclusive work environment where individual differences are valued, and employees are treated with dignity and respect. To advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility for the individuals we serve and our employees, we are pursuing the following initiatives:

- Establishing an Agency Priority Goal (APG) focused on equity and improving customer experience:

  Improve equity in our Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities.
  - By September 30, 2023, increase the number of all SSI applications by 15 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline, restoring rates closer to pre-pandemic levels.
  - By September 30, 2023, increase the number of SSI applications from underserved communities by 25 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline.

  Please see the Fiscal Years 2021–2023 Annual Performance Report and www.performance.gov for more information on our APGs.

- Ensuring equitable access to benefits and services by eliminating administrative barriers to participation in our programs, targeting outreach to underserved communities, and improving service delivery using a multi-faceted approach. For example:

  - We expanded access to survivors benefits for same-sex couples, if they would have been married or married earlier if State laws had permitted same-sex marriage. We have identified approximately 700 people who had applied and been denied survivors benefits based on a same-sex relationship and notified them of our change in policy. We will conduct additional outreach (e.g., Dear Colleague letter, blog post, and updates to our same-sex couples webpage) to find potentially eligible people who have not applied for benefits. Our outreach, successful identification, and payments to eligible individuals will provide same-sex couples with information to ensure same-sex couples receive the benefits to which they are entitled, but have not been able to access;

  - We employed an educational campaign by providing online resources and conducting training for organizations and individuals who assist others in applying for SSI;

  - We recently launched a new online tool that receives requests to schedule appointments for people who want to file for SSI and other benefits (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). This online tool records the appointment request date as a person's protective filing date, commonly known as the date a person initially notifies us of their intent to apply for benefits. The protective filing date secures the person's SSI application filing date if they file within 60 days;

- We will update sub-regulatory policy, notices, and other guidance documents to improve service delivery to gender-diverse and transgender people, where appropriate; and
- We will ensure equitable service for unrepresented claimants in the disability application process through increased outreach, collaboration with professional organizations to increase rates of representation, and assessment of our internal processes that may contribute to disparities in outcomes for applicants.

➢ Identifying and removing hurdles that small and disadvantaged businesses face in taking advantage of our procurement opportunities. These small and disadvantaged businesses include woman-owned businesses, service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, and business contractors in historically underutilized business zones;

➢ Supporting offices within the agency that are responsible for developing or implementing policies intended to better serve small and disadvantaged businesses;

➢ Ensuring diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our workforce and providing career development opportunities for employees; and

➢ Elevating the Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity as an independent component reporting to the Commissioner's Office at the Deputy Commissioner level. In doing so, we advance equity by promoting principles of equal employment opportunity and an inclusive work environment that values diversity and empowers individuals from all backgrounds to participate in their fullest in support of our mission.

We established the agency's Equity Team in accordance with Executive Order 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government to coordinate agency-wide and interagency efforts and discuss opportunities to ensure equity in our programs. The Equity Team established workgroups to address the following program and policy topics:

➢ Include diverse stakeholders in our outreach and develop relationships with diverse advocates, civil rights organizations, and community organizations;

➢ Establish an agency Implicit Bias Curriculum for SSA staff;

- Communicate existing policies that continue benefits during the administrative appeals process;

- Develop methods to increase the collection of data on race and ethnicity, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law; and conduct distributional analyses and evaluate the impact of existing and potential policies on applicants and beneficiaries by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography;

- Develop leading practices to increase access to and encourage participation in procurement opportunities by small and disadvantaged businesses, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law; and

- Improve relationships with academic and professional associations and networks to encourage participation in our research grants by Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law.

We are working to understand why fewer people applied for SSI during the pandemic, and to ensure our SSI program is accessible through outreach to communities of color and communities facing barriers. Some of these strategies include:

- Establishing nearly 650 liaisons in field offices to serve as points of contact for organizations who are committed to helping us identify and assist people facing barriers to our services by referring individuals to us, establishing leads, and helping take claims for SSI;

- Streamlining policies, procedures, and business processes in the SSI application process;

- Developing outreach efforts to connect eligible individuals to SSI benefits such as prioritizing to increase the number of SSI applications in geographic areas with the highest number of people who are underserved and close the gap between those underserved and the national average, enlisting usability and customer experience experts to research ways to simplify the customer journey for individuals filing for benefits, and continuing to understand and address discreet barriers to filing for SSI such as economic and social conditions, access to other service channels such as the 800 Number and field offices, behavioral changes such as reluctance to communicate by phone due to pervasive telephone scams, and availability of health services and medical/school records throughout the pandemic;

- Mailing information to people who may be eligible for SSI due to their current receipt of other Social Security benefits;

- Identifying how we can use data from States and local governments and organizations to improve outreach and the overall application process for SSI children's benefits;

- Adding detailed information about SSI eligibility for children on the receipt to parents who are filing for Social Security Numbers through the hospital using the Enumeration at Birth process; and

- Continuing our collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services to help eligible SSI applicants and recipients apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

We also established the following advocate-executive workgroups to address SSI administrative simplifications and evidence-based outreach:

- Third-Party Assistance: Our goal is to ensure people have the help they need to apply for SSI. One highlight is the creation of the *People Helping Others* website which provides resources about navigating our programs, as well as training, for anyone providing help or support to those interested in applying for our programs. In addition to the website, we implemented a third-party SSI claims-taking model, which provides an additional method of applying for SSI.

- Outreach to SSI Kids: We augmented our existing community-level outreach to children who may be eligible for SSI. We created a paid national digital campaign, which includes social media and search engine marketing (SEM). SEM ads promoting SSI, including SSI for kids, have generated over half a million website visits. Facebook and Instagram ads promoting SSI and SSI for kids have generated almost 86 million impressions or views so far. In addition to these ads, we pay for our website to appear at the top of search engine results when people search for information about SSI for kids, which has generated approximately 485,000 website visits thus far.

- SSI Application Streamlining/Accessibility: We have been developing strategies to ease the process for applying for SSI. We are evaluating the current SSI application to simplify, streamline, and modernize the application to increase its accessibility. We developed a fillable PDF version of the SSI application, form SSA-8000-BK, Application for Supplemental Security Income, that partner groups can use to take claims from their clients. We are also reviewing the questions on the SSI application to determine how we could make the application less complex and burdensome, both for our applicants and our employees.

- Targeted Mailing and Outreach: We initiated this effort to voluntarily encourage Social Security beneficiaries who may also be eligible for additional benefits under SSI to apply. We completed our first phase in March 2021 by sending 200,000 targeted mailers to elderly and non-English speakers. We set up a hotline to address the responses to the mailer. We are now in phase two and will send an additional 1.2 million mailers to reach the remaining beneficiaries. This effort will continue until the end of calendar year 2022.

> Because of this outreach, we have received almost 27,000 applications as of January 31, 2022, and of those, we have approved over 11,300 for additional benefits. In addition to promoting SSI, we have been working with both the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Treasury to encourage people to file for Economic Impact Payments and the Child Tax Credit with the Internal Revenue Service through various marketing campaigns.

Additional information on many of the efforts listed is in the Outreach to People Facing Barriers exhibit and Customer Experience exhibit.

## OUTREACH TO PEOPLE FACING BARRIERS

Applications for benefits, particularly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, have decreased during the pandemic. We remain concerned that there may be populations who need our help but are unable to reach us. In response, we developed and implemented targeted strategies to reach people facing barriers, including low-income individuals, people with limited English proficiency (LEP), people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, and people with mental or intellectual disabilities.

The FY 2023 Budget will continue to invest in these targeted strategies to simplify and expand access to our programs for the most underserved individuals. Specifically, our efforts will include enhanced communication, close collaboration with community groups serving people facing barriers, simplification of the SSI application process, and targeted outreach to current beneficiaries who may be eligible for additional benefits under the SSI program. These efforts will contribute to the success of our third Agency Priority Goal, which is to improve equity in the SSI program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities. Please see our Agency Performance Plan for additional information.

We have developed several initiatives, outlined below, to help people facing barriers access our programs. We also have plans, in addition to the initiatives detailed below, to improve the coordination of benefits across the Federal government, by exploring ways to increase the intake of other benefit applications, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), in our field offices. Additional details can be found in our Customer Experience exhibit.

### Initiative 1: Third-Party Assistance

We continue to carry out a robust, nationwide communications strategy to target those individuals most at-risk. As part of our efforts, we hold regular meetings with partner groups and organizations to identify ongoing challenges in reaching underserved individuals and potential solutions for overcoming these challenges. As a result of these conversations, we launched a national advertising campaign, in English and Spanish, on TV, radio, and social media, with emphasis on children with disabilities. Additionally, we featured blog posts by our advocate partners emphasizing the importance of our programs and our efforts to reach those we serve.

We are also working with third parties (e.g., community legal aid organizations, faith-based groups, social services organizations) to identify and assist people facing barriers who may be potentially eligible for our programs and interested in filing an SSI application. We designed a streamlined intake process for use by designated third-party partners and have developed in-depth training materials for our partners to use in assisting others with filing for SSI. We established Vulnerable Population Liaisons (VPL) and Vulnerable Populations Experts (VPE) in our field offices to work directly with community partners that have agreed to take and submit applications for SSI, provide information sufficient to establish a lead or protective filing, refer potential applicants to our agency, and conduct quality control reviews on claims submitted by third-party partners.

FY 2021 and FY 2022 Accomplishments:

- Launched a category of blogs called "People Facing Barriers" on our Social Security Matters blog. Since launching, we have featured several guest bloggers on topics ranging from homelessness to SSI for children with behavioral disabilities. The purpose of this blog series is to provide additional information on our programs.
- Created our "People Helping Others" website, which provides online resources to assist third parties helping people apply for benefits and access our services.
- Created a new people facing barriers resource page for groups and organizations, along with an updated resource page for faith and community partners.
- Continue to run paid social media and search engine marketing ads referring people to both our SSI page on our website and our apply page for SSI for children in English and Spanish.
- Convened a national conference call on March 25, 2021, with over 1,500 advocates to request their assistance with claims intake and other outreach to people facing barriers. During the call, we surveyed participants and received more than 650 expressions of interest from responders, with 375 agreeing to assist individuals in filing for SSI.
- Expanded outreach to community-based partners by having our Public Affairs Specialists conduct 12,441 outreach events. Through February 20, 2022, we secured an additional 4,314 total commitments to assist[1]:
  - 1,555 partners agreed to assist individuals in applying for SSI;
  - 1,592 partners have committed to provide SSA information sufficient to establish a lead/protective filing; and
  - 3,467 will refer potential applicants to SSA.
- Provided in-depth training for those partners committed to assisting individuals in filing SSI applications. Of the 1,555 organizations that have agreed to file SSI applications, we have trained staff at 1,412 organizations and have scheduled training for another 75 organizations as of February 20, 2022.
- Created an internal repository of information on outreach, engagement, and reporting to help track our engagements and training.
- Established dedicated VPLs who receive completed applications as part of their regular workload. These positions were created for offices that have seen the steepest decline in claims activity. In addition to their assigned duties, VPLs serve as a resource for outside

[1] Individual partners may commit to provide more than one service option when assisting individuals; therefore, the number of partners assisting with claims filing, establishing protective filings, and making referrals is greater than the total number of committed partners.

organizations. They identify potential errors and review with the submitter or refer recurring issues to local management and PASs or Area Work Incentives Coordinators (AWIC) who provide additional or follow-up discussion or training for the organization.

- Created a VPE assignment, which aligns with our existing Claims Technical Expert (CTE) position, to add a higher level of technical case review. The role of the VPE is to coordinate the Third-Party SSI Claims Taking Campaign at a broad level by providing technical guidance and support to the VPLs. The VPEs also perform quality control reviews and offer training to the organizations in coordination with the PASs and AWICs.
    - Designated 675 VPLs and 100 VPEs across our field offices through February 27, 2022.
    - Directed the Regional Communications Directors to serve as ombudsmen to address complex, exigent, or unresolved issues raised by our community-based partners.

<u>FY 2022 Plans:</u>

- Continue to invite guest bloggers on our Social Security Matters blog.
- Add more information to our "People Helping Others" website.
- Continue running paid social media and search engine marketing ads.
- Continue to build on the training and resource materials available for those designated third parties assisting individuals in accessing SSI.
- Maintain 675 VPLs and 100 VPEs in our field offices and consider adjustments if warranted by the workload.
- Send a Partnership Assessment Survey to partner organizations that committed to take SSI claims and help with outreach by the end of FY 2022. The survey will measure the efficacy of partnerships and partner access to targeted communities.

<u>FY 2023 Plans:</u>

- Continue FY 2022 plans to maintain the Social Security Matters blog, People Helping Others website, and social media campaigns.
- Continue to monitor the VPL and VPEs in our field offices. Evaluate responses to the Partnership Assessment Survey and consider adjustments to our outreach campaign based on the analysis.

**Initiative 2: Increase Outreach to SSI Kids**

**Limitation on Administrative Expenses**

To increase awareness about SSI children's benefits, we created a national campaign. As part of our campaign, we tested TV and radio public service announcements (PSA) with instructions on how to apply for benefits. We also developed social media advertising focused on SSI children's benefits. We collaborated with national and local third-party groups on the content of the PSAs and to share outreach toolkits through their networks. Additionally, we optimized the public-facing webpage and related information on how to apply for SSI children's benefits.

FY 2021 and FY 2022 Accomplishments:

- Tested TV and radio PSAs in English and Spanish in the Dallas market to inform our national rollout plans. On September 9, 2021, we began our national promotion of the TV and radio PSAs. The TV PSAs have generated over 64.6 million total impressions and have aired over 11,350 times.

- Ran paid social media and search engine marketing ads in English and Spanish that promote SSI and generated 1,789,592 visits to the SSA website through February 22, 2022.

- Ran Facebook/Instagram/Twitter ads promoting SSI for kids which generated nearly 151 million impressions through February 22, 2022.

- Redesigned and optimized the apply page for SSI for children, including in Spanish, and posted an outreach toolkit on our new outreach resources page for groups and organizations in English and Spanish. The changes have resulted in:

  - 764,000 page views to the English and Spanish web page;
  - 231,000 referrals to the Child Disability Report; and
  - 60,000 downloads from the Disability Starter Kit pages.

- Revised Form SSA-2853, *Message from Social Security*, to provide parents additional information on SSI when applying for their child's SSN as part of the Enumeration at Birth (EAB) process.

- Developed a toolkit with resources for youth already receiving SSI, with a focus on helping them navigate the transition to adulthood.

- Mailed a notice to more than 337,900 SSI recipients between the ages of 14 and 17 (transition-aged youth) and their adult representatives to help them identify policies and other resources to assist youth in their transition to adulthood. These mailings include a notice introducing our annual informational publication, *What You Need To Know About Your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) When You Turn 18* (Publication No. 05-11005).

FY 2022 Plans:

- Continue to promote our TV and radio PSAs nationally, run paid social media and search engine marketing ads, and promote the outreach toolkit for groups and organizations.

- Start using the updated Form SSA-2853.

FY 2023 Plans:

- Continue FY 2022 plans to promote our TV and radio PSAs, run paid social media and marketing campaigns, and promote the outreach toolkit.

**Initiative 3: Regulatory/Sub-Regulatory Changes**

We are working to simplify our policy around In-Kind Support and Maintenance (ISM). ISM is unearned income in the form of food and/or shelter and can affect the SSI benefit amount. On October 1, 2021, we raised the tolerance from $5 to $20 for determining an individual's shared living arrangement, , meaning sharing exists and we would not charge ISM if an individual's household contribution is within $20 of their pro rata share. We do not require a regulation to adjust the tolerance.

We previously revised our rules to stop counting the value of clothing given to SSI recipients as ISM, (Federal Register :: Determining Income and Resources Under the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program). Food, however, has been a part of the ISM calculation since the 1970s. In our Fall 2021 Unified Agenda of Regulatory Actions, we included our plans to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that will no longer consider food expenses as a source of ISM. This proposal would benefit disabled and aged persons who are struggling to meet basic food and shelter expenses, as the 2022 Federal maximum SSI benefit amount ($10,092/year) is lower than the current Federal poverty level which is set at $13,590 for an individual. Furthermore, the proposed rule fosters equity in the SSI program by ensuring that we treat food assistance uniformly regardless of the source, and removes barriers to food security for persons affected by persistent poverty. Our goal is to publish the NPRM by spring of 2022 and to finalize necessary actions to implement this change by spring of 2023.

Also, we continue to streamline our policies related to temporarily institutionalized (TI) claimants. Individuals may continue to receive their regular SSI benefits for stays in a facility of less than 90 consecutive days, provided the recipient requests to receive the benefits, and a physician certifies the stay as temporary. We are working to simplify this process by finalizing implementation of a new form SSA-186 *Temporary Institutionalization Statement to Maintain Household and Physician Certification,* which standardizes the process for obtaining benefit continuation during periods of temporary institutionalization for SSI recipients. We are targeting use of this new form by the end of FY 2022. We also plan to develop a demonstration project to assess the effect of automatically providing these temporary benefits in the first 90 days without requiring the person to demonstrate their need to maintain household expenses or provide the physician's certification.

We intend to use extramural research funds to establish a new Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP) to address several SSA priority areas, including assisting claimants who are facing barriers to apply for or appeal decisions on claims for SSDI or SSI benefits. ICAP allows us to enter into cooperative agreements to collaborate with external organizations with interest in identifying, operating, and partially funding interventional research related to SSDI and SSI.

Additionally, in an effort to increase transparency with the public, we shared detailed policy guidance and processing instructions to assist in understanding the steps employees take when processing various workloads.

<u>FY 2021 and FY 2022 Accomplishments:</u>

- Published an *SSA Spotlight on Continued SSI Benefits for Persons Who Are Temporarily Institutionalized – 2021 Edition* to inform individuals of the impact on SSI for those temporarily institutionalized.
- Created a standard form, Form SSA-186 *Temporary Institutionalization Statement to Maintain Household and Physician Certification* to obtain physicians' certification and recipient's statement of need. We submitted the form to OMB on September 30, 2021 for review and approval.
- Developed and published a request for applications for a new ICAP. The application period closed June 21, 2021 and we awarded a five-year ICAP cooperative agreement with the State of Georgia's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) on September 30, 2021. Under this agreement, the CJCC will conduct an intervention to help inmates in four county jails with serious and persistent mental illness apply for SSI and SSDI benefits if they are eligible.
- Posted 19 COVID-19 internal instructions for our employees to our public facing website (FY 2021).
- Hosted a public informational session to promote awareness of ICAP on February 2, 2022.
- Increased the tolerance for the pro rata share from $5 to $20 on October 1, 2021.

<u>FY 2022 Plans:</u>

- Implement use of the TI Form SSA-186
- Work with stakeholders on a plan to develop and implement a research demonstration on improved TI processes.
- Conduct an evaluation of the CJCC intervention under the ICAP cooperative agreement.
- Compete and award another round of ICAP in FY 2022.
- Continue to share policies and procedures with the public, as appropriate.

**Initiative 4: Streamlining the SSI Application and Increasing Accessibility**

We continue our efforts to streamline the SSI application process. We are investigating ways to incorporate user-centered design into our SSI application and process, which includes updating some of the questions and making the application available online. Ultimately, we expect to simplify the screening process for SSI, protect an individual's filing date, and allow an applicant the ability to easily schedule an appointment to file online.

<u>FY 2021 and FY 2022 Accomplishments:</u>

- Engaged in listening sessions with SSI advocates to identify barriers for completing our SSI forms and application process. We will use the feedback from the sessions to support our user-centered design approach.

- Analyzed the SSI application to identify opportunities to streamline and simplify the application form and that could be leveraged for an online application. Based on our analysis, we concluded:

    1. The application contains two very distinct type of questions: eligibility and development.

    2. Most of the eligibility questions apply to the majority of applicants while the developmental questions depend on the claimants unique set of circumstances.

    3. Revising the application so it more user-focused rather than simply digitizing the current application (even with some refinements) will produce a better customer experience for claimants.

- Created a 2021 edition of our Understanding Supplemental Security Income SSI Application Process and Applicants' Rights to clarify when and how to apply for SSI benefits.

<u>FY 2022 Plans:</u>

- Implement an electronic Protective Filing tool in March 2022 that will allow internet users to express interest in applying for SSI and request an appointment to file an application for benefits, thereby establishing a protective filing date instead of calling us or visiting a field office.

- Build on our analysis of the SSI application by using a more modern and innovative approach that is customer centered and minimally burdensome

- Explore a hybrid approach to the SSI application which would 1) capture the claimant's basic eligibility for SSI payments, and 2) schedule a technician supported experience to assist with gathering additional information necessary to complete the process. This development would be limited to only when we need the information.

- Begin exploring ways to modify and improve the basic eligibility questions striking a balance between meeting our statutory requirements and continuing to meet customers' expectations of an accessible, minimally burdensome, and user-friendly design. .

- Develop a simple interactive voice response (IVR) option on our National 800 Number to establish SSI protective filing.

**Initiative 5: Conduct Targeted Mailings for Title II Beneficiaries Who May Face Barriers and May Be Eligible for SSI**

We initiated the SSI mailer project after identifying current Social Security beneficiaries receiving less than the maximum monthly Federal SSI benefit to encourage those beneficiaries to apply for SSI.  In total, we have identified 1.4 million potentially eligible individuals, many who face barriers to our services.  The mailer, released in English and Spanish, includes a dedicated national hotline to assist recipients in determining eligibility for SSI.

FY 2021 and FY 2022 Efforts – Phase 1:

- Mailed 200,000 notices from mid-December 2020 through March 2021 to Social Security beneficiaries in three of the most affected groups.  Specifically, beneficiaries who are:
  - age 18-64 and receiving SSDI benefits;
  - age 65-84; and
  - age 65-84 who have limited English proficiency (LEP).
- The initial results of this mailing as of February 11, 2022, are:
  - 11,717 SSI applications taken (5.86 percent of total mailers sent);
  - 5,255 SSI applications have been approved (2.63 percent of the total mailers sent);
  - the newly eligible SSI beneficiaries receive an average SSI benefit of $208 per month; and
  - total SSI benefits paid based on Phase 1 efforts to date are $1,092,479.
- Received and processed applications from people in the initial mailing and completed our 12-month analysis in February 2022.

FY 2021 and FY 2022 Efforts – Phase 2:

- Released another 465,000 mailers from June 2021 to November 2021.
- Leveraged our experience from the first mailer to improve our processes for the next mailing as follows:
  - Added beneficiaries age 85 and older, including those 85 and older who have LEP.
  - Refined our data screening to better target mailing to people who are potentially eligible for SSI.  For example, we added additional screening criteria to precisely identify and remove individuals receiving a non-covered pension who would not be eligible for SSI benefits.  After this additional screening, we found about 1.2 million potentially eligible beneficiaries.
  - Plan to stagger the mailings over the course of the year.

- Shortened and simplified the notice, which will include a one-page fact sheet about the SSI program.
- Send an email notification to beneficiaries who have provided us with an email address. This email will be in addition to the paper notice.

- Set up a new toll-free number within our national 800-number call center to handle this work and we staffed it with dedicated bilingual employees fluent in Spanish and English.
- As of February 11, 2022, the initial results of our mailings are:
  - 30,423 SSI applications taken (6.54 percent of total mailers sent);
  - 13,040 SSI applications have been approved (2.80 percent of the total mailers sent);
  - an average SSI benefit of $219 per month for newly eligible SSI recipients; and
  - total SSI benefits paid to date based on Phase 2 efforts are $2.86 million.
- The overall total SSI benefits paid for Phase 1 and Phase 2 to date are $3.95 million.

<u>FY 2023 Plans:</u>

- Mail an additional 735,000 mailers between April 2022 through December 2022.
- Continue to receive and process applications from people who received mailers.

**Table 3.23–Estimate of Costs for Assisting People Facing Barriers**

| Initiative | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Third-Party Assistance | $37,202,000 | $97,100,000 | $97,066,000 |
| Outreach to SSI Kids | $1,347,000 | $1,486,000 | $1,492,000 |
| Regulatory/Sub-Regulatory Changes | $572,000 | $819,000 | $400,000 |
| SSI Application Streamlining/Accessibility | $126,000 | $2,386,000 | $2,316,000 |
| Targeted Mailings and Outreach | $2,478,000 | $11,997,000 | $3,683,000 |
| **Total** | **$41,725,000** | **$113,788,000** | **$104,957,000** |

## ADDITIONAL BUDGET DETAIL

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information technology (IT) is vital to nearly every aspect of our service to the public. IT allows us to offer new and innovative service delivery options and provides opportunities to improve and streamline our processes. Our employees use technology to collect and maintain earnings information, pay benefits, and identify and prevent fraud and improper payments.

The pandemic underscored the importance of IT to our mission and highlighted the successes of our modernization efforts. When we shifted to maximum telework in fiscal year (FY) 2020, our secure Virtual Private Network (VPN), laptops, and softphones helped transition over 90 percent of our employees, and thousands of State employees to telework within a few weeks. Technology has allowed us to continue serving the public through online and telephone services, enabling us to offer limited in-person appointments for critical situations. Online and telephone services will continue to be critical service delivery channels when we expand in-person services in early April. We make Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities.

Every major category of online service activity increased during the pandemic. For example, we had a 66 percent increase in *my* Social Security transactions from FY 2019-2021. This is particularly noteworthy, as *my* Social Security transactions allow credentialed customers toto complete some of their business with us without seeking help from our employees. Our Budget supports continued expansion of online service delivery options to our customers.

We will act in accordance with our enterprise risk appetite statement[1] to achieve our strategic goals and objectives. We will employ sound Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) principles, including identifying, measuring, monitoring, and controlling risks; transparent decision-making; effective communication; and prioritization of risk. We manage 15 interrelated sub-categories of risk to effectively oversee Social Security programs and safeguard taxpayer dollars. Where we have discretion, we are willing to assume limited risks if the benefit of delivering quality Social Security services to the public heavily outweighs the risk. Strong ERM practices will enable us to operate proactively and efficiently while managing mission-critical risks.

When individuals need Social Security services due to a major life event, they may conduct business with us through three main service channels: online, over the phone through our National 800 Number, or by visiting one of our local offices. Our IT request for FY 2023 demonstrates our commitment to improving service to the millions of people who expect and deserve timely and accurate help from us as a designated High Impact Service Provider. In support of President Biden's Executive Order 14058, on *Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government*, we will offer more streamlined and automated self-service options, and enhance in-office services for people who need them, while maintaining our robust cybersecurity program. In addition, we are strengthening our digital identity processes to comply with the *Creating Advanced Streamlined*

[1] Risk appetite is the amount of risk an organization is willing to accept in pursuit of strategic and organizational objectives and value to the enterprise.

*Electronic Services for Constituents Act*.[1] . While we develop these new IT capabilities, we must provide stable and secure access to our existing systems. In the sections that follow, we provide an overview of continuing modernization efforts and the support needed to maintain access to existing systems.

**Table 3.24–Total Information Technology Systems (ITS) Budget Authority**

| (Dollars in Millions) | TAFS Code | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ITS New Budget Authority | 28228704 | $1,233 | $997 | $1,504 |
| Prior Year Transfer/Carryover | 028X8704 | $137 | $226 | $150 |
| IT Reimbursables | 28228704 | $7 | $9 | $9 |
| Special Appropriation ITS ($460M) | 028X8704 | $67 | $0 | $0 |
| Recovery Act (National Support Center) | 028X8704 | $3 | $0 | $0 |
| ***Subtotal ITS*** | | **$1,447** | ***$1,232*** | ***$1,663*** |
| Internal Labor (Payroll) | 28228704 | $558 | $586 | $716 |
| Special Appropriation Internal Labor (Payroll) ($460M) | 028X8704 | $54 | $45 | $0 |
| ***Subtotal Payroll*** | | $613 | $631 | $716 |
| **Total** | | **$2,059** | **$1,863** | **$2,379** |

*Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.*

## FY 2021 Accomplishments

The pandemic emphasized the need to expand electronic self-service options for the public and restructure outdated work processes. We have made progress modernizing our IT systems, which are critical to our efforts to improve public service. These achievements further our efforts to deliver services effectively and efficiently. Our notable achievements include:

*Customer-Facing Service Delivery Improvements*

- Launched an application to the Representative (Rep) Payee portal, allowing Rep Payees to request a Medicare Replacement Card for beneficiaries within *my* Social Security quickly and efficiently.
- Produced over 95 million communications through our modern, cloud-based Customer Communications Management (CCM) product. Over 5 million *my* Social Security customers

[1] The *Creating Advanced Streamlined Electronic Services for Constituents Act* requires agencies to accept electronic identity proofing and authentication processes for an individual to give consent to disclose their records.

opted to go paperless, avoiding $1.5 million in cost for over 2.5 million notices that we did not need to print or mail.

- Initiated Cost-of-Living Adjustment and Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount Benefit Rate Change notices online in the Representative Payee Portal within *my* Social Security.
- Allowed an authenticated caller to perform change of address and change of phone number over the automated Integrated Voice Response system using our National 800 Number system, reducing the number of calls that required agent support.
- Broadened access to Internet Social Security Number Replacement Card (iSSNRC) for 19.5 million U.S. citizens. We anticipate in-office replacement card requests will decrease by approximately 150,000 to 200,000 transactions yearly, resulting in annual cost avoidance of $6 million to $8 million. iSSNRC actions increased by 233 percent from FY 2019 to FY 2021.
    - Added a web service to our agreement with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators within the Social Security Number Application Process (SSNAP) to verify the driver's license presented virtually for Social Security Number Replacement cards, enabling us to verify individuals' identity information without the need to visit our offices.
- Released the Claims Status Tracker in *my* Social Security to provide customers with an at-a-glance claim summary including personalized next steps and estimated timeframes for updates.
- Collaborated with outside experts to improve our website, www.ssa.gov. We incorporated feedback from customer interviews, analyzed how our customers look for information on our website, and developed best practices.
- Released Feedback Hub and the Unified Voice Customer Experience Feedback Tool to collect feedback from customers using any service channel, both online and offline, and present customer feedback in a single view to inform future directions in business processes, automation, and IT solutions.
- Debuted a Visitor Intake Process Re-Write (VIPr) Mobile Check-in application to allow visitors to check in for their appointment from their personal device, without the need to touch the kiosk.

*Technician-Facing Applications*

- Introduced an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) homepage in the Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System (HACPS), to give decision makers a single location for access to information they need for daily work tasks. We also enhanced scheduling capabilities and updated the Notice of Hearing for video and telephone hearings.
- Consolidated evidence stored in four different sources into a single view in the Evidence Portal. Having a central location to view evidence reduces employee-training time, maintains consistency across the agency, reduces errors, and enhances productivity.
- Expanded use of Duplicate Identification Process (DIP) to all Office of Hearings Operations (OHO) and Office of Appellate Operations (OAO) offices to help identify duplicate evidence in disability files. AA major release provided priority user requested enhancements, improved the overall performance, and complied with 508 accessibility requirements.
- Implemented an online SSA-455 form (Disability Update Report) for medical Continuing Disability Reviews. The online SSA-455 is a questionnaire used to obtain updated information

about our disabled beneficiaries As of September 2021, we have received almost 44,937 SSA-455 forms online.

- Implemented Medical Evidence of Record-Direct to Source for OHO users to request evidence directly from a claimant's treating sources (i.e., doctors, hospitals, etc.), thereby minimizing wait times for State disability determination services (DDS) staff to process assistance requests.
- Increased W-2 electronic reporting by 1.01 percent, which resulted in a cost avoidance of over $3 million from reducing paper reporting. Electronic W-2 reporting reduces the W-2 data transmission time to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by 3- 6 months.
- Through our Continuing Death Data Improvement (CDDI), we updated the Numident and Death Master File with more than 10 million death records from FY 2018 through September 2021, improving the accuracy, integrity, and completeness of the death information we share both internally and externally.
- Added four production DDSs (Kentucky, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, and Texas) for the Disability Case Processing System 2 (DCPS2), totaling 49 out of 52 DDSs that are using DCPS2 with only Alaska, California, and New York remaining.
- Successfully deployed 12 planned, monthly releases for DCPS2 resulting in prioritized functionality and fewer exclusions.
- Aligned functions in the Representative Payee Monitoring Tool (RPMT) with the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018.
- Continued development of the modern Debt Management System (DMS). We received more than $100 million in remittances using new functionality for debt collection deployed in FY 2021, including:
    - An online remittance option for debtors to use the Department of the Treasury's Pay.gov service pay a debt;
    - Front-end process to halt collection on Section 104 cases to comply with legislation and policy for children in foster care services who incurred a debt;
    - Ability for a technician to finalize a waiver, reconsideration, or appeal decision and stop recovery actions on an overpayment in case of a disaster;
    - Online Bill Pay to update the billing notices with language to allow the debtor to use the remittance identification to make payments or set up payments using their financial institutions. This tool will further expand the online options on paying a debt and continue to reduce our remittance workload; and
    - AA Lockbox Service to process benefit overpayment remittances sent via the mail. This transitions the manual remittance workload from the Mid-Atlantic Processing Center (MATPSC) to a Treasury-approved third-party lockbox service, reducing the manual remittance workloads at MATPSC.
- On-boarded 14 partners under the Electronic Evidence Acquisition Product initiative. We are on target to exceed 53 percent of evidence for disability claims received electronically. We

implemented the Unified Systems for Evidence (USE) Minimum Viable Product (MVP) in late FY 2021, the first in a series of releases to replace legacy applications.

- Implemented seventeen enhancements in the Processing Center (PC) Automation efforts to save approximately $1.3 million.

*Infrastructure*

- Completed all scheduled migrations for more than 81,500 users and shared mailboxes to the cloud 3 months ahead of schedule, releasing technical resources for more mission-critical applications.
- Completed Microsoft (MS) Teams Rollout to 100% of our frontline SSA employees and continued SharePoint Online Migration.
- Expanded the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW), which now provides over 85 enterprise sources as a single source of truth data[1] to over 800 users. The EDW enables critical decision-making for anti-fraud, disability, death processing, communications, Digital Identity, and Congressional reporting.
- Improved death reporting by pointing Death Management Information (MI) Reports from the mainframe to the Enterprise Data Warehouse and the cloud, and retired an MI legacy database.
- Initiated Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to reduce the number of actions pending at the processing centers (PC). This software (called "bots") helps employees perform tasks more efficiently by executing repetitive manual tasks, making decisions based on a set of rules, and seamlessly integrating with existing applications. Three bots are available to 3,300 users across all PCs.

*Cybersecurity and Digital Identity*

- Improved Login.gov and ID.me federation and introduced improvements to our identity verification process. As a result, we increased our online services registration pass rate, from roughly 40 percent to nearly 80 percent as of the end of FY 2021.
- Added Login.gov as a Credential Service Provider to the Federated Identity System, increasing a customers' access to online services and reducing traffic to field offices.
- Allowed public-facing users on the Registration of Most Everyone Internet Login Page to use the General Services Administration (GSA) login.gov credentials. Adding GSA's credentials improved the customer experience and increased accessibility to secure online services.
- Provided improved security and usability allowing new *my* Social Security registrants to create an account using the enhanced registration process that leverages State-issued IDs—regardless of the issuing State—and requires all registrants to prove possession and control of an address (e.g., postal, email, or cell phone).
- Expanded and matured our Software Asset Management capabilities to inventory all software we use and expanded the scope of our blacklisted software.

## FY 2022 and FY 2023 IT Modernization

[1] Single source of truth data is aggregated from our many systems into a single location.

We must continue to modernize our IT systems—including phasing out legacy systems, modernizing our infrastructure, and re-engineering our business processes---to operate more efficiently and provide services at a level the public expects.

As we enter into the final year of our five-year IT modernization plan, we are addressing core modernization needs and establishing a foundation that will support our employees at all levels to better serve our customers.

The following are some highlights of our IT modernization plans for FY 2022 and FY 2023:

- E video service options for the public to interact with our employees remotely;
- Allow the public to schedule, update, and cancel appointments online;
- Introduce an online service for adult disability beneficiaries to complete their medical continuing disability reviews (CDR) online;
- Expand *my* Social Security user features (e.g., representative payees will be able to view and accept claimants' appointments online);
- Enhance the mobile check-in for appointments with virtual private cloud (VPC) implementation, 508 compliance, and improved user experience (UX);
- Increase access to online forms through the adoption of eSignature Technology reducing reliance on paper forms;
- Modernize our claims-taking process, improving the quality of data we use to make decisions on eligibility and payment, and improving how we communicate with beneficiaries and recipients;
- Add automation to eliminate manual workloads, increase accuracy, and reduce pending post-entitlement workloads;
- Further evolve *my* Social Security to create a personalized, interactive, customizable, and secure one-stop shop for all Social Security electronic services, while providing a superior customer experience;
- Replace the Non-Disability Repository for Evidentiary Documents application and Claims File User Interface application within the Benefits Evidence Portal;
- Expand online notice inventory and correspondence sent in the customer's preferred delivery channel;
- Retire the legacy Person Information Web Service (PIWS) in favor of the Person Information Query Service
- Acquire enterprise data, and expand infrastructure and capabilities in the EDW;
- Roll out the modern HACPS nationwide to increase the accuracy and efficiency of disability case processing for our hearings offices and Appeals Council;
- Process all case types from case intake to case closure through HACPS;
- Implement electronic calendaring for all hearing participants to increase automation for staff scheduling hearings;
- Complete rollout of Intelligent Medical-Language Analysis GENeration (IMAGEN) to all State DDS offices;
- Support hearings level claims in IMAGEN beginning in FY 2023;

**Limitation on Administrative Expenses**

- Deliver MVP for the eWork replacement, including the functionality to initiate, process, adjudicate, and complete determinations for reviews of beneficiaries who have not had a previous work CDR;
- Remove disability paper workloads, including replacing the Expedited Reinstatements paper process and automating Multiple Pending Case processing. This will reduce the number of paper folders, improve case processing efficiencies, and expedite benefits to claimants;
- Provide the public who have given authorization for electronic monthly wage reporting with the ability to use the modernized Employee Wage Reporting (EWR) File Upload application for Tax Year 2021 wage reporting. Enhance the accuracy of wage files we accept by providing additional real time error information to the submitter prior to accepting the file. This will reduce errors and prevent files from being rejected by our Annual Wage Reporting batch processes;
- Release full production of the Employer Wage Reporting Journey's wage file upload application targeting over 2.9 million users, a guided process for smaller employers to enter and submit W-2/W-2C, and web services for larger employers;
- Expand online access to iSSNRC to Minnesota, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and New Hampshire. We expect to complete all States in FY 2022 except for Minnesota, which requires changes to State law to share data with usus;
- Explore expansion of Enumeration Beyond Entry related to Naturalization Certificates and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad. We anticipate these initiatives will serve 800,000 individuals who will not need to visit a field office;
- Develop a data exchange that will allow our customers to complete a name change online using iSSNRC. This new functionality will serve an additional 1.3 million individuals who will not need to visit a field office;
- Retire the legacy Alphident and Numident queries, and the final Enumeration Falcon Data Entry System processes that still exist in that legacy software. This addresses the need to reduce our technical debt and modernize applications that are approaching the end of their useful life.
- Directly credential users in our Integrated Registration Services (IRES) system to provide access to business services toto entities unable to use Enterprise Authentication and Authorization for Entities and Affiliates (EAZE);
- Expand use of the infrastructural platform services to manage credentials issued to non-organizational users. We will use a commercial off the shelf (COTS) product to provide centralized identity, credential, and access management (ICAM) capabilities to services that require identity support; and
- Align our identity mechanisms with the whole-of-government strategy, support cross-channel identity (including telephone and in-person proofing), and support services at different risk levels. We will reduce reliance on knowledge-based verification across all our automated services.
- Revamp our public-facing website, www.ssa.gov in FY 2022 to streamline content and redesign the home page. The revamped site is based on the test site, implemented in FY 2021, and strengthened by the public feedback we received.

To execute our plan, we grouped IT investments into domains along business and technical lines. The business domains represent the core business systems we use to serve the public, and the technical domains represent IT needs that cut across all of our IT systems. We have broken the IT Modernization program into six major IT investments aligned by domain as described below.

*IT Modernization - Service Delivery*
To underscore the importance of IT modernization as a foundation for improving service to the public, the Service Delivery Domain focuses on expanding and streamlining self-service channels for our customers while also improving tools our technicians use to help the public. Some of the service channels improvements include:

- **Digital –** We are automating services in *my* Social Security, including adding more customer-centric portals, introducing mobile applications, and modernizing the way our online customers receive claim status information;
- **Phone** – We are transitioning the National 800 Number platform with a focus on new technology and an enhanced caller experience. Upon the completion of this transition, we will improve and modernize interactive voice response services;
- **Visitor** – Our priority within the visitor channel is to enhance the field office experience, such as expanding use of automated appointment reminders, mobile check-in service, and streamlining workflows for the most common service requests. Efficiencies gained by these enhancements will allow staff to focus on other priority workloads, and reduce customer wait and interview times;
- **Agent** – The Agent Desktop application will serve as our official enterprise product to support and enhance front-line employee systems using a Customer Relationship Management solution. We will expand on this product and implement additional integrated business processes and omni-channel capabilities to replace current legacy software; and
- **Appeals and Appointed Representative** – Appointed Representative Services is an application for appointed representatives (AR) to view electronic folder (eFolder) documents in real time, download eFolder contents including multimedia files, and upload medical evidence and other documents directly into a claimant's eFolder. Appeals and Appointed Representative Processing Services (AARPS) will provide additional self-service options for ARs, AR support staff, and claimants to conduct related business online. AARPS will facilitate the collection of AR data, automate the transference of AR data to downstream systems, and provide view capabilities to the AR community.

*IT Modernization - Benefits*
The Benefits Domain is developing a consolidated claims experience (CCE) for employees to conduct benefit eligibility screening, initial claims intake and processing, and post-entitlement/post-eligibility activities all in one place. The CCE supports our vision for a modernized customer experience that lessens the information a customer must provide us, reduces the number of times we must contact them to complete an action, and reduces the time they must wait for us to process their claim.

A centralized tool will allow us to easily capture, store, view, manage, and share all types of evidence, perform complete and accurate benefit computations for initial and post-entitlement transactions, and provide a comprehensive database that contains benefit information about individuals who do business with us. We are focused on reducing high volume alerts, exceptions, and processing limitations via automation to reduce pending workloads, improve processing accuracy, and enhance customer service.

## Limitation on Administrative Expenses

*IT Modernization – Cross Cutting*
This investment captures cross-cutting enterprise functions that are foundational to the modern service environment and includes the Communications, Data, and Infrastructure domains. The strategies in this investment are drivers for change across the enterprise and are key to the success of all of modernization initiatives.

The Communications Domain will expand and automate customer communications, including increasing the inventory of notices available online. It will also expand our use of texts and emails to communicate with customers in their preferred communication channels. We will also broaden customer digital preferences in *my* Social Security so customers can opt out of digital communications sent via email and text/short message service.

The Data Domain provides access to customer-centric, integrated enterprise-level data within a secure, standardized, and common architecture that supports daily operations and fact-based data decision-making. We will integrate the data in our largest programmatic data stores, enhance data quality, and provide an authoritative view of data.

The Infrastructure Domain provides infrastructure platforms and services to deploy and support of IT Modernization, increasing process automation, improving system development methodologies, providing robust remote access to services, and improving digital services, both for our employees and for the public.

Our Back Office Modernization initiative in the Infrastructure Domain adopts modern services and improves productivity through implementing and supporting a self-managed infrastructure suite of services for back-office support (e.g., email, office productivity, and collaboration tools). Particularly relevant during the recent pandemic work environment, we will explore and implement remote access and collaboration tools, including multi-platform service suites.

In collaboration with customers and working within our enterprise architecture, the Mainframe Enterprise Architecture Effort initiatives are analyzing the use of relevant technologies for greater efficiencies and sustainable and reliable modernized systems. Focus areas will include more efficient handling of historical data, migration of applicable processes to the cloud environment, and improved reliance on cloud efficiencies for improved service delivery.

*IT Modernization - Disability*
The Disability domain consists of eight projects to improve our disability processing, including several projects to improve digital service delivery for SSA customers:

- **Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System (HACPS) -** HACPS will provide a modern, seamless national claims-processing system for the hearing offices and the Appeals Council to support timely, quality case processing;
- **Intelligent Medical-language Analysis GENeration (IMAGEN) -** IMAGEN employs artificial intelligence and predictive analytics technologies to analyze medical evidence data to increase efficiency, enable disability decision support for adjudicators, and support policy-compliant disability determinations and decisions;
- **Insight -** This is a quality tool that performs quality reviews on decisions to support policy compliance in disability adjudication. As we roll out HACPS nationally, we will migrate the case/claim data source for Insight from the legacy Case Processing Management

System to HACPS;

- **Medical Continuing Disability Review (CDR) -** The Medical CDRs project will modernize the CDR process to provide an online service option to the public. The online option is for beneficiaries to complete and submit the SSA-454 Continuing Disability Report. This improves customer service and eliminates the manual workload associated with the paper CDR process;
- **Work CDRs -** The Work CDRs project will modernize and streamline the work CDR process to increase efficiencies and reduce improper payments;
- **Duplicate Identification Process (DIP) -** The Duplicate Identification Process will enhance the adjudicative process by accurately identifying and minimizing duplicative evidence in the disability folder;
- **Access to the Electronic Folder -** Access to the Electronic Folder provides the claimant electronic access to their disability folder. This project replaces the manual process of burning compact discs and mailing them to the claimant. We will develop enterprise solutions such as providing claimants with the ability to access specific documents directly.

*IT Modernization – Earnings and Enumeration*

The Earnings Product is responsible for capturing, storing, and disbursing earnings information on behalf of the IRS. This product transforms our IT and business processes to enable our customers and partners to submit and track wage information in a more accurate, secure way. Our focus is on providing employers and employees with self-service features, real-time communication, and data transparency while improving data quality, reducing paper processes, and automating manual exceptions. As a result, we will provide the public with faster, more accurate posting of their earnings for tax and claims processing actions and reduce the need for the customer to contact us to rectify earnings issues.

The Enumeration Domain will expand the functionality of online enumeration services, expediting Social Security card processing, and improving death reporting and processing. We aim to provide automated options for the public's enumeration needs and reduce foot traffic to our field offices. We are making our enumeration products easier to use to save processing time. We continue to support new service channels through the Video Service Delivery platform and MS Teams, which have provided increased access to the public during the pandemic.

*IT Modernization - Cybersecurity*

Our Cybersecurity Domain aims to protect sensitive information for the public, while also making our digital identity processes secure and intuitive for the public to use across all service channels. Our strategy is to maintain a highly effective cybersecurity program to protect against security threats and comply with Federal policies and regulations, including the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework. Many of our priorities rely on a digital identity infrastructure that enables the public to use our online services. FY 2022 enhancements will directly support these operational priorities.

We have three critical roadmap activities:

- Build out capabilities for replacing IRES and adopting COTS Customer Identity and Access Management solution to support increased number of electronic filers next tax year. This

solution includes support for EAZE, which currently supports only electronic Consent-Based Social Security Number Verification, for all business and government services;
- Pursue possible COTS Customer Identity and Access Management solution to support long-term modernization efforts; and
- Migrate to a new External Data Source after the expiration of the Equifax contract in May 2022. This migration must be completed in FY 2022 to continue identity proofing operations.

This domain is focused on the following digital identity services:

- **Citizen Identity Services -** We provide identity proofing, increasing customer and authentication services for the public to access our online services. By allowing access to online services, we can significantly reduce the need to visit a field office or call to the National 800 Number.
- **Business and Government Services** – EAZE is a new authentication and authorization platform that will register, identity proof, authenticate, and authorize entities and affiliates. To strengthen and promote the security of our online business services, EAZE will integrate with entities' existing account management practices to ensure that the right entity or affiliate has the right access at the right time.
- **Identity Federation and Platform Services** – OMB M-19-17 requires agencies to leverage existing credentials and identity federations rather than issuing new credentials to others. Federating and leveraging existing capabilities and investments will accelerate our progress to our goal of providing 100 percent of customers convenient access to our online services.

*Future IT Modernization initiatives for FY 2023:*
We must continue to reimagine our operating models to be more responsive to the shifting public needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased demand for virtual interactions and online services.

Legacy IT platforms, antiquated data capabilities, and systems and applications that are not user-friendly challenge our ability to meet the current needs of our customers. We must continue to drive IT modernization to support a new operating model.

In FY 2023, we will structure our IT modernization efforts in the following categories:
- Business
- Digital Workforce
- Infrastructure
- Data
- Security
- Application
- Governance

## FY 2022 and 2023 Additional Modernization Investments

*Debt Management Product (DMP) - $20.6 million*
In addition to developing a new debt management system (DMS), we are updating our accounting and reporting for delinquent and unproductive debts via Program Debt Write-Off, streamlining our current

manual remittance process (Lockbox), and providing modern platforms and electronic services for those individuals seeking to pay us (Pay.gov and Online Bill Pay).

In FY 2022 and FY 2023, we will develop a streamlined, modernized enterprise DMS that will enable us to more effectively and efficiently post, track, collect, and report our overpayment activity. The DMP will improve service delivery to the public and other agencies by providing clear and accurate debt management information to overpaid individuals, organizations, auditors, and partner agencies. We estimate the continued modernization of our manual remittance processes will reduce our centralized manual remittance workload by over 90 percent upon full implementation. Continued modernization of our DMS, policies, and business processes will provide opportunities to do business effectively and efficiently.

*Representative Payee Legislative Changes - $10.6 million*

This major investment funds the effort to align with the *Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018*. The Act improves the representative payee program by strengthening oversight, reducing the burden on families, improving customer service, improving beneficiary protections, and limiting overpayment liability for children in the child welfare system.

In FY 2022 and FY 2023, our efforts include: providing support to State foster care agencies, implementing functionality to conduct ongoing criminal background checks on current representative payees every 5 years, and adding functionality to prevent individuals who have a representative payee from being selected to serve as a representative payee for another claimant.

*Disability Case Processing System 2 (DCPS2)*

DCPS2 will be the single, national case processing system utilized by all DDSs to adjudicate our disability determinations. In FY 2022, we plan to deploy DCPS2 to the remaining three DDSs and Federal components, as well as to prioritize Community of Practice (CoP)-driven enhancements for the national system. In FY 2023, we plan to support DCPS2 through Operations and Maintenance utilizing the DDS CoP. DCPS yields substantial benefits to the government and citizens, including more efficient case processing, enhanced security, improved citizen service, reduced administrative costs, more consistent policy-based decisions through use of case analysis tools, and nationally implemented software enhancements and modifications as required by evolving laws, regulations, and policy.

*Data Exchange Product - $8.8 million*

This investment will create the Enterprise Data Exchange Network (EDEN). EDEN will provide a holistic data exchange foundation that will reduce and centralize the many different systems and applications that process and manage data exchanges.

The EDEN product will provide data exchange customers, both internal and external, with a centralized, interactive, and dynamic user-friendly experience for requesting, sending, receiving, and administering incoming and outgoing data exchanges.

In FY 2022, we plan to work on the following Data Exchange Product activities:

- **Verification Service**: Ability to complete and implement enhancements to verification matching logic and migration of legacy verification systems;

- **Data Exchange Gateway**: Ability for internal users to add data exchanges applications and begin planning for migration of legacy data exchange applications to the Data Exchange Gateway; and
- **Customer Connection**: Ability to implement Federal and State data exchange workflows for account requests, feasibility, and agreement creation.

In FY 2023, we plan to work on the following:
- Data Exchange Request Workflow;
- External Partners receiving Title II data;
- User Interface for Data Exchanges; and
- Batch solution.

*Anti-Fraud Product (AFP) - $10.0 million*
Anti-fraud systems prevent, detect, respond, and report possible fraud through efficient collaboration across the agency and with external partners. The AFP provides the technology necessary to fully support our anti-fraud program across all lines of business; this technology is easy to use, includes a feedback loop and enables us to operate with speed and flexibility.

As this product line matures, it will strengthen our ability to prevent fraud. We will continue and expand the Allegation Referral and Intake System (ARIS) to meet future needs for Operational and Investigations Case Management through a combination of products. We will use our Business Intelligence tools against the data from these products to help strengthen our anti-fraud efforts.

In FY 2022, we will work on the following activities:
- Advance Modeling and Analytical Facility – We will develop new predictive models, test refinement of existing models, and conduct research and special studies to respond to emerging threats;
- Production Analytics and Orchestration – We will have the capability to run production analytics models and centrally coordinate and monitor end-to-end business processes; and
- Fraud Communication Services – We will enable communication between AFP line products and other systems to allow for real time checks for high-risk activities and enable special processing for high-risk transactions

ARIS releases improve fraud referral processes and data and allows Operations to retire the Fraud Information Tracking System (FITS). We will maintain Anti-Fraud Programs Infrastructure (AFPI), ARIS, and Public Facing Integrity Review products.

In FY 2023, we will work on the following activities:
- Operational Case Management – We will provide tools to process and manage operational business process workflows to identify and remediate flagged high-risk transactions; and
- Investigation Case Management – We will provide tools to support administrative inquiries and investigations and build comprehensive case referrals for administration action and investigative referrals to the Office of the Inspector General.

*Electronic Evidence Acquisition Product - $27.6 million*

The Electronic Evidence Acquisition Product (EEAP) provides a unified approach to evidence acquisition to intelligently route and store electronic evidence in a structured way. By building enterprise solutions and optimizing collection and use of electronic evidence across the agency, we reduce technician burden and disability claim determination time. Receiving and storing electronic evidence in a structured way provides an opportunity to apply analytics to the evidence in file resulting in faster and potentially more accurate decision-making.

In FY 2022, we plan to onboard new and larger partners and increase the volume of evidence we receive electronically. We will build out the EEA framework, which will replace the current siloed acquisition methods. We will reduce costs by not having to support both the new and legacy applications concurrently. The Unified Systems for Evidence (USE) architecture built in FY 2021 will allow for faster turnaround times for subsequent releases of EEA, allowing us to focus on user interfaces.

In FY 2023, we will complete work on USE Customer Relationship Management. We also plan to complete USE for appointed representatives and begin work on USE for providers.

*Electronic Records Management Product - $9.6 million*
This investment supports our implementation of OMB/National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) initiatives identified in the OMB/NARA Memorandum M-19-21, and Presidential Memorandum - Managing Government Records. These initiatives require all Federal agencies to manage both permanent and temporary email records in an accessible electronic format and manage all permanent and temporary electronic records in an electronic format.

We have taken steps to manage all permanent and a majority of our temporary records electronically by December 31, 2022.

## FY 2022 and FY 2023 Cybersecurity

*IT Security and Compliance - $193.7 million*
Cybersecurity is vital to protecting the personally identifiable information of everyone we serve. Maintaining the public's trust in our ability to protect sensitive data housed in our systems requires advanced cybersecurity controls, constant assessment of the threat landscape, and continually improvements and enhancements of our cybersecurity program. Our cybersecurity program uses a risk-based approach to balance protection and productivity and focuses on continuous improvement. We have a proven record of successfully meeting or exceeding Federal cybersecurity performance measures.

In May 2021, President Biden issued an Executive Order on *Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity*. We are well-positioned to implement the measures under this Executive Order. We remain vigilant and protect against network intrusions and improper access of data by strengthening our defensive cyber capabilities, sharing cyber threat information with our Federal and industry partners, and moving toward a Zero Trust Architecture that focuses on the secure flow of information from the network perimeter across the enterprise.

In alignment with the Executive Order and current guidance, this budget request includes funding necessary to support additional Supply Chain Risk Management services. We will acquire access to software tool subscription services that will assist us in identifying:

- Counterfeit components and high-risk suppliers;
- Corporate ownership and corporate relationships;
- If a company has been involved in commerce or trade violations; and
- If a company has financial weakness, which could lead to the company being more receptive to vulnerabilities or subversion.

We are expanding our vulnerability and incident response program to include enhanced automation capabilities to detect and remediate vulnerabilities and additional threat intelligence feeds. As our program aligns with the directives outlined in OMB Memorandum M-20-32, *Improving Vulnerability Identification, Management, and Remediation*, we are increasing our staffing levels to support vulnerability management and our Security Operations Center.

Our current incident response is an industry best-in-breed security focused ticketing system, which ensures the continued effectiveness of our security controls, informs automated implementation of remedies, and enables risk-based prioritization of mitigations based on the impact of a vulnerability or incident. Our goal is to continuously monitor, identify, and remediate significant security risks to our systems and data, and ensure near real-time situational awareness of its security posture.

We have made sustained investments in our cybersecurity capabilities in numerous domains including encryption, enterprise logging, IT asset management, endpoint detection and response, and managing supply chain risk.

We successfully implemented solutions for encrypting data-at-rest on end-users' devices, such as laptops and mobile phones, as well as our data centers, High Value Assets, and cloud providers. We have fully implemented the HTTPS-Only requirement (DHS BOD 18-01) for our publicly accessible websites and web services. We provide strong encryption for data transmitted to our business and data exchange partners. These efforts complement other areas of progress we have made in meeting enhanced requirements for endpoint detection and response (EDR) and enterprise logging in support of OMB Memorandums M-22-01 and M-21-31

In FY 2022, we allocated additional resources in support of the enhanced cybersecurity requirements of OMB Memorandum 22-09, *Federal Zero Trust Strategy*. This additional investment of resources and staff will implement MFA and data-in-transit encryption at the application tier for all our internal systems. The additional resources will also mature our supply chain risk-management process by continually assessing risks after the time of procurement and over the operational lifetime of critical IT products and services. Finally, we will invest in technology solutions to build a comprehensive inventory of all information systems and IT assets.

We are building onto the existing ICAM strategy to target key requirements in the executive order in support of Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) for all agency IT Systems and services. This directly provides the required support to enable agency-wide MFA at the application and system level in compliance with EO 14028, *Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity*.

The following critical security tasks to achieve MFA-specific compliance with EO 14028 are targeted for FY 2022:

- Assess and document application and system authentication and authorization methods in use;
- Publish enterprise standards for application and system level MFA;

- Develop and publish simplified processes and procedures for application MFA integration including examples;
- Deploy trained support personnel for mass integration effort; and
- Identify lessons learned with early adopters and refine processes, procedures, and training.

Completing these tasks in FY 2022 will enable us to rapidly implement enterprise-wide conversion efforts to MFA targeting all applications and systems in FY 2023. In FY 2023, we will prioritize internal systems for conversion to the enterprise MFA solutions architected in FY 2022. The focus will be to address the majority of internal applications, while in parallel, working to identify solutions for outliers that will be targeted in the future. Additionally, FY 2023 efforts include support for external facing systems utilized by our business and government stakeholders. These efforts support Executive Order 14028.

## FY 2022 and FY 2023 Application-Based Investments Ongoing Support

We must maintain stable and secure access to existing applications to serve the public. We have grouped our application-based investments into two portfolios: Agency Programmatic Applications and Administrative Applications.

*Agency Programmatic Applications - $518.3 million*
The Agency Programmatic Applications IT portfolio includes investments for technology and software employees use to serve the public, initiatives the public use to conduct online transactions with us, and the exchanges we have with other Government agencies. Investment areas include the following:

- Anti-Fraud
- Data Exchange
- Disability Claim Processing
- Earnings
- Electronic Services
- Enumeration
- Medical Evidence Processing
- Notice Improvement
- Payment Accuracy
- Reimbursable Services
- Title II Processing
- Title XVI Processing

*Agency Administrative Applications - $135.3 million*
The Agency Administrative Applications IT portfolio includes initiatives for administrative services and support systems. This includes investments that ensure compliance with applicable accounting principles, develop and maintain electronic personnel functions and records management requirements, and define required E-Government contributions. Investment areas include the following:

- Business Intelligence-Data Analytics

**Limitation on Administrative Expenses**

- E-Government Initiatives[1]
- Financial Systems
- Human Resource Investments
- Legal/Public Disclosure Processing
- Records Management

Within this portfolio, we are completing the transition from the Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) to a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Entities doing business with the Federal Government will use a UEI created in SAM.gov and will no longer need to go to a third-party website to obtain their identifier. This transition allows GSA to streamline the entity identification and validation process, making it easier for entities to do business with the Federal government. The project is on track to meet the GSA-mandated April 2022 date.

## FY 2022 and FY 2023 Infrastructure Investments

This portfolio provides the overall foundation on which we design, develop, and operate our IT. The initiatives within Infrastructure assure the sustained operation of current IT and provide an environment to support the growth of our new systems and technical infrastructure.

*Application - $113.5 million*
The Application standard investment supports enterprise-wide software for our IT operations, including the analysis, design, development, coding, testing, and release services associated with application development. These centralized services are critical for implementing a new functionality, including public-facing applications that include:

- Focus on User-Centered Development, Testing, and Standards, ensuring that applications -- comply with Section 508 and Enterprise Architecture standards;
- Enterprise services that allow business and data services to be consumed from any valid infrastructure provider;
- Modern development environment and architecture that provide a modern set of development tools with an agile and cloud-based testing environment;
- Development, support, and enhancements to a modern cloud database infrastructure;
- Enterprise data administration conventions establishing data entities and attributes that ensure data integrity across the enterprise;
- Implementation of business process automation technology to allow employees to focus on higher level workflows requiring analysis; and
- Testing improvements through collaboration with relevant stakeholders to determine best practices.

*Data Center and Cloud - $665.0 million*
Our data centers maintain data repositories and acceptable service level availabilities for our services to the public. We continue to meet increasing online public service demands and exceed our

[1] Note that the Integrated Award Environment E-Government initiative includes the funding required to reimburse a proportional share of the costs to GSA for extending DUNS support, allowing additional time for implementation of the UEI.

99.8 percent operational service level targets. The data centers ensure the availability, changeability, stability, and security of our IT architecture across the agency.

Two key design objectives for the build of our data center fabric were to improve resilience and availability. To operate in a cloud model, IT infrastructure must be geo-dispersed and always available. Our systems-of-record capabilities must be highly available to give our customers improved online and mobile offerings. We have already realized a 0.4 percent improvement in systems availability with the data center fabric.

Continual improvements to the data center fabric are necessary to support our IT modernization. We are striving to go beyond the Data Center Optimization Initiative, established in OMB Memorandum M-19-19, recognizing the scale of our data center fabric requirements and the scope of our IT modernization efforts. We are using standards-based metrics to measure and manage the data center fabric. We have a comprehensive data center infrastructure management program in place and are replacing our IT Operations Management technologies and practices in a multi-year effort that is essential to effectively managing our IT capabilities in a hybrid cloud ecosystem.

We are continuing enhancements to our Business Resilience automation and practices to provide cloud-like, geo-dispersed resilience. Our role swap mainframe initiative includes a set of automation technologies and resilience practices that allow systems running on mainframe servers to be relocated to different data centers as business or environmental circumstances demand. We have constructed the technology and practices to accomplish this movement. We have demonstrated the viability of doing this with one each of our development, integration, and production systems. We are currently working on hardware and software licensing changes to utilize this capability. This investment also includes mainframes and servers. Additionally, our FY 2023 request includes necessary refreshes, including:

- Mainframe infrastructure in the second quarter of FY 2023 to maintain currency for our technology;
- Backroom servers located in each branch office in FY 2022 and FY 2023 for print/utility services and technical integration as well as for offices with insufficient bandwidth; and
- Enterprise servers at our data centers in FY 2022 and FY 2023 for technology currency for key services including Active Directory authentication, and Domain Name Services, among other needs.

*End User - $184.1 million*

The End User standard investment provides us with the productivity software and laptops, and other computing equipment required to meet growing workload demands for our approximately 62,000 Federal employees across the nation. As service demand increases, our End User investment improves access to our infrastructure and provides the desktop capability and capacity to increase the performance of internal systems. We plan to expand collaboration functionality and integrate video conferencing with legacy systems for improved public interaction flexibility.

*Network - $375.0 million*

The Network standard investment provides secure, easy-to-use, and fast electronic service via the internet through telephone services, wide area network, and video teleconferencing systems. This investment allows us to maintain current systems and to enhance and refresh telecommunications equipment. It also provides ongoing improvement of connectivity and bandwidth for data, voice, and video communications. The investment benefits the public as an effective, efficient, economical, and secure method of providing both digital and online services. With our network technology, our National 800 Number handled about 35 million calls and, and our field offices handled about 60 million calls in FY 2021.

We will transition to the Next Generation Telephony Project (NGTP), a unified communication platform that replaces our three legacy telephone systems (national 800#, field offices, and headquarters) with a single platform. As part of NGTP, we are also transitioning the National 800 Number platform with a focus on new technology and an enhanced caller experience. This project will provide hardware, software, hardware and software maintenance, managed services, change requests, and relocation services. We plan to begin initial transition to the NGTP platform in FY 2022. The current estimate is for NGTP's Authorization to Operate in FY 2023, including transitioning the National 800 Number in FY 2023.

OMB issued memorandum M-21-07, *Completing the Transition to Internet Protocol Version 6* (IPv6), to provide guidance for Federal agencies to transition their information systems to the most current version of IP that provides an identification and location system for computers on the networks and routes traffic across the Internet. We transitioned our external-facing network to support IPv6 in 2012. Our main customer-facing web site, ssa.gov, supports network reachability via IPv4 and IPv6 protocol. We have implemented policies that ensure all IT acquisitions are IPv6capableWe will deploy IPv6 at a pace that ensures we maintain the integrity of the network to serve the public without disruptions.

In alignment with OMB memorandum M-19-16, *Centralized Mission Support Capabilities for the Federal Government, and Sharing Quality Service*, we initiated the Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions (EIS) initiative. EIS is a multiple-contract vehicle designed by GSA to allow Federal agencies to procure telecommunications and IT solutions (i.e., voice, video, data transport). We procure approximately $245 million worth of services annually from the GSA contracts that EIS will replace. During the EIS transition, we are consolidating and streamlining our business activities related to our telecommunications services. This allows us to transition to a more efficient infrastructure, which is one of the key areas outlined in M-19-16.

*Platform - $13.4 million*

The Platform standard investment provides enterprise-wide platform capability that includes database, middleware[1], mainframe database, and mainframe middleware. The Platform Center of Excellence will serve as our central point for the analysis and integration support of our expansion of common platforms. It will support the following throughout the agency:

- Platform strategy and roadmap;
- Vendor analysis;
- Governance;
- Product management integration;
- Product/project platform evaluation;

[1] SSA's middleware is software that connects software components or applications with SSA's master file data. Middleware sits "in the middle" between application software that may be working on different operating systems.

- Portfolio management;
- Resource enablement;
- Enterprise Architecture and Architecture Review Board sign off; and
- Value monitoring of application platforms.

*Output - $5.3 million*
The Output standard investment provides central print services in alignment with the Technology Business Management (TBM) framework.

## FY 2022 and FY 2023 IT Governance and Support Investments

*Delivery - $45.3 million*
This TBM-aligned standard investment provides management and resources to support our IT operations, including enterprise-wide product and project management resources to assist with agile development, and our Investment Management Tool for project management reporting. This investment drives product strategy and operations, facilitates accessibility and user/customer experience, and develops the framework and governance standards for Product and Project Management.

*IT Management - $130.5 million*
The IT Management standard investment captures all costs associated with IT Management and Strategic Planning (including Chief Information Officer (CIO) and other senior leadership full-time equivalent costs), Enterprise Architecture, Capital Planning, IT Budget/Finance, IT Vendor Management, general IT policy and reporting, and IT Governance.

This investment is responsible for establishing and executing processes in direct support of CIO authority enhancements per the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA). We have leveraged the authorities afforded by FITARA to improve how we acquire, manage, and organize our IT investments.

In addition, we have adopted TBM-standard IT Tower and Cost Pools, and reported categorized IT costs across the entire IT Portfolio. Using TBM has given us a consistent approach for categorizing the IT budget year over year, and a greater insight into spending patterns.

## Limitation on Administrative Expenses

### Appendix A: FY 2023 Agency IT Portfolio Summary Data

| FY 2023 Agency IT Portfolio Summary Costs in Millions | Total Cost | | | Internal Labor | | | External Labor | | | ITS Funds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2021[1] | 2022 | 2023[2] | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| **IT Portfolio Total** | **$2,055.4** | **$1,863.3** | **$2,379.3** | **$612.7** | **$631.0** | **$716.3** | **$438.2** | **$127.3** | **$400.0** | **$1,008.6** | **$1,105.0** | **$1,263.5** |
| **IT Modernization** | **$214.8** | **$118.4** | **$0.0** | **$101.0** | **$113.4** | **$0.0** | **$109.6** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$4.2** | **$5.0** | **$0.0** |
| IT Modernization – Benefits | $41.9 | $17.2 | $0.0 | $22.2 | $17.2 | $0.0 | $19.7 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | |
| IT Modernization - Cross Cutting | $37.4 | $24.8 | | $10.8 | $19.8 | $0.0 | $22.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $4.1 | $5.0 | |
| IT Modernization - Cybersecurity | $11.2 | $6.0 | $0.0 | $6.2 | $6.0 | $0.0 | $5.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | |
| IT Modernization – Disability | $51.9 | $35.4 | $0.0 | $26.3 | $35.4 | $0.0 | $25.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | |
| IT Modernization - Earnings and Enumeration | $30.5 | $14.9 | $0.0 | $16.0 | $14.9 | $0.0 | $14.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | |
| IT Modernization - Service Delivery | $41.9 | $20.1 | $0.0 | $19.5 | $20.1 | $0.0 | $22.4 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | |
| **Agency Programmatic Applications** | **$268.6** | **$246.5** | **$518.3** | **$143.8** | **$147.2** | **$288.7** | **$97.9** | **$60.8** | **$191.5** | **$30.9** | **$38.5** | **$38.1** |
| **Anti-Fraud** | **$14.4** | **$11.5** | **$16.7** | **$3.1** | **$4.0** | **$4.8** | **$5.5** | **$1.7** | **$5.4** | **$5.8** | **$5.8** | **$6.5** |
| Anti-Fraud Product | $9.3 | $5.7 | $10.0 | $0.9 | $1.6 | $2.3 | $5.4 | $1.7 | $5.4 | $3.0 | $2.3 | $2.3 |
| Anti-Fraud Support Systems | $5.1 | $5.9 | $6.7 | $2.2 | $2.3 | $2.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $2.8 | $3.5 | $4.1 |
| **Data Exchange** | **$7.9** | **$8.6** | **$16.5** | **$7.9** | **$7.1** | **$11.9** | **$0.0** | **$1.5** | **$4.7** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** |
| Data Exchange Product | $1.0 | $1.4 | $8.8 | $1.0 | $0.0 | $4.2 | $0.0 | $1.4 | $4.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Data Exchange Support Systems | $6.9 | $7.2 | $7.8 | $6.9 | $7.1 | $7.7 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| **Disability Claim Processing** | **$83.5** | **$64.2** | **$118.2** | **$43.8** | **$40.7** | **$74.4** | **$29.2** | **$10.2** | **$33.0** | **$10.5** | **$13.3** | **$10.8** |
| BBA Section 823 - Promoting Opportunity Demo | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| DDS Automation | $8.8 | $7.3 | $6.7 | $1.6 | $1.1 | $1.0 | $1.7 | $0.4 | $0.9 | $5.5 | $5.7 | $4.8 |
| Disability Case Processing System | $31.6 | $12.4 | $0.0 | $10.6 | $12.4 | $0.0 | $20.9 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Disability Claim Processing Applications | $34.5 | $29.5 | $44.8 | $24.8 | $20.5 | $33.3 | $4.7 | $1.3 | $5.5 | $5.0 | $7.6 | $6.0 |
| Disability Quality Review (DQR) | $5.1 | $5.1 | $3.4 | $4.3 | $5.0 | $2.8 | $0.8 | $0.2 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| IT Modernization - Disability | $0.0 | $7.9 | $60.2 | | | $35.4 | | $7.9 | $24.8 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| BBA Section 824 - Payroll Information Exchange | $3.5 | $2.0 | $3.2 | $2.3 | $1.6 | $1.9 | $1.2 | $0.4 | $1.3 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| **Earnings & Enumeration** | **$15.4** | **$19.9** | **$46.7** | **$13.7** | **$14.8** | **$30.8** | **$1.7** | **$5.1** | **$15.9** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** |
| Earnings Support Systems | $12.7 | $13.1 | $14.4 | $11.6 | $12.9 | $13.6 | $1.1 | $0.3 | $0.9 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Enumerations Support Systems | $2.7 | $2.1 | $2.8 | $2.0 | $2.0 | $2.3 | $0.6 | $0.2 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| IT Modernization - Earnings and Enumeration | $0.0 | $4.6 | $29.5 | | | $14.9 | | $4.6 | $14.5 | | | |

*Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.*

| **FY 2023 Agency IT Portfolio Summary** (Costs in Millions) | **Total Cost** | | | **Internal Labor** | | | **External Labor** | | | **ITS Funds** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** |
| **Electronic Services** | **$41.9** | **$53.8** | **$157.0** | **$12.5** | **$23.5** | **$75.5** | **$26.6** | **$23.9** | **$75.0** | $6.8 | $6.4 | $6.6 |
| Electronic Services | $34.7 | $32.9 | $50.0 | $7.6 | $21.0 | $23.3 | $26.0 | $6.9 | $21.6 | $5.2 | $5.0 | $5.1 |
| IT Modernization - Cross Cutting | $0.0 | $7.2 | $42.3 | | | $19.8 | $0.0 | $7.2 | $22.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| IT Modernization - Cybersecurity | $0.0 | $1.6 | $11.0 | | | $6.0 | $0.0 | $1.6 | $5.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| IT Modernization - Service Delivery | $0.0 | $7.1 | $42.1 | | | $19.7 | $0.0 | $7.1 | $22.4 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Rep Payee Legislation | $5.4 | $4.1 | $10.6 | $3.3 | $1.6 | $5.8 | $0.5 | $1.1 | $3.4 | $1.6 | $1.4 | $1.4 |
| Rep Payee Support Systems | $1.9 | $0.9 | $1.1 | $1.7 | $0.9 | $1.0 | $0.2 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| **Medical Evidence Processing** | **$15.7** | **$11.1** | **$27.6** | **$6.7** | **$1.3** | **$8.8** | **$6.9** | **$3.7** | **$11.4** | **$2.1** | **$6.2** | **$7.4** |
| Electronic Evidence Acquisition Products | $15.7 | $11.1 | $27.6 | $6.7 | $1.3 | $8.8 | $6.9 | $3.7 | $11.4 | $2.1 | $6.2 | $7.4 |
| **Notice Improvement** | **$4.0** | **$5.3** | **$6.6** | **$3.4** | **$5.2** | **$6.1** | **$0.6** | **$0.2** | **$0.5** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** |
| Notice Improvements | $4.0 | $5.3 | $6.6 | $3.4 | $5.2 | $6.1 | $0.6 | $0.2 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| **Payment Accuracy** | **$21.9** | **$15.4** | **$27.6** | **$10.2** | **$11.5** | **$15.3** | **$11.7** | **$3.9** | **$12.3** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** |
| Debt Management Product | $16.9 | $10.2 | $20.6 | $5.7 | $6.4 | $8.9 | $11.2 | $3.7 | $11.7 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Payment Accuracy Support Systems | $5.0 | $5.2 | $7.0 | $4.5 | $5.1 | $6.4 | $0.5 | $0.2 | $0.6 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| **Reimbursable Services** | **$21.3** | **$15.2** | **$23.6** | **$4.6** | **$5.3** | **$6.7** | **$11.0** | **$3.2** | **$10.0** | **$5.7** | **$6.7** | **$6.8** |
| Reimbursable Services | $21.3 | $15.2 | $23.6 | $4.6 | $5.3 | $6.7 | $11.0 | $3.2 | $10.0 | $5.7 | $6.7 | $6.8 |
| **Title II & XVI Processing** | **$42.6** | **$41.3** | **$77.8** | **$38.0** | **$33.8** | **$54.5** | **$4.7** | **$7.5** | **$23.3** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** |
| IT Modernization - Benefits | $0.0 | $6.3 | $36.9 | | | $17.2 | | $6.3 | $19.7 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Title II Processing Applications | $26.8 | $21.2 | $24.6 | $24.0 | $20.4 | $22.4 | $2.8 | $0.8 | $2.2 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Title XVI Processing Applications | $15.9 | $13.8 | $16.4 | $14.0 | $13.4 | $14.9 | $1.9 | $0.5 | $1.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| **Agency Administrative Applications** | **$111.9** | **$95.7** | **$135.3** | **$50.4** | **$50.0** | **$56.7** | **$38.3** | **$12.6** | **$39.3** | **$23.2** | **$33.1** | **$39.9** |
| **Business Intelligence-Data Analytics** | **$53.0** | **$39.1** | **$56.6** | **$24.9** | **$22.3** | **$25.4** | **$22.6** | **$7.9** | **$24.8** | **$5.5** | **$8.8** | **$6.9** |
| Business Intelligence - Data Analytics | $53.0 | $39.1 | $56.6 | $24.9 | $22.3 | $25.4 | $22.6 | $7.9 | $24.8 | $5.5 | $8.8 | $6.9 |
| **E-Gov** | **$1.8** | **$1.9** | **$1.9** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$1.8** | **$1.9** | **$1.9** |
| Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business (LoB) | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 |
| Federal Executive Boards LOB | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 |
| E-Rulemaking | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 |
| Federal PKI Bridge | $0.2 | $0.2 | $0.2 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.2 | $0.2 | $0.2 |
| Financial Management LoB | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 |
| Freedom of Information Act Portal | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 |

*Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.*

## Limitation on Administrative Expenses

| FY 2023 Agency IT Portfolio Summary (Costs in Millions) | Total Cost | | | Internal Labor | | | External Labor | | | ITS Funds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Geospatial LoB | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Benefits.gov | $0.4 | $0.4 | $0.4 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.4 | $0.4 | $0.4 |
| Grants.gov | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| Hiring Assessment LoB | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.1 |
| Human Resources LoB | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.1 | $0.1 |
| Integrated Award Environment | $0.7 | $0.7 | $0.7 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.7 | $0.7 | $0.7 |
| **Financial Systems** | **$34.6** | **$30.8** | **$44.6** | **$11.3** | **$13.3** | **$15.1** | **$11.2** | **$3.3** | **$10.3** | **$12.0** | **$14.2** | **$19.2** |
| Financial Management Systems | $34.6 | $30.8 | $44.6 | $11.3 | $13.3 | $15.1 | $11.2 | $3.3 | $10.3 | $12.0 | $14.2 | $19.2 |
| **Human Resources** | **$18.4** | **$17.5** | **$19.2** | **$11.9** | **$12.5** | **$13.7** | **$2.7** | **$0.7** | **$2.3** | **$3.8** | **$4.2** | **$3.2** |
| Human Resources Support Systems | $18.4 | $17.5 | $19.2 | $11.9 | $12.5 | $13.7 | $2.7 | $0.7 | $2.3 | $3.8 | $4.2 | $3.2 |
| **Legal-Public Disclosure Processing** | **$3.3** | **$1.8** | **$3.3** | **$1.8** | **$1.3** | **$1.7** | **$1.5** | **$0.5** | **$1.6** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** | **$0.0** |
| OGC Product | $3.3 | $1.8 | $3.3 | $1.8 | $1.3 | $1.7 | $1.5 | $0.5 | $1.6 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 |
| **Records Management** | **$0.8** | **$4.6** | **$9.6** | **$0.5** | **$0.6** | **$0.7** | **$0.3** | **$0.1** | **$0.3** | **$0.0** | **$3.9** | **$8.6** |
| Electronic Records Management Product | $0.8 | $4.6 | $9.6 | $0.5 | $0.6 | $0.7 | $0.3 | $0.1 | $0.3 | $0.0 | $3.9 | $8.6 |
| **Infrastructure** | **$1,158.6** | **$1,117.1** | **$1,356.2** | **$169.7** | **$169.7** | **$204.1** | **$128.4** | **$34.7** | **$108.6** | **$860.4** | **$912.7** | **$1,043.6** |
| Application | $126.6 | $68.6 | $113.5 | $40.8 | $38.4 | $46.1 | $66.9 | $18.8 | $58.7 | $18.8 | $11.5 | $8.7 |
| Data Center and Cloud | $457.4 | $562.8 | $665.0 | $71.9 | $73.9 | $88.8 | $33.7 | $9.2 | $28.9 | $350.2 | $479.7 | $547.4 |
| End User | $156.1 | $157.4 | $184.1 | $32.2 | $31.8 | $38.3 | $12.4 | $2.9 | $9.1 | $110.9 | $122.8 | $136.7 |
| Network | $407.5 | $313.8 | $375.0 | $22.1 | $22.7 | $27.4 | $9.8 | $2.2 | $7.0 | $373.8 | $288.9 | $340.7 |
| Platform | $10.8 | $9.4 | $13.4 | $0.5 | $0.6 | $0.7 | $5.6 | $1.6 | $4.9 | $4.7 | $7.2 | $7.7 |
| Output | $4.2 | $5.0 | $5.3 | $2.2 | $2.3 | $2.7 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $2.0 | $2.7 | $2.5 |
| **IT Governance and Support** | **$149.7** | **$129.0** | **$175.8** | **$106.1** | **$107.0** | **$115.6** | **$27.7** | **$7.5** | **$23.6** | **$15.9** | **$14.5** | **$36.6** |
| Delivery | $26.4 | $13.8 | $45.3 | $5.0 | $4.3 | $5.3 | $12.1 | $3.7 | $11.6 | $9.3 | $5.8 | $28.4 |
| IT Management | $123.3 | $115.2 | $130.5 | $101.0 | $102.6 | $110.3 | $15.6 | $3.8 | $12.1 | $6.7 | $8.7 | $8.1 |
| **Cybersecurity** | **$151.9** | **$156.7** | **$193.7** | **$41.7** | **$43.8** | **$51.2** | **$36.2** | **$11.8** | **$37.0** | **$74.0** | **$101.1** | **$105.4** |
| IT Security & Compliance | $151.9 | $156.7 | $193.7 | $41.7 | $43.8 | $51.2 | $36.2 | $11.8 | $37.0 | $74.0 | $101.1 | $105.4 |

[1] Includes $434.0 million obligated in FY 2021 for the FY 2022 period of performance, and $4.2 million obligated in FY 2021 for the FY 2021 period of performance.

[2] Includes $272.7 million obligated in FY 2023 for the FY 2023 period of performance and $127.3 million obligated in FY 2023 for the FY 2024 period of performance.

*Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.*

## Appendix B: Required Tables and Statements

### Protecting Privacy

Our IT budget submission is both a reflection and by-product of privacy requirements identified and implemented through our various IT governance processes, primarily the IT Investment Process (ITIP), and Systems Development Lifecycle (SDLC). Our Senior Agency Official for Privacy is an active member of the ITIP Investment Review Board, which governs the IT Investment Management Process, focusing primarily on up-front investment planning, which allows us to consider privacy risks, mitigating controls, and requirements early in the IT investment lifecycle. We have also integrated necessary privacy requirements into the release-planning phase of our SDLC. This requirement ensures that all new or modified systems or other IT resources, regardless of whether they support the creation, collection, use, processing, storage, maintenance, dissemination, disclosure, or disposal of personally identifiable information, undergo necessary privacy compliance assessments to ensure we identify and implement relevant requirements and where applicable, associated costs.

**Table 3.25–Other SSA Expenses/Service Fees Related to E-Government Projects**

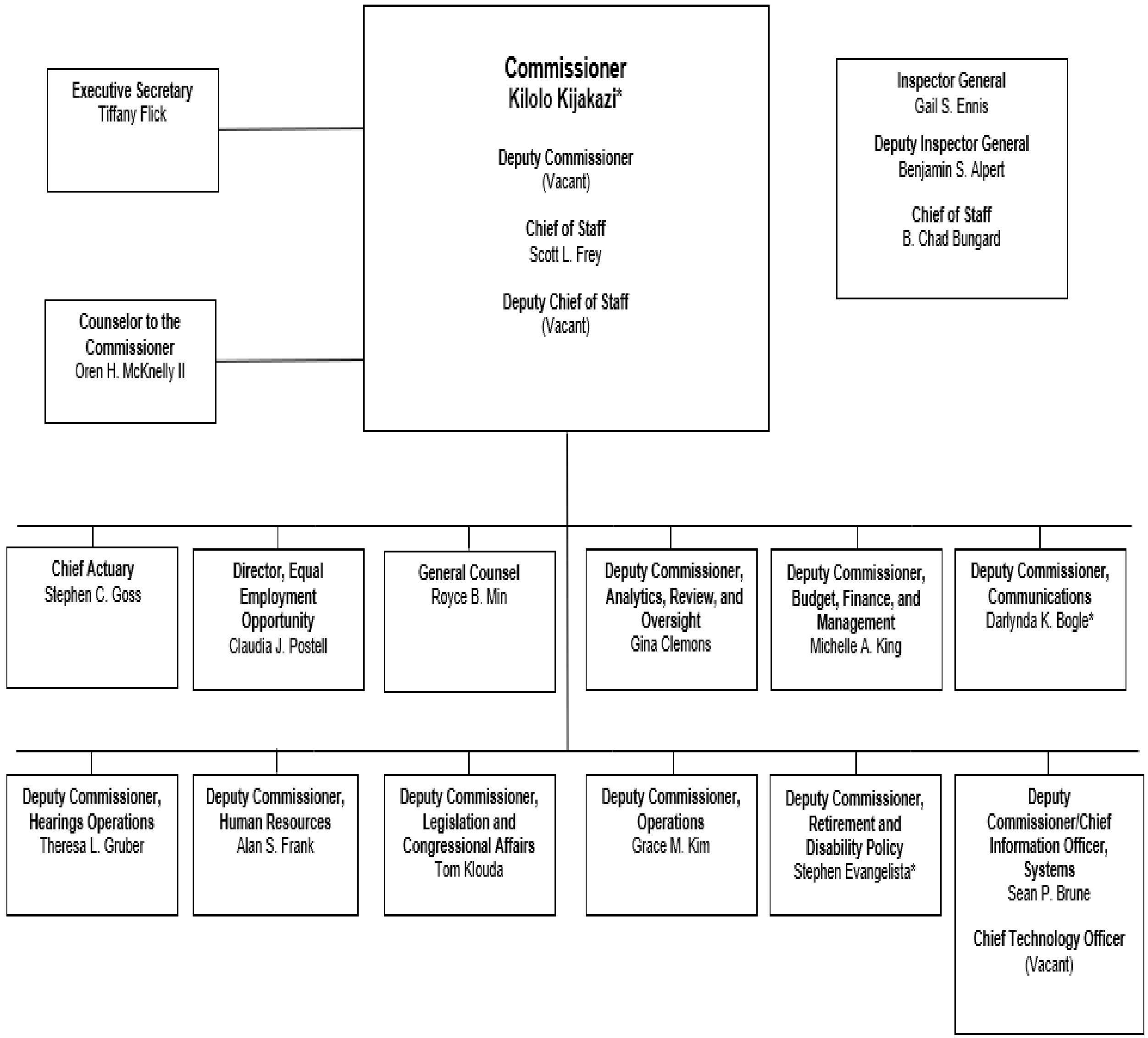
| Dollars in Thousands | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recruitment One-Stop | $483 | $497 | $517 |
| E-Payroll | $22,489 | $22,860 | $24,300 |
| E-Travel | $175 | $750 | $750 |
| **Total** | **$23,147** | **$24,107** | **$25,567** |

*Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.*

**Table 3.26–LAE Expired Balances & No-Year IT Account (in thousands)**

| **No-Year ITS Account** | |
|---|---|
| Carryover from FY 2020 (Unobligated Balances) | $6,036 |
| Carryover from funds transferred in FY 2020 for FY 2021 | $25,000 |
| **Total carryover from FY 2020 to FY 2021** | **$31,036** |
| Funds transferred in FY 2021 for FY 2021 | $119,000 |
| **Total FY 2021 No-year ITS funding available** | **$150,036** |
| FY 2021 Obligations | **-$137,089** |
| **Carryover from FY 2021 (Unobligated Balances)** | **$12,946** |
| Carryover from funds transferred in FY 2021 to FY 2022 | $101,000 |
| **Total carryover from FY 2021 to FY 2022** | **$113,946** |
| Funds transferred in FY 2022 for FY 2022 | $112,500 |
| **Total FY 2022 No-Year ITS Funding Available** | **$226,446** |

# SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART




For the full agency organization chart, please visit https://www.ssa.gov/org/ssachart.pdf

*Acting

## MAJOR BUILDING RENOVATIONS AND REPAIR COSTS

We have maintained a record of accomplishment in real property efficiency. We continue to achieve the goals set forth by our Reduce the Footprint standards. Our major building costs are associated with our ongoing efforts to optimize space and reduce our reliance on leased space where it makes business sense.

This exhibit provides an update on our on-going major building renovations and repairs funded in previous years. We have no major building renovations or repairs currently planned in fiscal year (FY) 2023.

**Update of Ongoing Projects (Funded in Prior Years)**

- **Perimeter East Building (PEB):** The PEB is located on our main campus in Woodlawn, Maryland. In FY 2019, we completely renovated the PEB third floor, repurposing this area from an information technology environment to office space. The space provides an efficient layout for approximately 500 additional occupants. With completion of the third floor, we began planning to renovate the fourth floor, including infrastructure upgrades necessary to support additional occupants in the building. In FY 2021, we completed the design of the fourth floor and have moved into the construction phase. We anticipate completing the fourth floor renovations in FY 2023. The PEB renovations are critical to our plan to create additional capacity for employee seating on campus and reduce our reliance on leased space in the Woodlawn area.

- **Robert M. Ball Building (RMB):** The RMB is located on our main campus in Woodlawn, Maryland. In FYs 2019 and 2020, we funded infrastructure upgrades totaling approximately $15 million to support added capacity on campus to accommodate additional employees from outlying leases we are vacating. The General Services Administration (GSA) anticipates awarding design for these upgrades in April 2022 and completing construction in early FY 2025.

- **Frank Hagel Federal Building (FHFB) (San Francisco, CA)**: In September 2020, Congress approved a GSA prospectus to enhance infrastructure for FHFB. The prospectus includes replacing the roofing and window washing system; restroom upgrades; replacing the dual pipe water system; replacing the air-handling units; and replacing and upgrading the interior air intakes. GSA awarded the architecture and engineering contract in May 2021, and we kicked off the project in June 2021. The design will be complete in March 2022, and we expect to start construction shortly thereafter. We anticipate project completion in October 2024.

- **Auburn Teleservice Center (Auburn, Washington):** GSA is disposing of the property located at 1901 C St. SW, Auburn, Washington, where one of our mega teleservice centers is located, along with a regional training center and interactive video training studio. These components currently occupy approximately 149,350 useable square feet (USF). However, we have determined that we only need approximately 42,000 USF in a new lease, reducing our portfolio by approximately 107,000 USF.  The Public Buildings Reform Board has committed to funding our move, as well as tenant improvement and furniture costs. Pre-planning, schedule, and cost information for this project are still in development.

## Physical Infrastructure

### Table 3.27—FY 2021 Physical Infrastructure Costs by Component
(dollars in thousands)[1]

The following tables satisfy a portion of the Report on LAE Expenditures Congressional reporting requirement.

| Components | Rental Payments to GSA | Communications, Utilities & Misc. Charges | Operations & Maintenance of Facilities[2] | Operations & Maintenance of Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LAE One Year** | | | | | |
| Office of Operations | $538,166 | $30,756 | $193,908 | $77 | **$762,906** |
| Office of Systems[3] | $0 | $1 | $2 | $0 | **$3** |
| Office of Hearings Operations | $110,911 | $2,272 | $35,279 | $2 | **$148,464** |
| Office of Human Resources | $0 | $16 | $465 | $0 | **$481** |
| Office of Retirement and Disability Policy | $0 | $12 | $12 | $0 | **$24** |
| Office of Communication | $0 | $0 | $3 | $0 | **$3** |
| Office of Analytics, Review and Oversight | $2,641 | $153 | $341 | $0 | **$3,135** |
| Office of Budget, Finance, and Management | $0 | $140 | $3 | $0 | **$143** |
| DCBFM - Agency Level | $66,708 | $141,547 | $84,564 | $381 | **$293,200** |
| Office of General Counsel | $933 | $8 | $116 | $0 | **$1,117** |
| Disability Determination Services | $0 | $27,499 | $209 | $0 | **$27,708** |
| Information Technology Systems | $0 | $199,291 | $125 | $636,917 | **$836,333** |
| Social Security Advisory Board | $253 | $1 | $12 | $0 | **$267** |
| **Subtotal LAE One Year** | **$719,672** | **$401,696** | **$315,038** | **$637,377** | **$2,073,785** |
| **LAE No Year** | | | | | |
| Delegated Buildings | $0 | $13,889 | $50,918 | $0 | **$64,807** |
| Information Technology Systems[3] | $0 | $1,036 | $0 | $136,054 | **$137,089** |
| IT Modernization | $0 | $0 | $0 | $66,992 | **$66,992** |
| National Support Center | $0 | $0 | $75 | $4 | **$79** |
| **Subtotal LAE No Year** | **$0** | **$14,925** | **$50,993** | **$203,050** | **$268,968** |
| **LAE Multi Year** | | | | | |
| Program Integrity | $0 | $0 | $0 | $160,812 | **$160,812** |
| CARES Act | $0 | $161 | $709 | $5 | **$875** |
| **Subtotal LAE Multi Year** | **$0** | **$161** | **$709** | **$160,817** | **$161,687** |
| **Grand Total** | **$719,672** | **$416,782** | **$366,741** | **$1,001,243** | **$2,504,441** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] Includes guard services
[3] The ITS budget funds all information technology projects for the Agency. The Office of Systems is a staff component that is responsible for the Information Management and Information Technology programs.

**Table 3.28—FY 2022 Estimated Physical Infrastructure Costs by Component**
(dollars in thousands)[1,2]

| Components | Rental Payments to GSA | Communications, Utilities & Misc. Charges | Operations & Maintenance of Facilities | Operations & Maintenance of Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LAE One Year** | | | | | |
| Office of Operations | $558,992 | $31,726 | $193,418 | $79 | **$784,215** |
| Office of Systems [3] | $0 | $1 | $2 | $0 | **$3** |
| Office of Hearings Operations | $115,204 | $2,343 | $35,190 | $2 | **$152,739** |
| Office of Human Resources | $0 | $17 | $463 | $0 | **$480** |
| Office of Retirement and Disability Policy | $0 | $12 | $12 | $0 | **$25** |
| Office of Communication | $0 | $0 | $3 | $0 | **$3** |
| Office of Analytics, Review and Oversight | $2,743 | $158 | $340 | $0 | **$3,241** |
| Office of Budget, Finance, and Management | $0 | $144 | $3 | $0 | **$147** |
| DCBFM - Agency Level | $69,290 | $146,011 | $84,351 | $394 | **$300,045** |
| Office of General Counsel | $1,031 | $9 | $116 | $0 | **$1,156** |
| Disability Determination Services | $0 | $28,366 | $208 | $0 | **$28,575** |
| Information Technology Systems | $0 | $205,577 | $125 | $658,297 | **$863,999** |
| Social Security Advisory Board | $274 | $1 | $12 | $0 | **$288** |
| **Subtotal LAE One Year** | **$747,534** | **$414,367** | **$314,243** | **$658,773** | **$2,134,916** |
| **LAE No Year** | | | | | |
| Delegated Buildings | $0 | $10,465 | $38,366 | $0 | **$48,831** |
| Information Technology Systems [3] | $0 | $2,184 | $0 | $171,638 | **$173,822** |
| IT Modernization | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | **$0** |
| National Support Center | $0 | $0 | $123 | $0 | **$123** |
| **Subtotal LAE No Year** | **$0** | **$12,650** | **$38,489** | **$171,638** | **$222,776** |
| **LAE Multi Year** | | | | | |
| Program Integrity | $0 | $0 | $0 | $158,452 | **$158,452** |
| CARES Act | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | **$0** |
| **Subtotal LAE Multi Year** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$158,452** | **$158,452** |
| **Grand Total** | **$747,534** | **$427,016** | **$352,732** | **$988,862** | **$2,516,144** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] Includes guard services.
[3] The ITS budget funds all information technology projects for the Agency. The Office of Systems is a staff component that is responsible for the Information Management and Information Technology programs.

**Table 3.29—FY 2023 Estimated Physical Infrastructure Costs by Component**
(Dollars in thousands)[1,2]

| Components | Rental Payments to GSA | Communications, Utilities & Misc. Charges | Operations & Maintenance of Facilities | Operations & Maintenance of Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LAE One Year** | | | | | |
| Office of Operations | $561,295 | $33,571 | $202,065 | $125 | **$797,056** |
| Office of Systems [3] | $0 | $2 | $2 | $0 | **$3** |
| Office of Hearings Operations | $115,678 | $2,480 | $36,763 | $3 | **$154,924** |
| Office of Human Resources | $0 | $17 | $484 | $0 | **$502** |
| Office of Retirement and Disability Policy | $0 | $13 | $13 | $0 | **$26** |
| Office of Communication | $0 | $0 | $4 | $0 | **$4** |
| Office of Analytics, Review and Oversight | $2,755 | $167 | $355 | $0 | **$3,277** |
| Office of Budget, Finance, and Management | $0 | $153 | $3 | $0 | **$155** |
| DCBFM - Agency Level | $69,575 | $154,506 | $88,121 | $620 | **$312,822** |
| Office of General Counsel | $1,035 | $9 | $121 | $0 | **$1,165** |
| Disability Determination Services | $0 | $30,017 | $218 | $0 | **$30,234** |
| Information Technology Systems | $0 | $217,536 | $131 | $1,036,548 | **$1,254,215** |
| Social Security Advisory Board | $275 | $1 | $13 | $0 | **$289** |
| **Subtotal LAE One Year** | **$750,612** | **$438,472** | **$328,291** | **$1,037,297** | **$2,554,673** |
| **LAE No Year** | | | | | |
| Delegated Buildings | $0 | $9,924 | $36,380 | $0 | **$46,304** |
| Information Technology Systems [3] | $0 | $1,447 | $0 | $113,694 | **$115,141** |
| IT Modernization | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | **$0** |
| National Support Center | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | **$0** |
| **Subtotal LAE No Year** | **$0** | **$11,371** | **$36,380** | **$113,694** | **$161,445** |
| **LAE Multi Year** | | | | | |
| Program Integrity | $0 | $0 | $0 | $178,213 | **$178,213** |
| CARES Act | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | **$0** |
| **Subtotal LAE Multi Year** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$178,213** | **$178,213** |
| **Grand Total** | **$750,612** | **$449,843** | **$364,671** | **$1,329,203** | **$2,894,330** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] Includes guard services.
[3] The ITS budget funds all information technology projects for the Agency. The Office of Systems is a staff component that is responsible for the Information Management and Information Technology programs.

**Table 3.30—FY 2021 Physical Infrastructure Costs by Region**
(Dollars in thousands)[1]

| Regions | Rental Payments to GSA | Communications, Utilities & Misc. Charges | Operations & Maintenance of Facilities [2] | Operations & Maintenance of Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Boston** | $26,875 | $1,988 | $11,390 | $0 | **$40,253** |
| **New York** | $85,232 | $6,270 | $43,918 | $1 | **$135,420** |
| **Philadelphia** | $60,823 | $4,712 | $31,560 | $69 | **$97,164** |
| **Atlanta** | $127,650 | $15,092 | $35,147 | $10 | **$177,899** |
| **Chicago** | $93,074 | $10,933 | $38,425 | $4 | **$142,435** |
| **Dallas** | $67,758 | $5,377 | $25,924 | $2 | **$99,060** |
| **Kansas City** | $29,209 | $3,790 | $13,114 | $2 | **$46,114** |
| **Denver** | $15,714 | $1,374 | $7,642 | $0 | **$24,730** |
| **San Francisco** | $106,203 | $10,029 | $41,138 | $2 | **$157,371** |
| **Seattle** | $25,933 | $1,562 | $8,648 | $1 | **$36,145** |
| **Headquarters**[3] | $81,202 | $355,656 | $109,837 | $1,001,171 | **$1,547,867** |
| **Total** | **$719,672** | **$416,782** | **$366,743** | **$1,001,262** | **$2,504,460** |

**Table 3.31—FY 2022 Estimated Physical Infrastructure Costs by Region**
(Dollars in thousands) [4,5]

| Regions | Rental Payments to GSA | Communications, Utilities & Misc. Charges | Operations & Maintenance of Facilities [6] | Operations & Maintenance of Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Boston** | $27,916 | $2,036 | $10,955 | $0 | **$40,907** |
| **New York** | $88,532 | $6,424 | $42,240 | $1 | **$137,196** |
| **Philadelphia** | $63,177 | $4,827 | $30,354 | $68 | **$98,428** |
| **Atlanta** | $132,592 | $15,463 | $33,804 | $10 | **$181,868** |
| **Chicago** | $96,677 | $11,202 | $36,957 | $4 | **$144,839** |
| **Dallas** | $70,381 | $5,509 | $24,933 | $2 | **$100,825** |
| **Kansas City** | $30,340 | $3,883 | $12,613 | $2 | **$46,837** |
| **Denver** | $16,322 | $1,408 | $7,350 | $0 | **$25,080** |
| **San Francisco** | $110,315 | $10,275 | $39,566 | $2 | **$160,158** |
| **Seattle** | $26,937 | $1,601 | $8,318 | $1 | **$36,857** |
| **Headquarters** | $84,346 | $364,389 | $105,641 | $988,772 | **$1,543,148** |
| **Total** | **$747,534** | **$427,016** | **$352,732** | **$988,862** | **$2,516,144** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] Includes guard services.
[3] Includes DDS, SSAB, ITS, NSC, IT Modernization, Program Integrity, and Delegated Buildings.
[4] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[5] Includes DDS, SSAB, ITS, and Delegated Buildings.
[6] Includes guard services.

**Table 3.32—FY 2023 Estimated Physical Infrastructure Costs by Region**
(Dollars in thousands)[1,2]

| Regions | Rental Payments to GSA | Communications, Utilities & Misc. Charges | Operations & Maintenance of Facilities [3] | Operations & Maintenance of Equipment | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Boston** | $28,031 | $2,145 | $11,325 | $0 | **$41,502** |
| **New York** | $88,896 | $6,767 | $43,670 | $1 | **$139,334** |
| **Philadelphia** | $63,437 | $5,086 | $31,382 | $92 | **$99,997** |
| **Atlanta** | $133,138 | $16,289 | $34,948 | $13 | **$184,388** |
| **Chicago** | $97,075 | $11,800 | $38,208 | $5 | **$147,088** |
| **Dallas** | $70,671 | $5,804 | $25,777 | $3 | **$102,254** |
| **Kansas City** | $30,464 | $4,090 | $13,040 | $3 | **$47,597** |
| **Denver** | $16,389 | $1,483 | $7,599 | $0 | **$25,471** |
| **San Francisco** | $110,769 | $10,824 | $40,905 | $2 | **$162,501** |
| **Seattle** | $27,048 | $1,686 | $8,600 | $2 | **$37,335** |
| **Headquarters** | $84,693 | $383,868 | $109,217 | $1,329,083 | **$1,906,861** |
| **Total** | **$750,612** | **$449,843** | **$364,671** | **$1,329,203** | **$2,894,330** |

[1] Totals may not add due to rounding.
[2] Includes DDS, SSAB, ITS, and Delegated Buildings
[3] Includes guard services.

## SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD

This Budget includes $2.75 million for the Social Security Advisory Board in FY 2023. The *Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994* established a bipartisan, seven-member board to advise the President, the Congress, and the Commissioner of Social Security on policies related to Social Security's Old-age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program, and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

According to the statute, the specific functions of the Board include: (1) analyzing the Nation's retirement and disability systems and making recommendations with respect to how the OASDI and the SSI programs, supported by other public and private systems, can most effectively assure economic security; (2) studying and making recommendations relating to the coordination of programs that provide health security with programs described in paragraph (1); (3) making recommendations to the President and to the Congress with respect to policies that will ensure the solvency of the OASDI program, both in the short-term and the long-term; (4) making recommendations with respect to the quality of service that the Administration provides to the public; (5) making recommendations with respect to policies and regulations regarding the OASDI and the SSI programs; (6) increasing public understanding of the social security system; (7) making recommendations with respect to a long-range research and program evaluation plan for the Administration; (8) reviewing and assessing any major studies of social security as may come to the attention of the Board; and (9) making recommendations with respect to such other matters as the Board determines to be appropriate.

The Board is required by law to meet at least four times per year and currently holds two-day meetings every other month supplemented with virtual field visits and regular conference calls. For more detailed information about the Board, please see the Board's website at *www.ssab.gov*.

**Table 3.33 - Obligations by Object Class and Staffing**

| Object Class | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Request | FY 2023 Request |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel and Benefits | $1,630,870 | $1,900,000 | $2,080,000 |
| Travel | $727 | $14,500[1] | $60,000 |
| Rent | $254,467 | $272,250 | $275,000 |
| Printing & Reproduction | $0 | $250 | $0 |
| Consultants & Contracts | $369,845[2] | $306,000 | $330,000 |
| Supplies | $13,052[3] | $6,000 | $3,000 |
| Equipment | $542 | $1,000 | $2,000 |
| **Total, All Objects** | **$2,269,503[4]** | **$2,500,000** | **$2,750,000** |
| Full-time, Permanent Staff | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| Part-time, SGE's and Temp Staff | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Board Members | 4[5] | 7 | 7 |

*Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.*

[1] FY 2022 and FY 2023 travel estimates assumes potential travel expenses for various Board activity. The estimates are higher than FY 2021, which did not involve travel due to the pandemic.

[2] The FY 2021 consultants and contracts includes a comprehensive IT systems contract and other service payments. The total does not reflect research commissioned by the Board totaling $75,000.

[3] FY 2021 supplies includes a one-time annual purchase; a reduction in supply purchases is expected in future FYs.

[4] The FY 2021 total is the total amounts obligated per SSA's FY 2021 Financial Indicator Reports. The total does not reflect research commissioned by the Board totaling $75,000.

[5] In FY 2021, there were a total of four Board members appointed to the Board. The Staff on Duty report only reflects the two Board members that were paid in the last pay period of FY 2021.

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## APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

### OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

(Including Transfer of Funds)

*For expenses necessary for the Office of Inspector General in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978, $33,000,000, together with not to exceed $84,500,000, to be transferred and expended as authorized by section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act from the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund: Provided, That $2,000,000 shall remain available until expended for information technology modernization, including related hardware and software infrastructure and equipment, and for administrative expenses directly associated with information technology modernization.*

*In addition, an amount not to exceed 3 percent of the total provided in this appropriation may be transferred from the "Limitation on Administrative Expenses", Social Security Administration, to be merged with this account, to be available for the time and purposes for which this account is available: Provided, That notice of such transfers shall be transmitted promptly to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate at least 15 days in advance of any transfer.*

*Note. —A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117–43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.*

## GENERAL STATEMENT

### OVERVIEW

The Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) mission is to serve the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations. SSA OIG accomplishes this mission by conducting independent audits, evaluations, and investigations; searching for and reporting systemic weaknesses in SSA's programs and operations; and providing recommendations for program, operations, and management improvements. SSA OIG's vision is to drive meaningful change to protect taxpayer dollars. The mission and vision, together, emphasize SSA OIG's role as public servants and agents of positive change.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget includes $117.5 million for SSA OIG direct appropriations, an increase of $12 million over the FY 2022 CR level and FY 2021 enacted level of $105.5 million, with $2 million available indefinitely for information technology (IT) modernization.

SSA OIG's mission and vision, as well as its strategic goals, are the foundation of the FY 2023 Budget. This Budget will allow SSA OIG to take innovative steps forward by building its data analytics capacity, increasing data-driven decision-making, investing in information technology and automation tools, and strengthening and building its workforce. These improvements will lead to a more nimble and responsive organization. In addition, this request will increase OIG's FTEs by 45 over the FY 2022 estimate. Using recent historical data, every additional investigative FTE added could result in 19 additional cases closed and more than $1.3 million in additional monetary accomplishments in FY 2023. For every additional audit FTE, SSA OIG could issue one additional audit report, generating $25.8 million in additional questioned costs, and an additional $193.5 million in aggregate potential costs savings.

The FY 2023 Budget also includes an estimated $1.3 million in Interagency Agreements to be paid to servicing agencies, such as the Office of Personnel Management, the General Services Administration, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, and the Treasury Executive Institute, which will provide SSA OIG specialized services in the applicable lines of business.

In FY 2023, SSA OIG will contribute an estimated $415,800 to the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), as requested by CIGIE. CIGIE is an independent entity established within the executive branch to address integrity, economy, and effectiveness issues that transcend individual government agencies and aid in the establishment of a professional, well-trained, and highly skilled workforce in the Offices of Inspectors General. CIGIE aims to continually identify, review, and discuss areas of weakness and vulnerability in Federal programs and operations with respect to fraud, waste, and abuse. They develop plans for coordinated, government-wide activities that address these problems and promote economy and efficiency in Federal programs and operations, including interagency and inter-entity audit, investigation, inspection, and evaluation programs and projects to deal efficiently and effectively with those problems concerning fraud and waste that exceed the capability or jurisdiction of an individual agency or entity.

In addition to the request for $117.5 million, the Budget allows SSA to transfer up to $15.1 million from SSA's Limitation on Administration Expenses (LAE) account dedicated program integrity allocation adjustment to SSA OIG for the cost of the jointly operated anti-fraud Cooperative Disability Investigations (CDI) units.

The FY 2023 Budget continues SSA OIG's efforts to rebuild its capacity by providing an increase in base resources and in the transfer. Prior to FY 2019, the SSA OIG prioritized expanding the jointly operated CDI Program at the expense of other investigative work. During that time staffing and the corresponding investigative accomplishments steadily decreased. Starting in FY 2019, the SSA OIG has received transfers from SSA's program integrity allocation adjustment (the adjustment funds SSA's CDI costs as well). These transfers have allowed the SSA OIG flexibility to replace a portion of the staff that the organization shifted to the CDI Program. In FY 2019, the increase in dedicated funding resulted in an increase of non-CDI fraud prosecutions for the first time since FY 2012. The FY 2023 Budget incorporates and continues this trend.

SSA OIG remains committed to the success of the CDI Program by increasing oversight and improving operations through dedicated leadership and management. A new organizational structure was implemented to provide management personnel dedicated solely to overseeing CDI investigative and operational efforts, including devoting a Senior Executive Service allocation to provide national oversight of the strategic vision. This reorganization resulted in expanding the CDI Division into three new CDI Field Divisions and will increase the number of SSA OIG employees supporting the program to 72. In FY 2022, SSA OIG began using transfer funding to charge operating costs related to the CDI Field Divisions.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

SSA OIG has consistently delivered valuable oversight information to SSA, Congress and other stakeholders, and the public. Moreover, SSA OIG's work has led to changes in legislation, regulation, policy, and operations. As workloads grow and evolve, SSA OIG will continue delivering products that lead to meaningful change.

As previously mentioned, SSA OIG's mission and vision, as well as its Strategic Plan[1] (described below), are the foundation of the FY 2023 Budget. This Budget aligns with the following strategic goals, described in detail below:

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver solutions to promote positive change
Strategic Goal 2: Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA programs and operations
Strategic Goal 3: Optimize operations
Strategic Goal 4: Strengthen our workforce

Tracking performance through specific measures and targets allow SSA OIG to monitor its progress in accomplishing the mission and meeting strategic goals. Please see below for the SSA OIG Performance Measures and the FY 2022 Targets.

**Table 4.1—OIG Performance Measures**

| Performance Measure | FY 2022 Target |
|---|---|
| Improve rates of criminal charges, civil complaints, and CMP initiations | Baseline |
| Review and take action on 85% of hotline allegations within 5 days of receipt | 85% |
| Substantially complete investigative fieldwork on 75% of social security program fraud investigations within 180 days | 75% |
| Exceed the 3-year trailing average return-on-investment as reported by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency | 18-to-1 |
| Work with SSA to ensure 80% of the recommendations we made within the last 4 fiscal years, which SSA agreed to implement, have been resolved | 80% |
| Ensure that 75% of audits are issued within one year from the entrance conference | 75% |

[1] SSA OIG Strategic Plan can be viewed at https://oig.ssa.gov/files/SSA_OIG_Strategic_Plan_FY%202021-FY_2025_508.pdf

**<u>Strategic Goal 1: Deliver solutions to promote positive change</u>**

SSA OIG's first strategic goal is to deliver solutions to promote positive change. This goal directly aligns with SSA OIG's vision to drive meaningful change to protect taxpayer dollars. To meet this goal, SSA OIG will address four key initiatives: emerging oversight responsibilities, education and outreach, significant audit findings, and significant investigative efforts.

***Emerging Oversight Responsibilities***

SSA OIG has significant emerging responsibilities related to the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19) pandemic and government imposter scams, and the organization continues to investigate fraud schemes targeting the government's response to the pandemic. As of March 2022, SSA OIG is participating in 25 COVID-19 fraud workgroups and collaborating with other Federal law enforcement entities on over 60 joint investigations related to COVID-19 fraud.

Since the outset of the pandemic, SSA OIG has received over 28,553 fraud allegations referencing COVID-19-related relief programs and funds. In FY 2023, SSA OIG will continue investigating COVID-19-related fraud schemes and assist with related prosecution efforts

In addition, SSA OIG has emerging oversight responsibilities related to Social Security-related government imposter scams[1]. The majority of these scams are robocalls initiated overseas and are widespread throughout the United States. These calls appear to originate from within the United States and, more maliciously, often "spoof" caller identification from a government or law enforcement agency.[2] The caller may ask for personal information, demand payment, or make threats. These scams occur primarily via the telephone, but a small number occur via email, text, or U.S. mail. In FY 2021, SSA OIG received nearly 505,145 allegations related to these Social Security-related and government imposter scams.

To stem this fraudulent activity, SSA OIG has taken numerous actions. In FY 2021, the organization dedicated an estimated $3.8 million in human capital resources, extended hotline call center operations, and enhanced allegations processing for social security. With the FY 2023 Budget, SSA OIG will continue to commit staff to analyze telephone and imposter scam allegations, develop investigative leads, and deploy effective investigative strategies to address other complex, multijurisdictional investigative challenges.

[1] Social Security-related government imposter scams refer to in-person phone calls, robocalls, texts, emails, or mailings that use a false premise involving a Social Security number, account, or benefits to convince potential victims to provide personally identifiable information or money.

[2] Requirements under the *Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act*, may hamper scammers' ability to "spoof" caller-ID numbers, as calls will require an authentication certificate. While effective on spoofing, many scammers can still acquire legitimate U.S.-based telephone numbers to pass malicious call traffic. Changes within the telecom industry are ongoing and evolving. SSA OIG closely tracks these changes.

Funding at this level would allow SSA OIG to invest in enhanced, state-of-the-art analytical software and data management and storage capacities to help anticipate, recognize, and efficiently mitigate new and emerging fraud schemes. These investments will not only help SSA OIG manage the long-term effect of these newly emerged oversight responsibilities, but also prepare the agency for new and unanticipated challenges.

***Education and Outreach***

In FY 2023, SSA OIG will continue its comprehensive public awareness campaign to protect taxpayers from Social Security-related and government imposter scams. This campaign will continue to include releasing public outreach materials explaining how to identify telephone scams and how to report scam activity through the *SSA OIG website*. SSA OIG will continue to identify trends, investigate and disrupt the scams, and issue fraud advisories warning the public about Social Security-related telephone scams to educate the public *before* they become imposter scam victims.

A notable part of the SSA OIG public awareness campaign is the annual National "Slam the Scam" Day, in which Federal agencies, state and local governments, and private companies join forces to encourage taxpayers to hang up on telephone scammers impersonating government employees. SSA OIG leads coordination efforts, creates marketing materials, contacts media outlets, and publishes content. In FY 2021, the national campaign included tweets viewed 1.98 million times and Facebook posts reaching nearly 3 million people. "Slam the Scam" received significant media attention from USA Today, CNBC, AARP, and Forbes, among other media outlets. SSA, SSA OIG, and U.S. Postal Inspection Service collaborated to place dual-branded digital or hardcopy posters in all U.S. post offices warning the public about these Social Security-related telephone scams. In addition, SSA OIG worked with major retailers to provide scam awareness information in stores across the country. Specifically, Walmart displayed "Slam the Scam" slides on customer service screens at 2,100 stores, and CVS broadcasted SSA's public service announcement in over 8,000 stores.

In FY 2023, SSA OIG will also continue to expand education related to whistleblower protection. The *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, directs Inspectors General to designate a Whistleblower Protection Coordinator. The coordinator's role is to educate Agency employees and managers about prohibitions against retaliation against employees who have made, or are contemplating making, a protected disclosure. The coordinator also informs them about the rights and remedies available for employees retaliated against for making protected disclosures.

In FY 2021, SSA OIG increased whistleblower educational information through direct communication to all Agency employees in SSA and SSA OIG. For example, the organization developed a robust training program for all new employees to ensure the workforce thoroughly understands whistleblower protections. In FY 2022, SSA OIG will implement a comprehensive, multi-stage training program upon workplace reentry, and in FY 2023, SSA OIG will provide hands-on training to SSA's approximately 60,000 workforce in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. SSA OIG is also increasing its educational outreach for contractors, grantees, and subgrantees.

***Significant Audit Findings***

Since October 1, 2020, SSA OIG has issued 68 audits that identified over $1.2 billion in questioned costs and over $3.2 billion in funds that could have been put to better use. Contributing to those totals were the reports, *Overpayments with Recovery Agreements that Will Extend Beyond 2049, Social Security Beneficiaries Financially Advantaged by Electing to Convert from Disability Benefits to Reduced Retirement Benefits*, and *Disabled Beneficiaries Whose Benefits Have Been Suspended for Address Development, Whereabouts Unknown or Miscellaneous Reasons*.
In the audit report, *Social Security Beneficiaries Financially Advantaged by Electing to Convert from Disability Benefits to Reduced Retirement Benefits,* SSA OIG recommended that SSA determine whether it should propose a change to section 202(q)(7)(F) of the *Social Security Act* to eliminate the financial advantage it gives to certain beneficiaries. Of the 100 beneficiaries reviewed in this audit, 89 percent took advantage of the early retirement provision, which provided a $1.8 million financial advantage and could provide most of these individuals $2.4 million more because the advantage will continue the rest of their lives. In aggregate, the provision could affect 29,000 beneficiaries and cost $1.4 billion in additional lifetime benefits.[1]

Since October 1, 2020, SSA OIG has completed four audits identifying underpayments or potential underpayments to vulnerable populations such as child beneficiaries, widows, Supplemental Security Income recipients, and surviving spouses. Potential underpayments identified in these reports totaled over $244 million.

A November 2020 report on *SSA Beneficiaries Eligible for Total and Permanent Federal Student Loan Discharge* highlighted the fact that more than 400,000 Social Security disability beneficiaries eligible for Federal student loan discharge have not had their loan balances discharged by the Department of Education. SSA OIG identified 36,000 additional beneficiaries eligible for student loan discharge that SSA's data matching process failed to identify for the Department of Education.

SSA OIG has ongoing audit work related to SSA's processing of mail in SSA offices. The report is on track to be issued in late April 2022. SSA has changed many of its processes due to COVID-19, and SSA OIG intends to complete additional work that would require site visits to SSA field offices, Social Security card centers, and program service centers. For example, as SSA makes changes to field office functions such as mobile check-in and self-help personal computers, SSA OIG auditors would plan to visit field offices to determine whether newly installed technology has improved customer service, including reduced wait times. This work would require assistance from auditors across the country to visit field offices.

In addition, SSA OIG continues to be concerned as Federal information systems—and the information they hold—are increasingly becoming targets of cyber-attacks. SSA must implement a strong information security program to detect and prevent intrusions. Prior SSA OIG audit and investigative work has revealed serious concerns with the security of SSA's information systems.

[1] The SSA OIG team that conducted this audit received a 2021 Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) Award for Excellence for identifying a provision in the *Social Security Act* that appears to no longer be necessary.

Additionally, SSA OIG plays a vital role in helping to ensure the Agency's IT investments are made wisely, and in keeping the Agency, the Congress, and the American public informed.

To ensure SSA OIG is positioned to provide timely, effective oversight of SSA's information security efforts in this ever-changing environment, staff must have the necessary knowledge and skills. SSA OIG plans to invest in ongoing training for information technology audit staff to keep abreast of advances in technology, new vulnerabilities, and emerging threats. SSA OIG also plans to work with a contractor to assess the effectiveness of SSA's information security policies, procedures, and practices on a representative subset of the Agency's information systems, as required for *Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014* (FISMA) oversight.

***Significant Investigative Efforts***

In recent years, SSA OIG has refocused resources on significant investigations, such as third-party facilitator fraud, e-Services fraud, and schemes, such as Social Security-related and government imposter scams, that target vulnerable populations.

In its recent Fall 2021 *Semiannual Report to Congress*, SSA OIG provided case examples detailing the complex nature of the cases it handles and described the organization's achievements. Such achievements include over $106.2 million in monetary accomplishments, 3,976 cases closed, and 1,006 investigative reports issued.

## Strategic Goal 2: Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA programs and operations

SSA OIG's second strategic goal is to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA programs and operations. SSA OIG is responsible for protecting the integrity and efficiency of SSA's administration of approximately $1 trillion in benefit payments annually to more than 70 million people. SSA OIG strives to improve its approach to oversight work, including advancing its capabilities and impact by ensuring the stewardship of SSA programs and conducting core audit, investigative, and legal oversight efforts.

***Ensuring Stewardship of SSA Programs***

In 2021, SSA OIG issued 39 audit reports with recommendations, identifying over $1 billion in questioned costs and over $3.1 billion in Federal funds that could be put to better use. SSA OIG also effected 591 criminal convictions and obtained a return of almost $255 million in monetary accomplishments which includes court-ordered restitution, recoveries, settlements, judgments, fines, civil monetary penalties (CMP), and estimated savings resulting from our investigations. Overall, in FY 2021, SSA OIG identified $38 in returns to the government for every $1 it received through its appropriation.

SSA OIG will continue to focus on stewardship by completing audits that ensure the correct person is paid and benefit payments are accurate. For example, SSA OIG plans to perform additional data matches with states and other Federal agencies and with third parties to help identify payments made to individuals who are not eligible for benefits. SSA OIG also plans to focus on manual processes and SSA's processing of system-generated alerts and to identify the root cause of errors.

SSA OIG's core audit oversight efforts revolve around SSA's most significant management challenges. SSA OIG identifies these challenges annually based on congressional mandates and its audit and investigative work. One such challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed SSA's operations and the manner in which it serves its customers.

Congress passed legislation to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the American public, which included additional mandates for SSA. In 2021, SSA OIG issued a report about SSA's telephone services during June 2020[1] and a final report on the safety of SSA employees and visitors since March 2020.[2] Other audit work continues to review telephone services, safety of employees and visitors, and other aspects of SSA's response to the pandemic.

SSA continues to face challenges with pending disability hearings and related processing times, and the COVID-19 pandemic renewed challenges with pending disability claims and continuing disability reviews. Recently, SSA OIG issued a report to determine whether SSA had taken appropriate actions for disabled beneficiaries whose benefits it suspended for address development, whereabouts unknown, or miscellaneous reasons.[3] SSA should have terminated disability benefits for about 5,699 beneficiaries who did not cooperate with a continuing disability review or requested SSA terminate their benefits. These beneficiaries had approximately $336.7 million in suspended benefits since the date SSA should have terminated their benefits. SSA also should have documented its attempts to locate about 6,055 beneficiaries who had approximately $452.7 million in suspended benefits, and reinstated disability benefits totaling approximately $197.2 million payable to 3,918 beneficiaries. SSA agreed with the four audit recommendations and has begun taking corrective action for some of the beneficiaries.

As mentioned, SSA is responsible for issuing approximately $1 trillion in benefit payments annually. Given the amounts involved, even the slightest error in the overall payment process can result in millions of dollars in over- or underpayments. In its FY 2021 Agency Financial Report, SSA estimated it made approximately $8.3 billion in improper payments in FY 2020. Of those, $6.8 billion were overpayments and $1.5 billion were underpayments. Recent SSA OIG audit work identified the source of such improper payments; for example, in a March of 2020 report, we identified one specific source of improper payments. We estimated SSA employees incorrectly processed approximately 555,000 OASDI post-entitlement alerts[4], which resulted in approximately $1.3 billion in improper payments.

***Investigative Oversight: Detecting and Preventing Social Security Disability Fraud***

Since 1997, the CDI Program has been one of SSA and SSA OIG's most successful anti-fraud initiatives, improving the integrity of SSA's disability programs. CDI units consist of staff from SSA OIG, SSA, state DDS, and state or local law enforcement, collectively using their skills,

[1] Report can be viewed at https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-05-20-50998_0.pdf
[2] Report can be viewed at https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/ a-15-21-51103.pdf
[3] Report can be viewed at https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-09-18-50523.pdf
[4] Report can be viewed at https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-07-18-50621.pdf

knowledge, and expertise to investigate allegations of disability fraud. The program's investigative efforts also benefit other Federal and state programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

To date, 49 CDI units cover 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and all U.S. territories. Since inception, CDI investigations have contributed to a projected savings to taxpayers of more than $7 billion. Accomplishments of the CDI program include the following:

- **October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021**
  Disability claims denied or ceased = 1,078
  Projected savings for SSA programs = $86,018,721
  Projected savings for non-SSA programs = $76,500,094

- **October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020**
  Disability claims denied or ceased FY 2020 = 1,729
  Projected savings for SSA programs FY 2020 = $108,087,930
  Projected savings for non-SSA programs FY 2020 = $116,988,066

Congress passed the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015* (BBA), mandating CDI coverage to all 50 states and U.S. territories by October 2022. SSA OIG and SSA remain on schedule to expand CDI coverage to Maine, Vermont, and Connecticut by the end of FY 2022. SSA OIG and SSA will work with state and local partners to complete CDI coverage in accordance with the BBA by FY 2022.

The *Inspector General Empowerment Act* (IGEA) includes a provision that exempts certain computer matching activities, when conducted by IGs, from the *Computer Matching and Privacy Protection Act* (CMPPA) requirements. SSA OIG plans to use the IGEA to continue to obtain data that can be analyzed to identify elements of disability fraud in SSA's programs. For example, the SSA OIG has initiated a study with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to identify disability beneficiaries who are not utilizing Medicare benefits.

***Legal Oversight: Enforcing the Social Security Act***

SSA's Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) program, delegated to SSA OIG, allows the Inspector General to impose CMPs for certain violations of the *Social Security Act*. SSA OIG's CMP program is an effective administrative enforcement alternative when criminal or civil prosecution is not appropriate or feasible.

Section 1129 of the *Social Security Act*, as amended, authorizes a CMP under Titles II and XVI of the law against anyone who (1) makes a false or misleading statement to SSA to obtain or retain benefits or payments; (2) receives benefits or payments while withholding disclosure of a material fact; or (3) wrongfully converts a beneficiary's payments while acting as a representative payee. Recognizing Americans were facing significant health and economic challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic, SSA OIG suspended most section 1129 CMP actions. However, SSA OIG continued developing Section 1129 cases and has now renewed its focus on enforcing the law.

SSA OIG is also responsible for enforcing Section 1140 of the Social Security Act, which, in part, protects consumers from misleading SSA-related communications. This law prohibits the use of SSA words (for example, Social Security Administration), acronyms (for example, SSA), products (for example, *my* Social Security), symbols (for example, SSA's official emblem), and other SSA-related images (for example, Social Security card) in communications to convey a false association with or authorization by SSA. Every day, SSA OIG combats Section 1140 violations involving websites, emails, telephone solicitations, snail mail, radio, television and Internet broadcasts, app stores, and social media platforms. SSA OIG educates businesses and individuals regarding these violations, assists them in taking corrective action, and ensures that further misuse does not occur. For example, in FY 2021, SSA OIG engaged with Facebook and Instagram to combat imposter social media accounts and pages.

In FY 2021, SSA OIG partnered with various state agencies to combat Section 1140 violations related to SSA-related telephone scams. SSA OIG will continue to expand Section 1140 outreach and enforcement efforts and will increase partnerships with state and Federal agencies to combat Social Security related scams. SSA OIG will also perform additional reviews of possible Section 1140 violations on social media and increase enforcement of Section 1129 cases.

## Strategic Goal 3: Optimize operations

SSA OIG's third strategic goal is to optimize operations through six key initiatives: intergovernmental collaboration, cost-saving efforts, impact-driven initiatives, cybersecurity, modernizing SSA OIG information technology systems, and data analytics.

### *Intergovernmental Collaboration*

To leverage collective experience and resources across government, SSA OIG continues to collaborate with other governmental entities to promote economy and efficiency in investigations. Recently, for example, SSA OIG collaborated with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Civil Division, and other Federal law enforcement agencies on investigations related to imposter scams and elder justice initiatives. SSA OIG also participates in numerous committees, subcommittees, and workgroups under the auspice of CIGIE, including the Investigations, Technology, and Audit committees.

In addition, SSA OIG proactively shares data, information, and best practices with partner organizations to support a government-wide approach to combating fraud. In June 2021, SSA OIG began sharing information collected via its online imposter scam complaint form with the Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Sentinel Network. SSA OIG also shares reports of COVID-19-related unemployment insurance fraud with the Department of Labor OIG. These efforts provide hundreds of law enforcement agencies timely access to the fraud data collected.

SSA OIG also collaborates with state and local entities. In addition to cooperative partnering through the CDI program, OIG assists State Attorneys General with combating imposter scam robocalls. In January 2022, SSA OIG partnered with the State of North Carolina Attorney General, who filed a civil complaint against a Texas-based telecommunications "gateway" carrier that passed millions of suspected scam calls to North Carolina residents. The company is alleged to have knowingly allowed domestic and international scammers to route scam calls to millions of customers via the U.S. telephone network.

SSA OIG intends to continue embracing a collective, government-wide, approach to tackling complex investigative challenges.

**COVID-19 Task Force Participation:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. government issued billions of dollars through relief programs, many of which are targeted by various schemes intended to defraud. These schemes implicate SSA OIG oversight jurisdiction and authority, as many involve identity theft or the misuse of a Social Security Number while perpetuating the fraud. As of March 2022, SSA OIG currently participates in 25 COVID-19 fraud workgroups, including the Unemployment Insurance Fraud Task Force and COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force, both led by the DOJ. SSA OIG also collaborates with other Federal law enforcement entities on joint investigations of schemes targeting the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including unemployment insurance fraud and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) fraud.

For example, in October 2020, an unemployment insurance investigation led to the arrests of five people and seizure of over $1.1 million in cash. The investigation, conducted jointly with Federal and state law enforcement agencies, led to charges that revealed an alleged scheme to use stolen personally identifiable information to fraudulently apply for and receive unemployment benefits and Federal and state tax refunds.

In November 2020, a joint investigation into alleged fraud involving the PPP led to the arrest of a Warren County, New Jersey businessman for wire fraud, bank fraud, and money laundering. SSA OIG worked with other Federal law enforcement agencies to gather evidence of the alleged scheme to submit three fraudulent PPP loan applications. The businessman allegedly received nearly $1.8 million in loans, diverting the funds to accounts under the control of his relatives and to another company that did not obtain a PPP loan.

**Online Portal Abuse Workgroup:** In May 2021, SSA OIG created an OIG community workgroup to collaborate and share information with other OIG partners on schemes that target Federal agency online customer service portals, after notification from SSA that it detected substantial anomalous cyber activity targeting its *my* Social Security application. This workgroup includes many different partners, such as the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, the Department of Education OIG, Department of Labor OIG, Department of Interior OIG, and United States Postal Service OIG. Through the workgroup, SSA OIG community partners reported similar patterns of behavior and activities affecting their respective agency customer service portals. The collaborative workgroup has brought together information technology, audit, cybersecurity, investigative, analytical, and legal experts to focus on portal abuses. The continued collaboration and data sharing initiatives will stimulate community-wide mitigation against these abuses and increase awareness on the perpetual use of technology to carry out complex fraud schemes.

### *Cost-saving Efforts*

SSA OIG is committed to maximizing its resources through several cost-saving efforts. Like others across the governments, the SSA OIG is working to improve real property management by utilize space efficiently, including by consolidating and collocating where appropriate, in support of the broader effort to freeze the footprint. In response to planning for a safe increased return of our staff, SSA OIG is analyzing future office space needs and reimagining our future workplace through flexible employee work schedules and locations. Doing so could reduce the overall footprint, and ultimately costs, associated with SSA OIG's real property inventory.

Additionally, SSA OIG is centralizing several budgetary and operational efforts to improve organizational efficiency. Those efforts involve streamlining budget formulation and execution, including procurements, acquisitions, and agreements. On the operational side, SSA OIG is consolidating processes for facilities and fleet management, along with facilities-related expenses, such as landline and furniture purchases.

SSA OIG is pursuing these cost-saving efforts with the focus of being good stewards of taxpayer dollars, and we have incorporated these savings into our FY 2023 request.

### *Impact-driven Initiatives*

**CDI Hub** SSA OIG remains committed to the success of the CDI Program by increasing oversight and improving operations through dedicated leadership and management. A new organizational structure was implemented to provide management personnel dedicated solely to overseeing CDI investigative and operational efforts, including devoting a Senior Executive Service allocation to provide national oversight of the strategic vision, and to provide for more efficient and effective program management. This reorganization resulted in expanding the CDI Division into three new CDI Field Divisions and will increase the number of SSA OIG employees supporting the program to 71. In conjunction with SSA, SSA OIG has implemented "CDI Hubs" to leverage existing CDI units to conduct investigations in areas of expansion without building office space for each location, resulting in significant cost savings. SSA and SSA OIG are also harnessing the skillsets and institutional knowledge of reemployed annuitants to serve as CDI investigators in areas where SSA OIG has had difficulty securing a state or local law enforcement partner.

**Special Reviews and Professional Responsibility:** In FY 2020, SSA OIG established a dedicated office to improve SSA OIG's oversight of SSA's programs and operations, in addition to fulfilling SSA OIG's statutory duties related to whistleblower protection. The workload of this dedicated office encompasses projects that do not fit squarely within the current SSA OIG structure and can be more effectively handled by a multidisciplinary staff of senior attorneys, criminal investigators, and investigative analysts. Examples include sensitive, high-profile, complex investigations and special reviews involving (1) whistleblower retaliation primarily against employees of SSA, contractors, and grantees; (2) procurement and contract fraud; (3) serious and often sensitive and complex misconduct and mismanagement allegations involving senior-level SSA employees; (4) allegations of misconduct involving OIG employees; (5) referrals from Agency Ethics officials;

and (6) special matters regarding significant public or congressional concern, as well as systemic and recurring management challenges at SSA.

The Inspector General, Congress, whistleblowers, or other sources may request investigations and special reviews that relate to SSA's activities, operations, or personnel (both Headquarters and regional offices), as well as individuals and organizations having official dealings with SSA. These investigations and reviews cover issues that are sensitive, complex, and important to the missions of SSA and SSA OIG.

Since its creation in FY 2020, the Office of Special Reviews and Professional Responsibility (OSRPR) has seen its inventory of sensitive, high-profile matters increase. SSA OIG anticipates that trend will continue as OSRPR management meets with various agency and SSA OIG components to describe OSRPR's mission.

***Cybersecurity***

Realizing the importance of collaboration in cybersecurity efforts, SSA OIG formed an OIG Cybersecurity Workgroup in May 2020 based on recommendations from an internal research initiative. The mission of the SSA OIG Cybersecurity Workgroup is to ensure timely, efficient, and effective cross-component coordination regarding cybersecurity-related issues, analyses, work products, incidents, or other relevant items. Through this workgroup, SSA OIG collaborates on ways it can improve its cyber posture without overlapping Agency efforts. SSA OIG also uses the workgroup to remain current on cybersecurity initiatives and changes in policy to ensure SSA OIG is in compliance.

As cyber threats continue to emerge, it is imperative SSA OIG continues to expand its oversight of cybersecurity initiatives within SSA and across government. In addition, to be compliant with the May 2021 Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity, notably the move to zero trust architecture, SSA OIG must enhance its enterprise applications and staff skillsets. SSA OIG is a contributing member of the SSA Insider Threat Hub, providing valuable cyber and investigative expertise during inquiries of mutual interest. These contributions have aided SSA in developing and resolving matters related to detected cyber anomalies. SSA OIG also leverages partnerships with external agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, for coordination on cyber matters of mutual interest. This funding level allows SSA OIG to invest in employee training to develop cybersecurity skills that will enhance SSA OIG's cybersecurity capabilities and support ongoing collaborative efforts.

***Modernizing SSA OIG Information Technology Systems***

To keep pace with current IT trends and technologies necessary to support efficient and effective SSA OIG audit and investigative functions, SSA OIG requires specialized IT staff to handle IT support and services, systems development and infrastructure maintenance, information security and compliance, and cybersecurity. Currently, an SSA OIG IT staff of 40+ employees supports SSA OIG IT functions nationwide. SSA OIG requires additional IT professionals, trained and skilled in these areas, to support current and future workloads.

In FY 2021, SSA OIG implemented a new investigative case management system to support SSA OIG's investigative processes and workloads. Since the initial release, SSA OIG has continued to provide application support, complete maintenance activities, migrate data, and incorporate new functionality. The success of SSA OIG's mission hinges in large part on the continued operability of its investigative case management system. To ensure system availability, the Budget requests funding for continued application maintenance and the ability to add or modify functionality to meet organizational needs.

Additionally, many of SSA OIG's administrative applications operate on a platform that is nearing end-of-life. As SSA OIG modernizes these critical administrative applications with new databases and business process management tools, SSA OIG must enhance its skillsets in these areas.

For FY 2023, SSA OIG will continue to leverage industry innovations to modernize the critical applications necessary to support SSA OIG audit and investigative functions. Providing specialized training is critical to ensuring SSA OIG has the technical acumen to modernize critical applications, and the FY 2023 Budget supports these efforts. SSA OIG intends to pursue enhanced data sharing and collaboration with other IGs, as well as improving internal abilities to make data-driven decisions.

***Data Analytics***

SSA OIG's data analytics program continues to identify ways to improve operational efficiency, refine strategic decision-making, and maximize organizational impact. This program is made possible by accessing SSA's vast and diverse datasets as well as collaborating with private, public, and governmental entities. Access to internal, SSA, and third-party data sources allows SSA OIG to proactively identify targets of suspected large-scale Social Security fraud, flag vulnerabilities in Social Security's systems for audit review, and prioritize allegations and potential audits to ensure alignment with SSA OIG strategic goals and optimize resource allocation. Through the deployment of these analytical initiatives and many others, SSA OIG can improve employee productivity by optimizing staffing levels across SSA OIG, increase the impact of initiatives internally and with our government partners, and maximize return on investment.

**Strategic Goal 4: Strengthen our workforce**

SSA OIG's employees are the organization's greatest strength, and SSA OIG's success depends on its workforce. To succeed, SSA OIG must build and refine an innovative and agile organization to adapt and respond to changes. SSA OIG plans to address skills gaps, deepen its leadership bench, and promote employee development and innovation in the current workforce team. Through human capital management, SSA OIG will recruit and hire talented and diverse candidates who possess mission-critical competencies.

To meet this strategic goal, SSA OIG will promote diversity and inclusion; implement specialized recruiting, hiring, and retention; and support employee training and recognition. The FY 2023 Budget Request supports these initiatives, which will strengthen the organization's workforce.

### *Employee Training and Recognition*

SSA OIG is committed to investing in, developing, and retaining its employees through job-specific training and professional development. For example, SSA OIG is creating professional development programs for its Senior Executive Service (SES) and non-SES staff. The SES development program will incorporate executive coaching, 360-Degree Leadership Assessments, and training that addresses the Executive Core Qualifications requirements and meets the OPM's standards for SES continuing education and training. The non-SES development program will outline job-specific skills and abilities required for SSA OIG employees to succeed in their job series, and it will outline how SSA OIG will approve funding for external job-specific trainings and courses, including leadership development opportunities, for all employees.

In addition, SSA OIG is using internal data on employee training requests to identify global areas of professional development and seek organization-wide trainings in these areas. SSA OIG is actively working to provide cost-effective training opportunities that will support employees' professional growth and benefit the organization.

The FY 2023 Budget includes $1.2 million for training to satisfy the aforementioned training requirements. Finally, SSA OIG enthusiastically recognizes employees' achievements. The comprehensive, year-round employee awards program includes monetary awards for sustained performance and for special acts and non-monetary awards, such as the annual Inspector General Awards.

### *Specialized Recruiting, Hiring, and Retention*

SSA OIG is also conducting broader human capital planning to more effectively carry out major investigative, audit, and legal initiatives and support emerging priorities, such as combating Social Security-related and government imposter scams and monitoring SSA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, SSA OIG seeks to centralize investigative, analytical, and legal resources to maximize their use and address complex, multijurisdictional investigative challenges. SSA OIG also plans to use data related to SSA's programs, services, and operations to support and enhance investigative, audit, and strategic initiatives.

As of June 2021, about 18 percent of SSA OIG's workforce is eligible for retirement, and an additional 24 percent will become eligible in the next 5 years. SSA OIG's planned internal and contracted human capital management—to include leveraging various hiring authorities, merit promotion processes, and position management strategies—will help the organization anticipate retirement spikes and focus hiring in areas where SSA OIG needs technical support, such as investigative and analytical expertise.

### *Diversity and Inclusion*

In FY 2022, for the first time in the organization's 26-year history, SSA OIG established a formal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA) Council. The Council will enrich SSA OIG's workforce diversity and sustain an inclusive work environment where individual differences are valued, and employees are fully engaged in serving the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations.

The executive-led Council is comprised of SSA OIG diversity champions from all levels of the organization—executives, managers/supervisors, and staff-level employees. The Council serves as a communication forum where SSA OIG employees and leaders share knowledge and exchange innovative diversity and inclusion ideas and information. The Council also cultivates relationships and serves as ambassadors to promote and disseminate information throughout the organization about diversity and inclusion initiatives to advance SSA OIG's ability to recruit, hire, and retain a highly skilled, diverse workforce.

SSA OIG has representation on SSA's Diversity and Inclusion Council, and the organization participates in a CIGIE Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup, gleaning best practices from the agency and the Inspector General community. Additionally, SSA OIG is leveraging human capital information from SSA's Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity, as well as conducting its own workforce assessments, to determine where the organization needs to focus its human capital management—including diversity and inclusion—and plan for future success.

This funding level allows SSA OIG to invest in various DEIA activities including diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training for all SSA OIG employees, recruitment at annual conferences of minority serving organizations, and partnerships with minority serving institutions. These activities will promote a respectful and inclusive workplace and ensure that SSA OIG can recruit and retain the Nation's best talent.

## BUDGETARY RESOURCES

The OIG annual appropriation consists of appropriations from both the general fund and the trust funds. The President's Budget for FY 2023 consists of $33,000,000 appropriated from the general fund, and $84,500,000, which will be transferred and expended as authorized by Section 201(g) (1) of the Social Security Act from the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund. The table below displays budget authority, split by type of funding, and obligations. This table also includes FTEs.

**Table 4.2—OIG Budget Authority and Amounts Available for Obligation**

| | FY 2021 Actual | FY 2022 Estimate | FY 2023 President's Budget | *FY21 to FY23 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| FTE | 499 | 487 | 532 | 45 |
| General Fund Appropriation | $30,000,000 | $30,000,000 | $33,000,000 | $3,000,000 |
| Trust Fund Appropriation | $75,500,000 | $75,500,000 | $84,500,000 | $9,000,000 |
| **Subtotal:** | **$105,500,000** | **$105,500,000** | **$117,500,000** | **$12,000,000** |
| Transfer Authority[1] | $562,100 | | | |
| Program Integrity Transfer[2] | $11,200,000 | $11,200,000 | $15,100,000 | $3,900,000 |
| Program Integrity Carryover[3] | $637,530 | $1,465,700 | $0[4] | ($1,465,700) |
| **Total Authority:** | **$117,899,630** | **$118,165,700** | **$132,600,000** | **$14,700,370** |
| Total Obligation[5] | $115,917,100 | $118,165,700 | $132,038,000 | $14,434,300 |
| Unobligated balance lapsing | $515,744 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

[1] In FY 2021, SSA-OIG provided consultation services for the performance of SSA contract audits of State DDSs, and SSA reimburses SSA-OIG for these services through an annual transfer.
[2] P.L. 116-260 allows SSA to transfer $11.2 million in FY 2021 from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The FY 2022 CR continues this transfer in FY 2022 of up to $11.2 million. The FY 2022 Budget requests a $12.1 million transfer in FY 2022, and the FY 2023 Budget requests a $15.1 million transfer.
[3] SSA OIG's PI allocation adjustment is an 18-month account. The carryover represents the unobligated funds that will be obligated within the first six months of the following fiscal year.
[4] SSA OIG does not estimate any carryover from FY 2022 into FY 2023.
[5] Total Obligations for FY 2023 include $1.4 million of the $2 million in IT Modernization no-year funding with the remaining $562,000 carrying over into FY 2024.

**Table 4.3—Explanation of OIG Budget Changes**

| | FY 22 | | FY 2023 | | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **WYs (FTEs)** | **Budgetary Resources** | **WYs (FTEs)** | **Budgetary Resources** | **WYs (FTEs)** | **Budgetary Resources** |
| **<u>BUILT-IN INCREASES</u>** | | | | | | |
| **Payroll Expenses** | **487** | *$103,605,800* | **487** | *$103,605,800* | **-** | *$0* |
| *· Change in base payroll expenses related to career ladder promotions and within-grade increases* | - | - | - | *$2,007,800* | - | *$2,007,800* |
| *· Change in base expenses for employee benefits including health benefits and new employees hired under the Federal Retirement Employees System* | - | - | - | *$902,100* | - | *$902,100* |
| **Non-Payroll Costs - ** All other built-in non-payroll changes, travel management support and equipment | - | *$9,759,900* | - | *$11,392,500* | - | *$1,632,600* |
| **Rent** | - | *$4,800,000* | - | *$4,681,400* | - | *($118,600)* |
| **Subtotal, Built-in increases** | **487** | ***$118,165,700*** | **487** | ***$122,589,600*** | **-** | ***$4,423,900*** |
| **<u>PROGRAM INCREASES</u>** | | | | | | |
| **Payroll Increase -** Net Increase in OIG WYs | - | - | 45 | *$9,804,700* | 45 | *$9,804,700* |
| **Subtotal, Program Increases** | **-** | **-** | *45* | *$9,804,700* | *45* | *$9,804,700* |
| **Total Increases** | ***487*** | ***$118,165,700*** | ***532*** | ***$132,394,300*** | ***45*** | ***$14,228,600*** |

| | FY 2022 | | FY 2023 | | Change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WYs (FTEs) | Budgetary Resources | WYs (FTEs) | Budgetary Resources | WYs (FTEs) | Budgetary Resources |
| **BUILT-IN DECREASES** | | | | | | |
| **Base Payroll Expenses**—Decrease in all other payroll costs | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Non-Payroll Costs** | | | | | | |
| **Rent** | | | | *($356,300)* | | *($474,900)* |
| **Subtotal, Built-in decreases** | *0* | *0* | *0* | *($356,300)* | *0* | *($474,900)* |
| **PROGRAM DECREASES** | | | | | | |
| **Decrease in costs for training, other support, services, and supplies** | - | - | *0* | - | - | - |
| **Subtotal, Program Decreases** | *0* | *0* | *0* | *0* | *0* | *0* |
| **Total Decreases** | ***0*** | ***$0*** | ***0*** | ***($356,300)*** | ***0*** | ***($474,900)*** |
| **Net Change** | **487** | ***$118,165,700*** | **532** | ***$132,038,000*** | **45** | ***$13,872,300*** |

**Table 4.4—Budget Resources by Object**

| | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | *FY21 to FY23 Change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full-time permanent | $67,900,600 | $69,521,200 | $78,126,800 | *$8,605,600* |
| Other than full-time permanent | $755,200 | $805,200 | $852,300 | *$47,100* |
| Other compensation | $1,160,000 | $1,194,000 | $1,286,700 | *$92,700* |
| Subtotal, Personnel Compensation | $69,815,800 | $71,520,400 | $80,265,800 | *$8,745,400* |
| Civilian personnel benefits | $30,955,300 | $32,085,400 | $36,054,800 | *$3,969,400* |
| Total, Compensation and Benefits | $100,771,100 | $103,605,800 | $116,320,600 | *$12,714,800* |
| Travel | $1,262,500 | $2,548,800 | $2,664,800 | *$116,000* |

| | **FY 2021** | **FY 2022** | **FY 2023** | ***FY21 to FY23 Change*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transportation of things | $46,300 | $51,000 | $60,000 | *$9,000* |
| Rental payments to GSA | $4,215,300 | $4,300,000 | $3,837,200 | *($462,800)* |
| Rental payments to others | $102,100 | $141,000 | $148,100 | *$7,100* |
| Communications, utilities, and others | $517,200 | $647,000 | $633,900 | *($13,100)* |
| Printing and reproduction | $500 | $9,000 | $20,000 | *$11,000* |
| Other services | $3,390,400 | $4,018,100 | $5,764,000 | *$1,745,900* |
| Supplies and materials | $96,000 | $389,000 | $310,600 | *($78,400)* |
| Equipment | $5,604,200 | $2,503,000 | $2,332,700 | *($170,300)* |
| Insurance Claims | 0 | 2000 | $3,100 | *$1,100* |
| Adjustments | ($88,500) | ($49,000) | ($57,000) | *($8,000)* |
| **Total Budgetary Resources** | **$115,917,100**[1] | **$118,165,700** | **$132,038,000** | ***$13,872,300*** |

**Table 4.5—FTE Employment and WYs**

| | **FY 2021 Actual** | **FY 2022 Estimate** | **FY 2023 Estimate** |
|---|---|---|---|
| FTE | 499 | 487 | 532 |
| Overtime / Lump Sum Leave | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| **Total:** | **505** | **493** | **538** |

**Table 4.6—Average Grade and Salary**

| | **FY 2021 Actual** |
|---|---|
| Average ES | $185,300 |
| Average GS | 13 |
| Average GS Salary | $121,600 |

[1] Total includes the $562,100 transferred to SSA-OIG for consultation services on the performance of SSA contract audits of State DDSs.

## APPROPRIATION HISTORY

The table below displays the President's budget request, amounts passed by the House and Senate, and the actual amount appropriated for the period FY 2013 to FY 2021.

### Table 4.7—Appropriation History Table

| Fiscal Year | Budget Estimate to Congress | House Committee Passed | Senate Committee Passed | Enacted Appropriation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| General Funds | $30,000,000 | - - - | $28,887,000 | **$27,376,000** |
| Trust Funds | $77,600,000 | - - - | $73,396,000 | **$72,557,000** |
| 2013 Total | $107,600,000 | - - -[1] | $102,283,000[2] | **$99,933,000**[3] |
| General Funds | $30,000,000 | - - - | $29,689,000 | **$28,829,000** |
| Trust Funds | $75,733,000 | - - - | $74,972,000 | **$73,249,000** |
| 2014 Total | $105,733,000 | - - - | $104,670,000[4] | **$102,078,000**[5] |
| General Funds | $29,000,000 | $28,829,000 | | **$29,000,000** |
| Trust Funds | $75,622,000 | $74,249,000 | | **$74,350,000** |
| 2015 Total | $104,622,000 | $103,078,000[6] | | **$103,350,000**[7] |
| General Funds | $31,000,000 | $30,000,000 | $28,829,000 | **$29,787,000** |
| Trust Funds | $78,795,000 | $78,795,000 | $74,521,000 | **$75,713,000** |
| 2016 Total | $109,795,000 | $108,795,000[8] | $103,350,000[9] | **$105,500,000**[10] |
| General Funds | $31,000,000 | $29,787,000 | $29,829,000 | **$29,787,000** |
| Trust Funds | $81,000,000 | $75,713,000 | $75,713,000 | **$75,713,000** |
| 2017 Total | $112,000,000 | $105,500,000[11] | $105,500,000[12] | **$105,500,000**[13] |
| General Funds | $30,000,000 | $29,796,270 | $29,796,270 | **$30,000,000** |
| Trust Funds | $75,500,000 | $74,987,280 | $74,987,280 | **$75,500,000** |
| 2018 Total | $105,500,000 | $104,783,550[14] | $104,783,550[15] | **$105,500,000**[16] |
| General Funds | $30,000,000 | $31,000,000 | $30,000,000 | **$30,000,000** |
| Trust Funds | $75,500,000 | $77,500,000 | $75,500,000 | **$75,500,000** |
| 2019 Total | $105,500,000 | $108,500,000[17] | $105,500,000[18] | **$105,500,000**[19] |
| General Funds | $30,000,000 | $31,000,000 | $30,000,000 | **$30,000,000** |
| Trust Funds | $75,500,000 | $77,500,000 | $75,500,000 | **$75,500,000** |
| 2020 Total | $105,500,000 | $108,500,000[20] | $105,500,000[21] | **$105,500,000**[22] |
| General Funds | $33,000,000 | $31,000,000 | $30,000,000 | **$30,000,000** |
| Trust Funds | $83,000,000 | $75,500,000 | $75,500,000 | **$75,500,000** |
| 2021 Total | $116,000,000 | $108,500,000[23] | $105,500,000[24] | **$105,500,000**[25] |
| General Funds | $32,000,000 | $32,000,000 | $32,000,000 | |
| Trust Funds | $80,000,000 | $80,000,000 | $80,000,000 | |
| 2022 Total | $112,000,000 | $112,000,000 | $112,000 | |
| General Funds | $33,000,000 | | | |
| Trust Funds | $84,500,000 | | | |
| 2023 Total | $117,500,000 | | | |

[1] The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which included $28,887,000 from general funds and $77,600,000 from trust funds, totaling $106,487,000.

[2] S. 3295.

[3] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6). The $69,557,000 in trust funds included in the language for this account for FY 2013 were increased by $3,000,000 to $72,557,000 as a transfer from SSA to OIG.

[4] S. 1284.

[5] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76).

[6] H.R. 5464.

[7] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).

[8] H.R. 3020

[9] S. 1695.

[10] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113).

[11] H.R. 5926.

[12] S. 3040.

[13] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31).

[14] Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-56). Funding includes a rescission of 0.6791% of FY 2017 appropriation. The $30,000,000 in general funds and $75,500,000 in trust funds included in the language for this account for FY 2018 were reduced by $415,284 and $301,166 respectively, in accordance with P.L. 115-56.

[15] Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-56). Funding includes a rescission of 0.6791% of FY 2017 appropriation. The $30,000,000 in general funds and $75,500,000 in trust funds included in the language for this account for FY 2018 were reduced by $415,284 and $301,166 respectively, in accordance with P.L. 115-56.

[16] Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-56).

[17] H.R. 6157.

[18] H.R. 6157.

[19] Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245).

[20] H.R. 1865.

[21] H.R. 1865.

[22] Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94).

[23] H.R. 133.

[24] H.R. 133.

[25] Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260).

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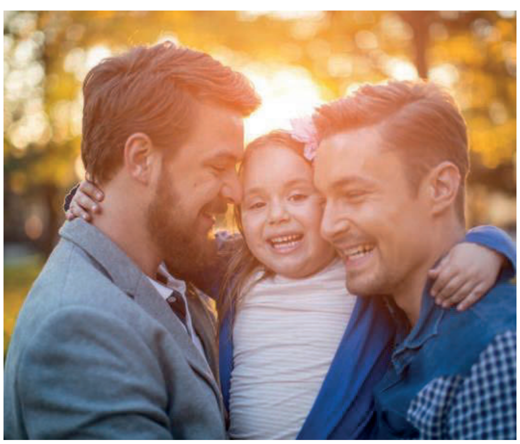
Securing today
and tomorrow

# Social Security Administration

# Annual Performance Report

# Fiscal Years 2021–2023



Annual Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2023
Revised Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2022
Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2021

# Table of Contents

# Message from the Acting Commissioner

I am pleased to present the Social Security Administration's *Annual Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2023, Revised Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2022, and Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2021*, which detail our priorities and goals for the next two fiscal years and our accomplishments in the past fiscal year.

My vision is to provide income security for the diverse population we serve. To deliver on that vision, we will ensure equity and accessibility in delivering Social Security services by improving the customer experience and addressing systemic barriers to participation in our programs.

Last year, despite the difficulties with operating under pandemic conditions, we made significant progress in addressing some key challenges. We reduced the hearings backlog, which is now at its lowest level in over 20 years and plan to eliminate it in FY 2023. We increased the number of registered *my* Social Security users, grew the number of customers successfully using our online services, and established liaisons in our field offices to work with community-based groups who support people who face barriers to our services.

As good stewards of our programs and as required by law, we must continue our quality reviews, cost-effective program integrity work, and payment accuracy efforts to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits for which they are eligible. We will expand the use of data analytics and predictive modeling, and increase the number and scope of strategic partnerships, to effectively administer benefits and protect our programs from waste, fraud, and abuse.

Based on internal evaluations, I affirm that the performance data in this report is complete, reliable, and accurate.

Respectfully,

Kilolo Kijakazi

Kilolo Kijakazi, Ph.D., M.S.W.

Baltimore, Maryland
April 1, 2022

## Vision

Provide income security for the diverse population we serve.

## Mission

Ensure equity and accessibility in delivering Social Security services by improving the customer experience and addressing systemic barriers to participation in our programs.

## Programs

Few government agencies affect the lives of as many people as we do.  We administer three programs under the Social Security Act, as amended:

- **Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI):**  Established in 1935, the OASI program provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their family members.  In fiscal year (FY) 2021, we paid OASI benefits to an average of over 55 million beneficiaries each month, and we paid nearly $983 billion to OASI beneficiaries through the fiscal year.

- **Disability Insurance (DI):**  Established in 1956, the DI program provides benefits for workers who become disabled and their families.  In FY 2021, we paid DI benefits to an average of nearly 10 million beneficiaries each month and paid nearly $141 billion to DI beneficiaries through the fiscal year.

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):**  Established in 1972, the SSI program provides financial support to aged, blind, and disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources.  In FY 2021, we paid SSI benefits to a monthly average of nearly 8 million recipients (approximately 2.6 million of whom concurrently receive OASI or DI benefits), and we paid over $58 billion in SSI Federal benefits and State supplementary payments through the fiscal year.

In addition, we support national programs administered by other Federal and State agencies, as required by law, such as Medicare, *Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act*, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), *Help America Vote Act*, State Children's Health Insurance Program, E-Verify, Medicaid, and Federal Benefits for Veterans.

We administer our programs in accordance with law and regulations.  We have implemented enterprise risk management (ERM) processes to improve the effectiveness of our organization and program administration.  Our goals are informed by strategic opportunities as well as our assessment of program evaluations, our Learning Agenda, and identified risks.

# Organization

Nearly 60,000 Federal employees and 15,000 State employees serve the public from a network of more than 1,500 offices across the country and around the world. We administer our programs and services online, by phone, and in-person in our offices. Our customers can access online services such as applying for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits, checking the status of an application or appeal, or requesting a replacement Social Security card.

A diverse, engaged, and well-trained workforce is critical to meeting our service delivery goals. Most of our employees directly serve the public or provide support to employees who do. We care about the well-being of our workforce and support them throughout their chosen career paths through employee engagement, training, and development.

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly affected our operations and how we serve the public. We have remained open for business throughout the pandemic, while taking steps to keep our workforce and the public safe.

Our highest priority during this unprecedented time is to provide mission-critical services while ensuring the health and safety of the public and our employees, including maximizing remote work during the height of the pandemic and implementing policy and process flexibilities. Our goal is to provide services the public expects and needs in order to access the benefits for which they are eligible. We are accelerating our planning and implementation of alternative digital and remote services, as well as expanding the use of data exchanges to obtain evidence.

During the pandemic, most Social Security services have been available to the public online at www.ssa.gov, by telephone, or via in-person appointments for limited, critical situations, depending upon local office conditions. If a person cannot use our online services, they can call our National 800 Number or their local office (www.ssa.gov/locator/) for assistance. Our National 800 Number callers can conduct business through our 24-hour automated services or by speaking directly with a customer service representative. Our automated services include requesting benefit verification letters, ordering replacement Medicare cards, and obtaining claim status updates. In early April 2022, we will expand appointments and open walk-in service at our field offices for those who need to reach us in person.

In FYs 2020 and 2021, we received significantly fewer disability claims, particularly for SSI benefits. We are working to understand why fewer people applied for SSI during the pandemic, and prioritizing efforts to ensure our SSI program is accessible to underserved communities and people facing barriers to our services.

State agency disability determination services (DDS) make disability determinations for initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews (CDR). We are increasing processing capacity to address the existing backlog of initial disability claims and an anticipated increase in claims in FYs 2022 and 2023.

Administrative law judges (ALJ) in our hearing offices and administrative appeals judges in our Appeals Council decide appealed cases.  In response to the pandemic, we have been holding voluntary telephone and online video hearings.  We are beginning to resume limited in-person hearings.  We continue to make progress toward our goal of eliminating the disability hearings backlog.  The hearings backlog is now at its lowest level in 20 years.

Our processing centers (PC) handle the most complex benefit payment decisions, in addition to issuing benefit payments after appeals decisions, determining and collecting debt, correcting records, and performing program integrity work.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to meet many of our service goals—improving National 800 Number wait times and reducing busy signals, enhancing our digital services, handling the backlogs in our PCs, and accelerating our information technology (IT) modernization plans to make our services more customer-centric.

The pandemic has highlighted opportunities and driven creative solutions to provide alternate service options to the public, lessening the need for people to visit a local office.  We made more of our paper processes electronic, added online service options, and examined how we can enhance service delivery for our customers.  In particular, we are examining our internal policies and procedures for opportunities to improve and provide additional avenues to give our customers more efficient access to our services, including by helping our customers access other Federal benefits, such as SNAP.

For more information about our organization and its functions, visit our organizational structure webpage at www.ssa.gov/org.

## Agency Plans and Performance

This Annual Performance Report addresses the strategic goals, objectives, and strategies in our *Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022–2026* as required by the *Government Performance and Results (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010*. We assess our progress by the performance measures and targets for each strategic objective.

## Cross-Agency Priority Goals

The *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010* requires agencies to address Cross-Agency Priority Goals in our strategic plan and the annual performance plan. Refer to [www.performance.gov](http://www.performance.gov) for our contributions to those goals and progress.

## Agency Priority Goals

As required by the *GPRA Modernization Act of 2010*, we established three agency priority goals (APG) for FYs 2020–2021:

1. Improve customer service in the hearings process by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing decision.
2. Improve the integrity of the Supplemental Security Income program by focusing our efforts on reducing overpayments.
3. Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number.

We established three APGs for FYs 2022–2023 that support multiple objectives across our strategic plan. Annotated below are the strategic objectives most closely aligned with each APG.

1. Improve Equity in the Supplemental Security Income Program. Improve equity in our Supplemental Security Income program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities *(see Strategic Objective 1.1 – Identify and Address Barriers to Accessing Services)*
    a) By September 30, 2023, increase the number of all SSI applications by 15 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline, restoring rates closer to pre-pandemic levels.
    b) By September 30, 2023, increase the number of SSI applications from underserved communities by 25 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline.
2. Improve the National 800 Number Service. Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number *(see Strategic Objective 1.3 – Build a Customer-Focused Organization)*
    a) By September 30, 2023, achieve an average speed of answer of less than 12 minutes, including implementation of estimated wait time and call back options.
3. Improve Initial Disability Claims. Improve the customer experience by reducing the average processing time for initial disability claims and by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for initial disability determinations *(see Strategic Objective 1.3 – Build a Customer-Focused Organization)*
    a) By September 30, 2023, achieve an average processing time for initial disability claims of 164 days.
    b) By September 30, 2023, decide 85 percent of pending initial disability claims that begin the fiscal year 180 days old or older.

APGs are 24-month goals that reflect our top performance improvement priorities and key commitments for advancing the President's Management Agenda. Visit www.performance.gov for more information about how our APGs reflect our key priorities.

# Strategic Goal 1: Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers

Through our OASI, DI, and SSI programs, we provide essential benefits to retirees, survivors, elderly, or blind and disabled individuals, including those with limited income and resources who rely on us to meet life's basic needs. We also support our nation's workforce who are paying into Social Security, by providing Social Security numbers, recording wages and earnings, and maintaining and improving services for workers and their families when they need to access our programs.

Serving our customers is at the heart of all we do. We listen to our customers and adjust how we do business to meet their needs. For example, partially in response to customer feedback, we have offered more services online, expanded ways to obtain claims status, and changed how employers share information with us. Now, we are strengthening our commitment to optimizing customer experience through all steps of accessing our programs. Optimizing the experience of our customers means we provide timely, accurate, and more efficient access to our services through the delivery channel customers prefer. Doing so requires a better understanding of our customers' evolving needs, advancing inclusive policies, and ensuring equity throughout our programs (e.g., targeted outreach to communities of color and underserved communities). It also requires that we continue to examine our current policies and procedures to ensure they are as efficient and equitable as possible.

We are dedicating agency resources to focus on customer experience, including transforming the way we obtain and use customer feedback and how our actions impact service delivery. We expect our customer experience strategies to result in continually improving service delivery. These strategies include adopting human-centered design and standardizing customer experience and satisfaction data collection.

## Strategic Objective 1.1: Identify and Address Barriers to Accessing Services

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy

### Strategies

#### Identify and address potential inequities in current policies and programs

We will routinely engage in conversations with external stakeholders to discuss service delivery methods and how we can achieve efficiencies. We will extend our outreach campaigns to national organizations to reach underserved communities across the country. We will continue to develop and maintain a network of advocates and community-based organizations and meet with them regularly to address the needs of people facing barriers.

In addition, we will look inward to examine the effects of our policies, procedures, and systems on service delivery. For example, we will increase our collection of data by race and ethnicity and employ it to discern whether there are differences in the rate of participation in our programs or disparities in average benefit levels. If there are, we will assess the potential factors contributing to these differences and work to address them.

### Increase support services for unrepresented claimants

Our customers have a right to have a representative to help them conduct business with us. However, nearly 20 percent of claimants at the hearing level do not have representation. We will support unrepresented claimants at the hearing level during our administrative review process. Through improved outreach, our goal is to prepare unrepresented individuals to participate in the hearing process before an administrative law judge. We will also examine our processes and procedures for potential actions that may result in disparate outcomes for unrepresented individuals.

### Conduct implicit bias training for employees

We established a workgroup on implicit bias and worked with training experts to assess and develop new training and a proposed curriculum. We will devise and implement agency-wide policies and trainings to increase equity and equality in our programs. We will use pre- and post-training evaluations to better understand implicit bias within our organization and the impact of our trainings to mitigate bias.

### Conduct and analyze customer satisfaction surveys to identify areas for improvement

We will analyze data to identify areas for improvement. We will consider the perspectives of different data sources, such as our ongoing customer satisfaction, prospective client, and retirement application surveys. We will also review and analyze civil rights complaints submitted by the public.

## Key Initiatives

### Equity and Outreach

We are the nation's largest Federal program, serving as a safety net for millions of individuals. Our vision is to provide income security for the diverse populations we serve, including individuals with disabilities as well as retirees and their families. Our intent is to serve all who are eligible for our programs and remove barriers for people who have few resources and may need our programs the most. We are taking action to ensure equity and accessibility in delivering Social Security services by improving customer experience and addressing systemic barriers to participation in our programs, including potential internal barriers. For more information, please view our Equity Action Plan (https://www.ssa.gov/policy/about/racial-equity-resources.html).

- In FY 2021:
    - We established the Agency Equity Team, including executives from across the agency, in accordance with Executive Order 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government, to coordinate agency-wide and interagency efforts and discuss opportunities to ensure equity in our programs.
    - We established several workgroups, including executives and 180 staff at all levels, to advance equity in the following areas of focus:
        - Improve our stakeholder engagement processes;
        - Assess and create a comprehensive implicit bias curriculum training for all employees;
        - Improve pre-hearing development contacts and outreach to further reach unrepresented claimants and better prepare them to participate in a hearing before an ALJ;
        - Implement a barrier analysis program to identify and address any potential barriers that impede free and open competition in the workplace and in leadership development programs;
        - Improve data collection, use, and sharing of program data on race and ethnicity;
        - Conduct research to determine the impact of our programs and policies on different racial and ethnic groups;
        - Conduct market research on equity and support for underserved communities through Federal government-based guidelines for research grants and contracts to broaden the range of bidders and awardees; and
        - Review gender identity and sexual orientation guidelines prohibiting discrimination and update policy, notices, and other guidance documents to be more inclusive.
    - We identified Social Security beneficiaries whose monthly benefits are less than the maximum monthly Federal SSI benefit and initiated the SSI mailer project to encourage those beneficiaries to apply for SSI as they may be eligible for additional payments under the SSI program, with plans to send several hundred thousand more over the next year.
        - In total, we identified 1.4 million potentially eligible individuals.
        - From mid-December 2020 through January 2022, we released 665,000 mailers. We are releasing the remaining 735,000 mailers from April 2022 to December 2022.
    - We increased communications to field offices to encourage reporting and increased public engagement to voluntarily report race and ethnicity (RE) through our targeted recruitment efforts.

- In FY 2022, we plan to:
    - Review our outreach initiatives to determine the impact on equity and outreach goals, ensuring that our efforts improve customer service and maximize access to our programs.
    - Use administrative and Census data to identify underserved communities,[1] conduct targeted outreach to these communities, and increase access to the SSI program.
    - Conduct the following research activities on our Disability Insurance and SSI programs:
        - Use our Disability Research Surveys to learn about barriers applicants face and implement changes to our DI and SSI programs, as appropriate;
        - Partner with States, private foundations, and other non-Federal groups and organizations and conduct research to test strategies for assisting claimants in underserved communities; and
        - Create journey maps of customer experiences in our DI and SSI programs to determine how we can simplify these programs.
    - Work with the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives, to increase representation for DI and especially SSI claimants, as they tend to have lower levels of representation.
    - Reach out to unrepresented claimants to prepare them for the hearing process.
    - Host a listening session with advocates, medical professionals, and stakeholders to learn about improving policy, service, and access to our disability programs for individuals in the LGBTQIA+ community.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we will:
    - Simplify our service delivery by providing alternatives to in-person visits when possible.
    - Examine the impact of internal processes on outcomes for unrepresented claimants in the disability application process, as well as examine the effects of other internal policies, processes, and systems on service delivery as part of our cross-goal activities.

[1] As defined in EO 13985, the term "underserved communities" refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

## Establish Enterprise Voice of Customer (VoC) Feedback Collection

We have been conducting annual customer re-contact studies, online satisfaction surveys, and automated post-call surveys for many years. However, our understanding of the customer's experience has been limited because feedback is collected and managed by different parts of the organization. An enterprise VoC will allow us to capture real-time customer feedback across all service channels to help identify pain points along customers' journeys.

As we increase access to our in-person services, we are considering new approaches to scheduling appointments, completing customer intake, and avoiding crowded waiting rooms. We will use the VoC to guide and validate the effectiveness of these processes from the customer perspective, in addition to other workload, internal process, and benefit delivery measures.

- In FY 2021, we procured an industry-leading customer feedback management platform and deployed a persistent "Feedback" option to multiple high-traffic ssa.gov pages. We launched a voluntary survey to claimants and representatives who participated in online video hearings to assess customer satisfaction with this new hearing option.
- In FY 2022, we plan to communicate and market a feedback survey to customers across all major service channels (i.e., online, National 800 Number, and field offices), deploy the "Feedback" option to all ssa.gov pages, standardize surveys across service channels, and establish a baseline satisfaction measurement compliant with Federal requirements.
- In FY 2023, we plan to set agency Customer Experience performance targets and goals for improvement using FY 2022 baseline data.

# Performance Measures

## 1.1a Improve equity in our Supplemental Security Income program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities (also a two-year APG)

| Fiscal Year | 2023 | |
|---|---|---|
| Target | By September 30, 2023, increase the number of all SSI applications by 15 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline, restoring rates closer to pre-pandemic levels | By September 30, 2023, increase the number of SSI applications from underserved communities by 25 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline |

**Data Definition: The targets represent the total number of total SSI applications received and the subset received from underserved communities.**

## Strategic Objective 1.2:  Expand Digital Services

Lead:  Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Deputy Commissioner for Systems

### Strategies

#### Better understand our customers' service preferences

To improve customer experience, we will deepen our understanding of our customers, including what drives their evolving service preferences.  We will learn more about our customers' journey through various service channels and touchpoints.  We will use Voice of Customer feedback to understand our customers' needs and preferences and adjust to improve their experience.  Specifically, an enterprise-wide Voice of Customer feedback will allow us to capture real-time customer feedback across all service channels, which we will use to identify customers' pain points and assess effectiveness of current and new processes.

#### Address our customers' service needs

We will implement industry leading customer experience best practices to analyze our customers' journey from start to finish.  Through this analysis we will identify opportunities for improvement and develop and implement solutions that will improve our customers' experiences.  Solutions will include expanding options that provide a fully digital service experience for many of our services on a variety of electronic devices and from any location with internet service.  We will also introduce new online options and continue to provide and improve service through our phone and in-office service channels.  For example, customers will be able to express an intent to file for SSI benefits online and use a mobile-accessible, online process to upload forms and other documentation.

#### Increase the use of secure digital services

While we provide the public with additional digital services such as online, remote, and self-service options that represent the best of current technology, we must do so in a way that maintains our strong commitment to protect our customers from current and emerging threats including identity theft and scams to steal money or personal information.  The combination of additional service options and secure access allows our customers to confidently use our digital services.

### Key Initiatives

#### Enhance the Digital Experience

##### Noteworthy Progress

We are making noteworthy progress toward Enhancing the Digital Experience.  We are exploring ways to enhance customer experience by providing convenient, user-friendly, and secure digital self-service options.  We are adding services online and exploring more self-service options to help reduce wait times.  We are modernizing customer experience by enabling the customer to submit and sign documents electronically.  (see Figure 1.)

- In FY 2021, we implemented a *beta* site for ssa.gov that includes streamlined content and a redesigned home page and web template.[2]  We continue to use customer feedback, solicited from online surveys and focus groups, to make appropriate adjustments to the *beta* site.
- In FY 2022, we plan to transition the final redesigned ssa.gov website into production based on *beta* site customer feedback.  We also are developing a mobile-accessible, online process for individuals applying for or receiving services to upload forms, documentation, evidence, or correspondence without needing to travel to a field office.
- In FY 2023, we plan to introduce online capabilities and add enhancements to the online experience based on customer feedback and on our internal analyses.

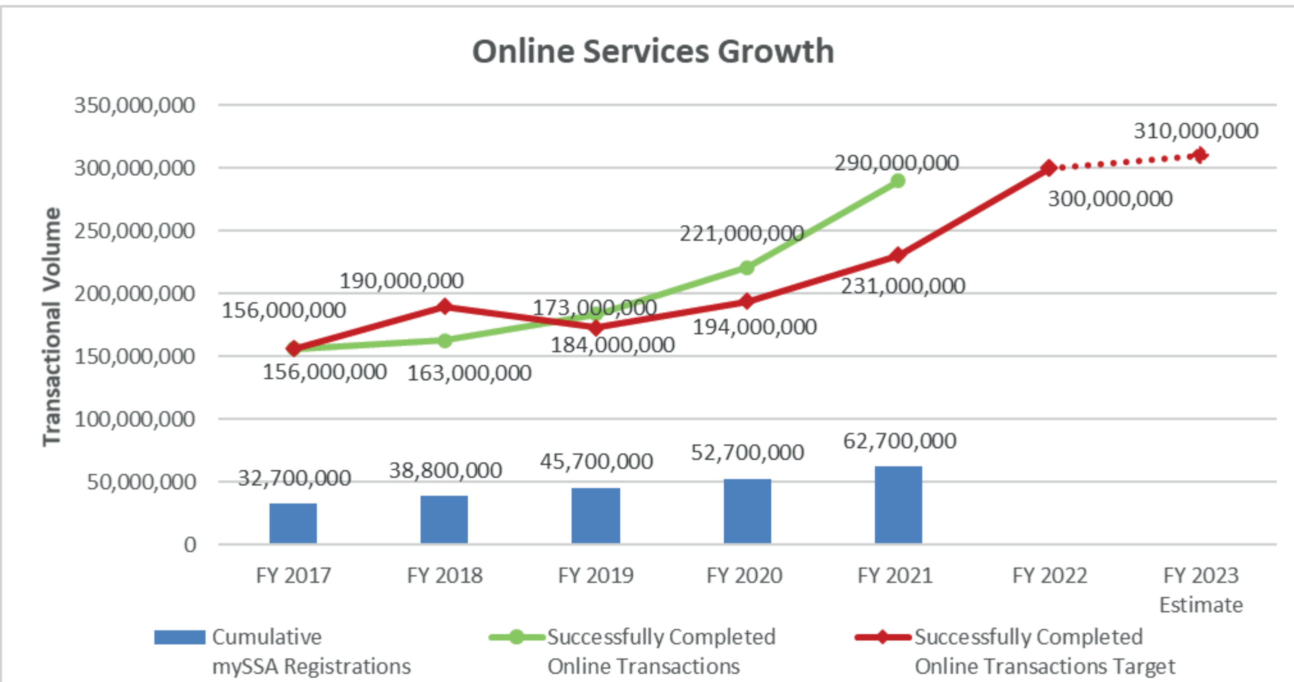



**Figure 1.**  The cumulative number of *my* Social Security (mySSA) registrations, successfully completed online transactions, and successfully completed online transactions target from FYs 2017 to 2023.

[2] Our *beta* site is a part of ssa.gov and allows the public to use the *beta* site as an alternative to, and in parallel with, the production website.  The public can distinguish between the *beta* and production sites.

## Enhance *my* Social Security

*my* Social Security is our online portal that provides registered users with a convenient, secure option to conduct business with us or view their Social Security records. *my* Social Security offers a broad range of services, including changing an address or direct deposit information, getting personal retirement benefit estimates, and requesting a replacement Social Security number (SSN) card. *my* Social Security allows access from various devices.

- In FY 2021, we expanded user features for individual representative payees by adding a standardized benefit verification letter and a Medicare Replacement card request option. We also enhanced claim status tracking.
- In FY 2022, we plan to enhance user experience, streamline the online claims process for our customers, and reduce the amount of contact with a claims representative needed to complete an application. We also plan to improve the claims status tracker and the online portal design.
- In FY 2023, we plan to enhance the online portal design and engage in discovery activities to explore and prioritize expanding the ability for customers to apply for benefits online.

## Enhance Online Appeals

We are improving the iAppeals online application process for people who appeal an agency decision for non-medical issues such as overpayments or Medicare premium rates. Our enhancements will integrate the Medical and Non-Medical iAppeals via an authenticated claimant and appointed representative portal.

- In FY 2021, we began preparing a single Online Appeals application that will route beneficiaries and appointed representatives to the appropriate medical or non-medical appeal; and allow beneficiaries and appointed representatives to view previously submitted information.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we will work with stakeholders to develop a single Online Appeals application that will route beneficiaries and appointed representatives to the appropriate medical or non-medical appeal and allow beneficiaries and appointed representatives to view previously submitted information.

## Enhance Online Service Options for Appointed Representatives

We are exploring ways to improve the experience for claimants, their representatives, and our technicians by developing the Appeals and Appointed Representative Processing Services (AARPS). AARPS will be an online portal with self-service options for customers and appointed representatives to complete electronically the appointment of representative process, fee agreements, appeals, registration, and other related workloads. AARPS will also reduce paper workloads for our technicians and ensure accurate, consistent, and transparent communications with our customers.

- In FY 2021, we worked with stakeholders on the development of the AARPS.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we plan to develop and implement AARPS, incorporating stakeholder input.

### Online Options for New Social Security Numbers and Replacement Cards

We are expanding online service options for replacing SSN cards, so members of the public do not need to visit an office. For example, adult U.S. citizens who meet certain criteria may apply for a replacement card using our internet Social Security Number Replacement Card (iSSNRC) online application, which can be accessed with a *my* Social Security account. We have an agreement with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators under which we verify an iSSNRC applicant's identity by matching State driver's license data. (see Figure 2.)

- In FY 2021 we awarded a contract for verifying State marriage data, allowing customers with a name change due to marriage, who meet certain criteria and reside in a participating State, to request a replacement SSN card through the iSSNRC. Additionally, we began building the iSSNRC prototype to include marriage data questions and elements. We enhanced the security of iSSNRC and expanded the availability of iSSNRC to Nevada.
- In FY 2022, we will expand iSSNRC to non-participating States. We will continue incorporating the name change due to marriage initiative in iSSNRC, allowing eligible customers to request a replacement SSN card.
- In FY 2023, we will expand the marriage data exchange; integrate the Electronic Verification of Vital Events data exchange into iSSNRC to verify birth information; and explore additional avenues to increase access and enhance security.

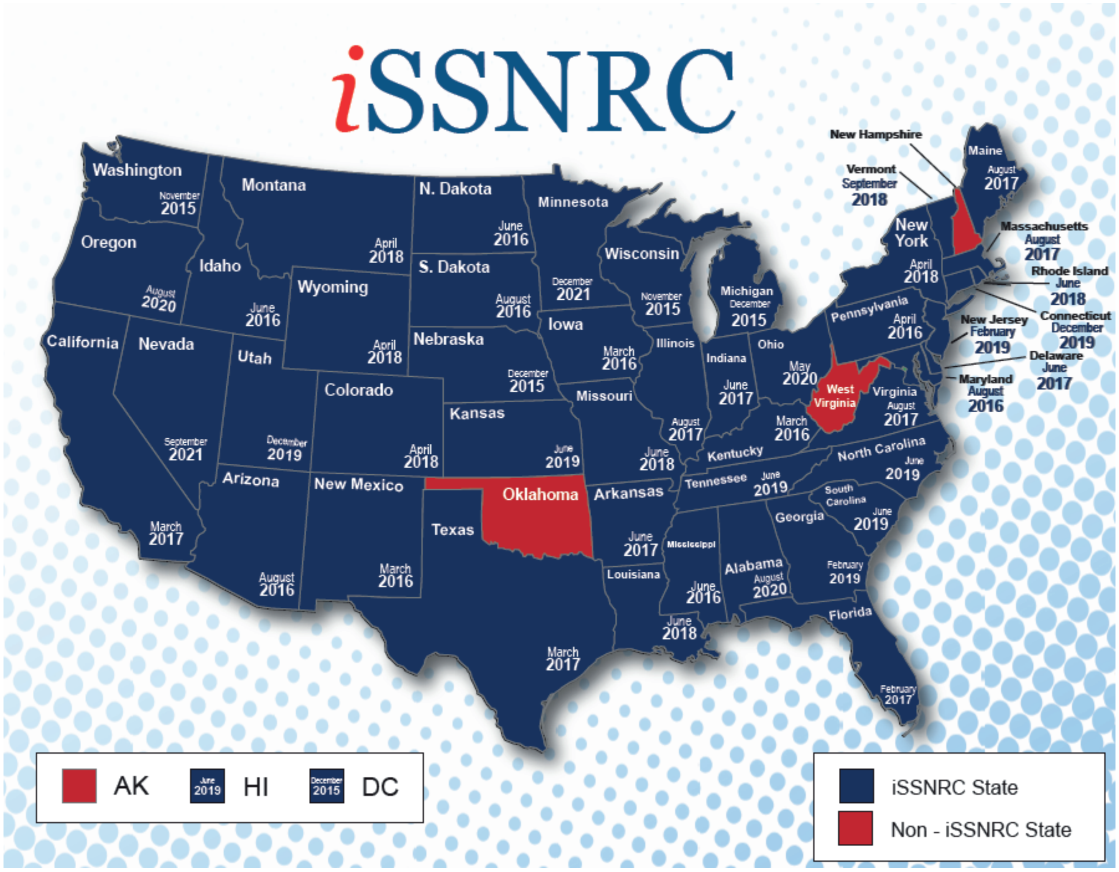



**Figure 2.** Forty-six States and the District of Columbia have the iSSNRC option available. Alaska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and West Virginia do not have the iSSNRC option.

## Performance Measures

### Performance Measure 1.2a: Redesign SSA's website to enhance the user's online experience

| Fiscal Year | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Implement a redesigned ssa.gov web template and home page | Implement a *beta* site for ssa.gov with updated content and a redesigned template and home page. Achieve a two-point increase in customer satisfaction with the redesigned home page of the *beta* site. | Implement final redesigned website and establish baseline customer experience scores using our new customer feedback platform. |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Met | TBD |
| **Performance** | We completed the content audit for the full informational site, completed the new information architecture and design, and completed the retirement path updates. | We implemented a beta site for ssa.gov. We achieved a two-point increase in customer satisfaction with the redesigned home page of the beta site. | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We successfully implemented an ssa.gov beta site with updated content and a redesigned home page. We achieved a two-point increase in customer satisfaction with the redesigned home page of the beta site. | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents implementation of a redesigned ssa.gov web template and home page and establishing baseline satisfaction scores using our new customer feedback platform.**

## Performance Measure 1.2b: Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 156 million | Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 35 million over the prior year (~190 million) | Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 10 million over the prior year (~173 million) | Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 10 million over the prior year (~194 million) | Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 10 million over the prior year (~231 million) | Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 10 million over the prior year (~300 million) | Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 10 million over the prior year (~310 million) |
| **Target Met** | Met | Not Met | Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 156 million | 163 million | 184 million | 221 million | 290 million | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in FY 2021, more people visited ssa.gov and used our online services, which resulted in nearly 290 million transactions. | | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the total the number of online transactions successfully completed. Note, this is the fiscal year total of transactions completed on ssa.gov (e.g., address changes, claims filed, replacement SSN cards).**

## Strategic Objective 1.3: Build a Customer-Focused Organization

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Operations, Deputy Commissioner for Hearings Operations, and Deputy Commissioner for Systems

### Strategies

#### Continue modernizing our information technology

We will provide employees with effective, easy-to-use tools that help them serve our customers more efficiently. We will continue to improve self-service support tools and video options, allowing our customers to choose how and when to conduct transactions and receive immediate access to available online records, support, and service. Improvements in our IT will, for example, improve the accuracy and timeliness of our decisions and enable the public to provide medical evidence and schedule appointments online.

#### Improve timeliness and eliminate and prevent backlogs

Disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to backlogs in several parts of our organization. For example, the number of initial disability claims pending and the average processing time for these claims has increased. We must work down the backlog of cases while also handling a projected increase in disability applications, and we are prioritizing actions to reduce the time it takes for individuals to receive initial disability decisions. We acknowledge that it is challenging for individuals to wait five and a half months on average to receive a disability decision. We have made it a priority to improve the average processing time for initial claims generally and work down older cases, even as our initial claims receipts are projected to increase. We are increasing capacity to process these initial claims and prioritizing those who have waited the longest. Our new APG on initial disability claims reflects this commitment.

We will identify opportunities in policies, workloads, and processes for improving and enabling efficient and effective operations. We will improve claims systems, such as the disability claims processing system, by increasing our access to electronic medical information to make timely and policy-compliant disability determinations and improve our customers' disability application experience.

While we are striving to eliminate the hearings backlog in FY 2023, we are exploring technology enhancements, including greater automation and policy and process efficiencies to eliminate and prevent hearings delays and backlogs. We will explore automation options for other backlogs, such as initial disability claims and our processing center workloads and improve National 800 Number service performance.

## Key Initiatives

### Information Technology Modernization

Four years ago, we began a multi-year *IT Modernization Plan* (www.ssa.gov/open/materials/IT-Modernization-Plan.pdf), supported by $415 million in dedicated appropriations from Congress. We review our modernization plan to ensure it is flexible to keep up with rapid technology changes and future customer needs. In 2020, we updated our plan, building on our progress in addressing foundational modernization needs and incorporating input from public and private technology experts, our frontline employees, and the public we serve.

Our *IT Modernization Plan, 2020 Update* (www.ssa.gov/open/materials/IT-Modernization-Plan-2020-Update.pdf) emphasizes service modernization, which includes building additional digital services; improving and expanding automated services available through our National 800 Number; and providing additional self-service and expedited services in our field offices.

- In FY 2021, we:
  - Provided DDS employees with a tool that uses artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to automatically analyze and process medical evidence.
  - Enhanced our Claims Status process with the release of our Claim Status Tracker (CST). CST provides real-time information and sets expectations throughout the application process for all initial claims and appeals.
  - We piloted our internet Employer Wage Reporting Journey (EWRJ), simplifying the process for employers to submit annual wage data. The EWRJ encourages electronic online filing, reduces paper wage processing, and reduce data errors. EWRJ provides guided instructions and displays the wage file progress and results in real time. We piloted wage file uploads with over 20 employers and submitters that processed 19 million wage reports and improved customer experience as reflected in a 96 percent usability score.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we will:
  - Enable the public to schedule appointments online for select services;
  - Introduce an online service for adult disability beneficiaries to complete the SSA-454 (Continuing Disability Report) without needing to visit a field office;
  - Expand mobile check-in services available to field office visitors;
  - Expand the number of forms users can complete online;
  - Implement electronic calendaring for all hearing participants, allowing our staff to schedule hearings; and
  - Increase the ability to obtain a replacement Social Security card without needing to visit a field office.

## Improve 800 Number Services

Millions of our customers count on our National 800 Number technicians to answer important questions; therefore, we are focused on improving the timeliness of our National 800 Number average speed of answer (ASA)[3] and agent busy rate (ABR).[4] We will improve service and reduce wait times through targeted hiring, improved training methods, and additional automated services through our Next Generation Telephony Project (NGTP).

- In FY 2021, our agents handled more than 31 million calls. We hired and trained additional agents to improve our ability to address 800 Number callers efficiently. We also focused on new training and oversight methods to enhance the quality of our responses and resolve callers' questions during their first contact.
- In FY 2022, we plan to end the year with an ASA of 19 minutes and reach an ABR of 7 percent.
- In FY 2023, we plan to implement tools within NGTP that will better direct calls between the 800 Number and field offices, including expanded self-help service for the 800 Number. By the end of FY 2023, we expect to reduce the ASA to less than 12 minutes and maintain an ABR of 1 percent.

## Modernize the *Social Security Statement*

To improve customer service and the public's understanding of our programs, we are modernizing the *Social Security Statement*. The modernized *Statement* provides users with their earnings records, Social Security and Medicare taxes paid, and future benefit estimates, as well as access and links to retirement planning tools, calculators, supplemental fact sheets, and other applicable information.

- In FY 2021, we launched nine supplemental fact sheets, to accompany the Statement and present information based on the user's age and earnings history.
- In FY 2022, we provided the redesigned *Statement* and fact sheets to all users in the *my* Social Security portal. We also began mailing the redesigned *Statement* and supplemental fact sheets in black and white print. We plan to continue our *Statement* modernization efforts and solicit, receive, and assess feedback from the public, stakeholders, and advocates to incorporate in the documents. We are developing an additional supplemental fact sheet.

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[3] The Average Speed of Answer is the average amount of time callers wait in queue to be answered by an agent. Wait time begins when the call is placed in queue and ends when the agent answers.

[4] The Agent Busy Rate is the percentage of calls routed for live agent service that encounter a busy call back message.

- In FY 2023, we plan to begin the contract negotiation for color printing the mailed *Statements*.

## Expand Video Service Delivery

Video service delivery (VSD) allows us to provide a video face-to-face service option, which helps us balance our workloads and reduce wait times. We offer VSD in over 900 convenient locations across the country such as our field offices, hospitals, libraries, community centers, American Indian tribal centers, homeless shelters, and other government agencies. VSD offers high-resolution magnification and black light capability, allowing for in-depth review of the security features and authenticity of the evidence presented. However, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced customers' ability to access these VSD locations.

While VSD requires individuals to go into specific locations that offer VSD service, our videoconferencing platform allows the public to obtain online face-to-face service from our employees from any location, using their personal devices.

- FY 2021, we deployed videoconferencing to our frontline employees. We tested videoconferencing for several workloads, including contractors conducting representative payee reviews. In December 2020, we implemented online video hearings with ALJs. We also implemented several videoconferencing features, including desktop sharing, channels, and conference call capabilities.
- In FY 2022, we plan to expand VSD services to 60 additional field offices and third-party sites throughout the nation. We will also deploy videoconferencing to all remaining SSA and DDS employees.
- In FY 2023, we plan to expand VSD services to 60 additional field offices and third-party sites across the nation. We also plan to explore other video alternatives to support new and ongoing agency initiatives and roll out the videoconferencing recording feature.

## Expand Access to Electronic Medical Evidence

We depend on healthcare providers to send us the medical records we need to determine whether a claimant is disabled. We offer multiple electronic delivery formats to make it easier for medical providers to submit evidence, allow disability adjudicators to efficiently identify pertinent information, and improve the disability determination process through use of data analytics.

- In FY 2021, we onboarded 14 partners to exchange medical records electronically. We received over 53 percent of our medical evidence electronically.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we plan to continue our work to onboard new and larger partners to increase the volume of evidence we receive electronically. We expect to increase the percentage of medical evidence we receive electronically to 55 percent in FY 2022 and to 57 percent in FY 2023.

## Modernize Disability Case Processing

We are bringing decision support tools using artificial intelligence technologies, machine learning, and predictive analytics to many aspects of the disability determination process to improve decisional accuracy and policy compliance. We are improving disability case processing through our enterprise-wide efforts to develop and implement modern, national claims processing systems that will seamlessly interact with each other from initial claim filing through a final appeal decision. We are replacing aging systems to provide more efficient and consistent case processing, improve our customer's experience, and reduce administrative costs. We are integrating the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS2), Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System (HACPS), and the Quality Review Case Processing System (QRCPS) across our offices and DDSs.

- In FY 2021, we increased DCPS2 functionality and deployed DCPS2 to 4 additional DDSs, bringing the total to 49 of the 52 DDSs supported in production. Also, 37 DDSs completed the transition from legacy systems and are fully utilizing DCPS2 to process disability claims. We completed the nationwide rollout of HACPS to all 189 sites and about 8,000 employees. We also completed a QRCPS release that allowed for the processing of additional case types.
- In FY 2022, we plan to complete our DCPS2 deployment and transition from legacy systems for all DDSs.
- In FY 2023, we plan to support DCPS2 in Operations and Maintenance through the DDS Community of Practice. We also plan to continue adding functionality to QRCPS.

## Reduce the Hearings Backlog

Eliminating the hearings backlog and reducing the time it takes to receive a hearing decision are among our most critical priorities. Our Compassionate And REsponsive Service (CARES) plan is a multi-pronged approach to eliminate the hearings backlog through increased decisional capacity, business process efficiencies, and IT innovations. With our CARES plan, the special hearings backlog funding we received, and our dedicated employees, we are significantly reducing the average wait for a hearing decision. The average wait time in FY 2021 was at the lowest level since FY 2001. We expect to eliminate the hearings backlog in FY 2023. (see Figures 3 and 4.)

- In FY 2021, we reduced the hearings pending to about 350,000. The annual average processing time was 326 days and the monthly average wait time for September 2021 was 362 days.
- In FY 2022, we plan to end the year with an annual average processing time of 375 days. We are preparing for a downstream increase in hearings requests in anticipation of the DDSs processing increased volumes of initial disability claims and reconsiderations, and we will work down this projected workload increase in 2023. We will closely monitor

the impact of additional disability applications on our appeals process to avoid creating new backlogs.

- In FY 2023, we estimate the annual average processing time will be 335 days, and the monthly average processing time will be 270 days by September 30, 2023. We will monitor our incoming workloads and our capacity to complete work. This will help us manage the resources needed to prevent the recurrence of the backlog.

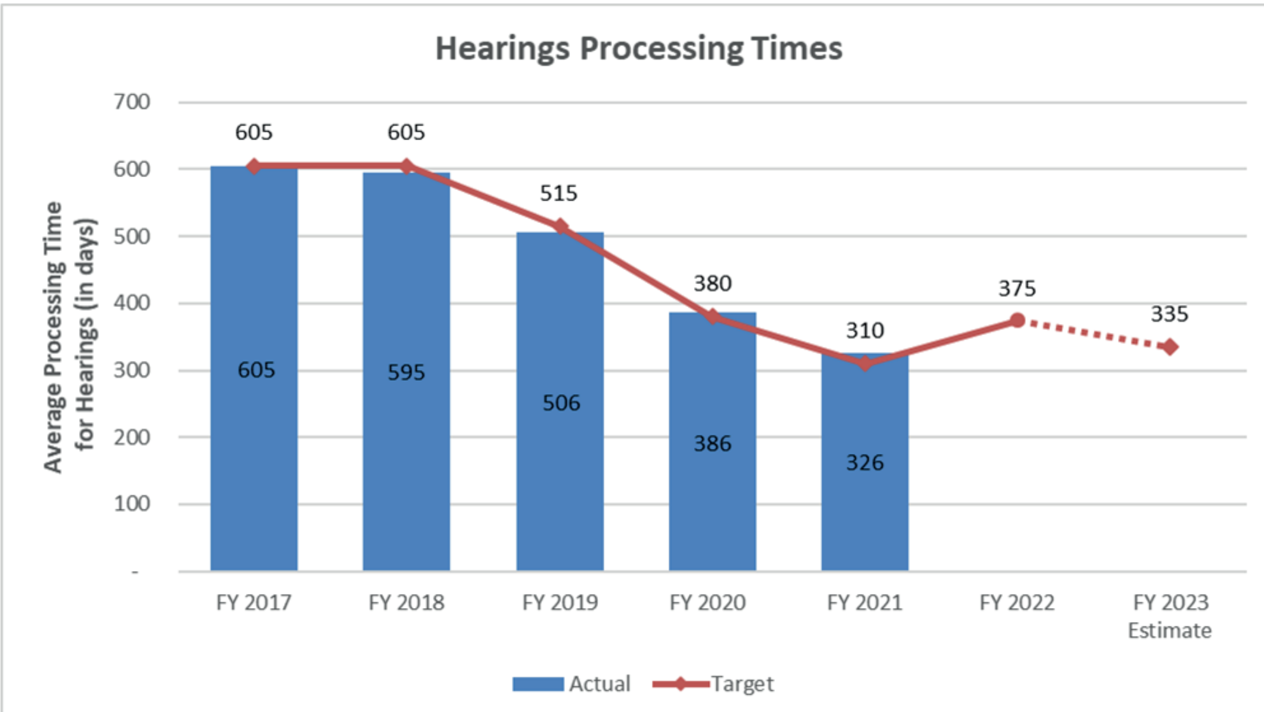


**Figure 3.** The average number of days a person waits for a decision by an ALJ for cases closed in each fiscal year from 2017 to 2023.

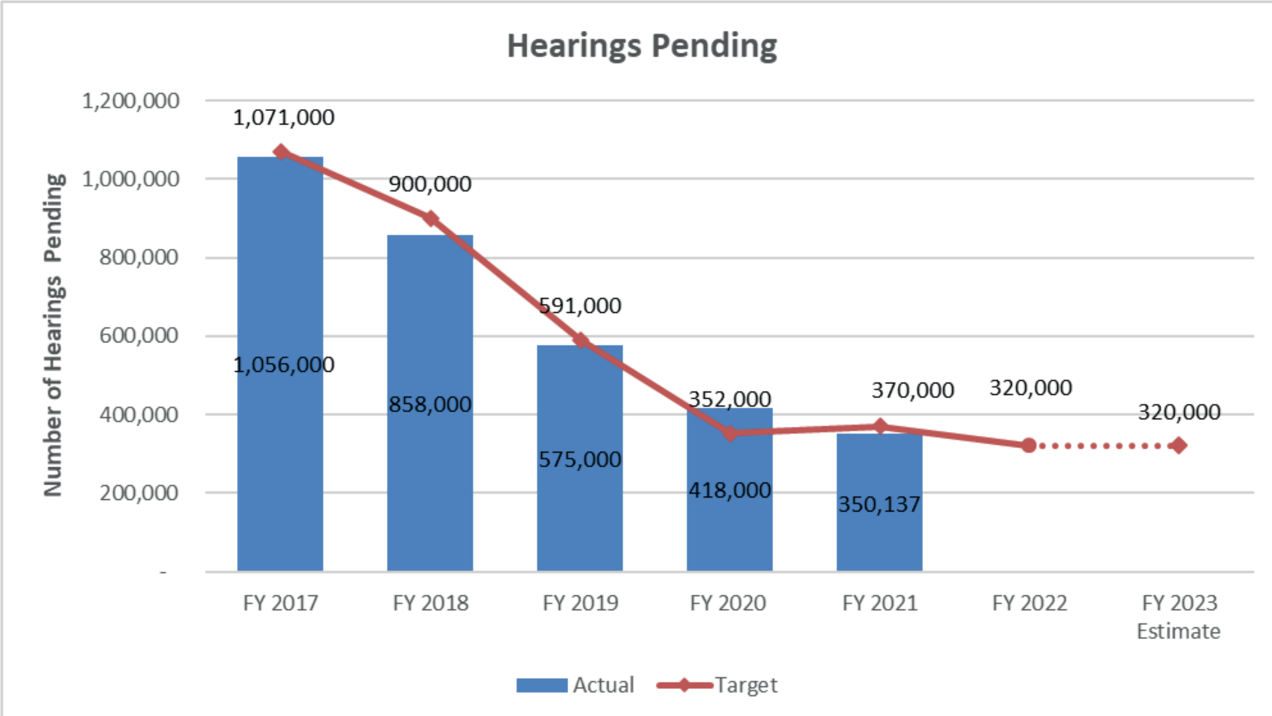


**Figure 4.** The number of hearings pending in the Office of Hearings Operations at the end of each fiscal year from 2017 to 2023.

## Reduce the Processing Center Backlog

Our PCs handle complex Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability benefit payment decisions. The PC are focused on reducing the backlog of pending actions. In FY 2021, we reduced the average age of pending actions in the PCs by around 78 days.

In FY 2021, we completed a multi-phase programmatic debt write-off project to analyze and identify debt determined to be delinquent and uncollectible. By terminating collection activity on uncollectible debts, we will better reflect current receivables on our financial statements and permanently removed over 430,000 actions from the pending backlog. While we are terminating active collection efforts, the debt will remain on the individual's agency record for future collection, where appropriate and applicable. If eligible, we will refer these delinquent debts to the Treasury Offset Program for external collection action.

- In FY 2021, we:
  - Reduced the incoming actions for the PCs by automating garnishment notices and enhancing OASDI beneficiary manual notices;
  - Reduced the amount of manual benefit resumption actions due to representative payee changes by automating a single update to one record resulting in updates to all other records when an individual receives multiple benefits;
  - Gained processing efficiencies by automating technician alerts when there is a change in the amount of Federal workers' compensation payments received;

- Updated our processes to automate the handling of returned checks; and
- Maintained staffing for the PCs, instituted workflow enhancements and quality initiatives to improve overall performance and focused on reducing aged and pending PC workloads.

- In FY 2022, we will focus on reducing the time it takes for our PC technicians to process incoming actions and improve payment timeliness. We will also look for opportunities to address simple tasks more quickly and implement automation to eliminate duplicate work.
- In FY 2023, we plan to identify and implement workload strategies that will reduce the PC pending and improve processing quality.

## Performance Measures

### Performance Measure 1.3a: Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number (also a two-year APG)

| Fiscal Year | 2023 | |
|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Achieve an average speed of answer of less than 12 minutes | Implement Estimated Wait Time and Call Back options |

**Data Definition: The target represents the average amount of time it takes to answer a call once it routes to an agent for service and implementing Estimated Wait Time and Call Back options.**

### Performance Measure 1.3b: Improve the customer experience by reducing the average processing time for initial disability claims and by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for an initial disability determination (also a two-year APG)

| Fiscal Year | 2023 | |
|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Achieve an average processing time for initial disability claims of 164 days | Decide 85 percent of pending initial disability claims that begin the fiscal year 180 days old or older |

**Data Definition: Average processing time represents the amount of time it takes for an initial disability claim to be processed nation-wide. The aged case target represents the percentage of aged cases completed by the end of the fiscal year that started the year 180 days old or older.**

## Performance Measure 1.3c: Expand video service delivery

| Fiscal Year | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Target | Implement MS Teams to 100% of frontline employees | Implement videoconferencing to 100% of SSA and DDS employees | Implement additional videoconferencing features |
| Target Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| Performance | MS Teams was successfully deployed to 100 percent of SSA frontline employees. | TBD | TBD |
| FY 2021 Performance Results | We added videoconferencing capabilities and additional features to all of our frontline staff and began the rollout to the remaining SSA and DDS staff. | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the implementation of a unified communication and collaboration platform that includes workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration.**

## Performance Measure 1.3d: Provide uninterrupted access to our systems during scheduled times of operations

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 99.90% availability | 99.90% availability | 99.90% availability | 99.90% availability | 99.90% availability | 99.90% availability | 99.90% availability |
| Target Met | Met | Met | Met | Not Met | Not Met | TBD | TBD |
| Performance | 99.96% availability | 99.95% availability | 99.95% availability | 99.84% availability | 99.89% availability | TBD | TBD |
| FY 2021 Performance Results | We experienced business continuity challenges resulting in system availability percentages slightly under our target goal of 99.90 percent. We responded to the challenges by adding new online services for our customers and employees. We remotely managed end-user devices, upgraded hardware and security, added video services, and implemented innovative solutions to help address our personnel and public service needs. | | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the average percentage of availability of our systems infrastructure.**

## Performance Measure 1.3e: Implement a New Framework for the Acquisition of Electronic Medical Evidence

| Fiscal Year | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Implement Phase I of the Electronic Evidence Acquisition (EEA) Framework | Implement an exchange with a large Medical Evidence network | Implement Phase II of the Electronic Evidence Acquisition Framework. Onboard a large Medical Evidence network. |
| **Target Met** | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We released Unified Systems for Evidence for Experts Release 1.0 to improve the user experience of the medical and vocational experts who support the hearings and appeals levels in the disability determination process. We also released the Systems for Evidence Acquisition MI portal to provide users with an enhanced visualization into Health IT medical evidence of record analysis by using a new metric (i.e., medical evidence documents per case) to better assess evidence acquisition volume year-over-year and between offices and regions. In addition, we onboarded 14 partners. | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the implementation of the EEA program and includes establishing an MI framework; implementing a Structured Data store; and establishing connections with Electronic Health Records vendors and Health Information Exchanges.**

## Performance Measure 1.3f: Improve customer service by reducing the number of actions pending at the processing centers

| Fiscal Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 3.3 million | 2.9 million | 5.5 million | 4.2 million | 3.7 million | 4.4 million |
| **Target Met** | Met | Not Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 3.2 million | 4.5 million | 3.75 million | 3.86 million | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | Focusing on high priority workloads, along with increased staffing, training, automated enhancements, and other factors, we ended the year with 3.86 million actions pending and exceeded our target. | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the total number of pending actions in all of the PCs at the end of the fiscal year.**

# Strategic Goal 2: Build an Inclusive, Engaged, and Empowered Workforce

Through their compassion and dedication, our talented employees are the heart of the agency. A trained, inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce, with the proper tools to do their jobs, is critical to our success. However, we are currently challenged by an increasing number of retirements and staff attrition that is causing a loss of institutional knowledge and complicating knowledge transfer. Based on staff feedback from employee surveys and exit interviews, we have learned about potential causes of attrition, which we are working to address. These efforts include hiring and retaining exceptional people, supporting their chosen career paths, continually offering them tools to do their jobs, and investing in our employee development and training programs.

To improve organizational performance and effectiveness, we are aligning our human capital policies to support in-person and remote customer service delivery. We will use these policies, as well as existing and emerging technologies, to attract, train, develop, and retain our workforce.

We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. We are promoting equity by developing and implementing diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness training for all employees. We will ensure our hiring and promotion practices promote equity as we continue to build a workforce that reflects and delivers customer-focused service to diverse populations.

## Strategic Objective 2.1: Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Hiring and Advancement

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources and Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity

### Strategies

#### Conduct analyses to identify and address systemic barriers present in hiring and advancement

To ensure a workforce that reflects the diversity of our customers at all levels of the organization, we will conduct analyses to determine if systemic barriers exist and work to remove any barriers we find. We will implement changes in hiring and career advancement, particularly around training. We will rethink our workplace culture, as necessary, to further these commitments.

### Broaden reach for hiring and promote retention

Increased workplace flexibility and the increasing use of online services allows us to broaden our geographic reach for hiring and retention in a way that complements our efforts to promote diversity and equity in hiring and advancement, where flexibilities are compatible with how we deliver our mission.  We are exploring workplace flexibilities, such as remote work when it fits within mission requirements; creating greater interest in Federal employment with us; providing the opportunity for stability, attractive pay, and benefits packages; and offering opportunities for the best qualified job candidates regardless of their physical location.

## Key Initiatives

### Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

We are committed to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) across the employee experience, including hiring, promotion, accommodation, and long-term retention. Our goal is to improve policies and practices to build a representative workforce that includes: appropriately identifying talent; using multiple means to announce vacancies; supporting a pipeline of new members of the workforce; mitigating bias in the promotion process; and addressing any potential barriers in accessing job opportunities.

We will conduct barrier analyses to achieve systematic improvement of our processes and procedures.  We will build our agency DEIA strategic plan to address potential barriers in accessing job opportunities and foster a workplace environment that accommodates, embraces, and assures the safety of our employees.

- In FY 2021, we conducted a national training to increase the awareness of potential areas of systemic and institutional bias against underserved communities.  The training centered on promoting respectful and inclusive workplaces, agency accessibility practices, and the understanding of implicit and unconscious bias.
- In FY 2022, we will review policies and procedures (e.g., assessment tests, vacancy announcements, eligibility criteria, suitability requirements, accommodations requests etc.) to identify and create an agency DEIA strategy to address potential barriers to full participation in the workplace.
- In FY 2023, we will start implementing internal and external DEIA strategies policies, practices, and processes.  We will assess results and focus on achieving systematic improvement of processes and outcomes.

### Enhancing Strategic Workforce Planning

To serve the American public efficiently and effectively, we must align our workforce requirements with the strategic direction for our organization.  We will employ strategic workforce planning (SWP) to ensure the effective acquisition, development, and retention of a talented and diverse workforce. SWP analyzes the current and future needs of our workforce, identifies gaps in skills and competencies, and implements strategies to address them. We will update our Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP), which serves as the roadmap to our future workforce, using SWP data analysis and assessment of key competencies for our mission-critical occupations.

- In FY 2021, we conducted research for the best industry practices and benchmarking with SWP programs across multiple Federal agencies.
- In FY 2022, we will develop a comprehensive SWP framework and business process.
- In FY 2023, we will assess the SWP framework for expanded implementation at the component level and to support development of future human capital efforts.

### Execute Talent Management and Succession Planning

Our goal is to continue to increase the strength and diversity of our leadership cadre and pipeline to enhance our readiness to fill potential gaps in leadership and critical positions. We are developing an enterprise-wide approach to succession planning, using a module within our talent management system to automate our business process and improve efficiency. In FY 2020, we announced selectees for the National Leadership Development Program (NLDP) and identified selectees' competency baselines with a goal of reducing leadership competency gaps among at least 90 percent of program participants.

- In FY 2021, we began assignments for our inaugural NLDP Track 1 (GS 15) and Track 2 (GS 12–14) selectees. We announced selections, completed competency baselines, and began assignments for Track 3 (GS 8–11) selectees. Additionally, we finalized configuration of our succession planning tool.
- In FY 2022, with the completion of the NLDP, we will reduce the identified leadership competency gaps among at least 90 percent of NLDP participants. We will also launch the prototype of the succession planning module and then test and validate the tool in preparation for national roll out.
- In FY 2023, we will conduct an evaluation of the NLDP. We will also begin a phased roll out of our succession planning tool.

## Performance Measures

### Performance Measure 2.1a: Enhance the leadership pipeline through a modernized national leadership development program

| Fiscal Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Review readiness of at least 95% of career executives | Launch a redesigned national leadership development program | Identify competency baselines in national leadership development program participants | Begin assignments for NLDP Tracks 1, 2 and 3 | Reduce leadership competency gaps of at least 90% of NLDP participants | Conduct an evaluation of the NLDP |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 99% | Launch Complete | Competencies Identified | Assignments Initiated | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We started the assignments for NLDP Track 1, 2 and 3, with expected completion in early FY 2022. | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the release of an NLDP, which includes developing program graduates by increasing their baseline competency and reducing competency gaps. The FY 2022 target compares NLDP participant outcomes on pre and post program 360-degree assessments. The FY 2023 target includes an evaluation of the program based on participant and supervisor feedback, program outcomes such as participant placement rates, and return on expectations.**

# Strategic Objective 2.2: Support Employees' Chosen Career Paths

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources

## Strategies

### Invest in our employees

We will provide agency managers with the tools and resources to enhance their skills and competencies, optimize organizational performance, address current and future workforce needs, and attract the talent we need to achieve our business goals. We will modernize our talent management systems to support interactive and job-specific activities across the employee lifecycle, further supporting management accountability for improved employee performance and engagement. We will create opportunities for our employees to design, develop, and implement strategies to improve service to our customers and performance across the agency. These measures should boost employee engagement and employee empowerment, which will improve the employee experience, and lead to improvements in our customer experience.

### Ensure inclusive leadership development

One of our greatest challenges is transferring operational knowledge when experienced employees leave the agency. For example, as of October 1, 2021, approximately 25 percent of our employees were eligible to retire. To ensure continuity in our public service, we will invest in our future leaders by developing job-enrichment opportunities to facilitate the transfer of job knowledge from employees eligible for retirement to retained employees. Employees will have opportunities to participate in development programs that will broaden their skills and prepare them for leadership positions.

## Key Initiatives

### Improving Employee Engagement

We are focusing on strategies that highlight best practices in employee engagement, diversity, equity, inclusion, and retention. We are also employing tools that support executive and management accountability, such as: workforce statistics that convey the impact of engagement on attrition and retention, employee feedback through surveys or focus groups to obtain insight on employee needs and experiences, targeted and required action planning to document and track our strategies, training on soft skills and engagement-related topics, and other resources to enhance employees' levels of engagement and inclusion.

- In FY 2021, we developed an agency-wide Improving Workplace Morale (IWM) Plan. This plan includes initiatives (e.g., effective leadership, employee and management development, and effective communication) developed to improve employee engagement. Components also developed specific IWM plans.
- In FY 2022, we plan to implement agency and component-level IWM plans and offer training, resources, and support for managers.
- In FY 2023, we will enhance our agency and component plans based on benchmarking and research of current trends and best practices in employee engagement.

### Invest in Training and Support for Managers

Effectively trained managers and supervisors with the foundational tools to execute their responsibilities are better positioned to train and manage the performance of their own staff, enhance employee engagement, increase productivity, and improve retention.

In FY 2019, we launched and updated our Leadership Essentials for New Supervisors (LENS) curriculum to train new managers and supervisors on management laws and responsibilities, in conjunction with the Office of Personnel Management's policies and procedures. New supervisors are enrolled in training within 90 days of their appointment. We expect them to complete LENS training within one year of their supervisory appointment.

In FY 2020, we began developing Leadership Fundamentals, a new multi-year online and self-paced curriculum that provides sequential training for managers within the first three years of their supervisory roles. The first year of Leadership Fundamentals includes lessons in personnel management, labor and employee relations, managing a diverse workplace, managing performance, and health and safety.

- In FY 2021, we developed online lessons that encompass the first full year of the Leadership Fundamentals curriculum.
- In FY 2022, we will begin implementation of the first-year curriculum and develop the training that will encompass years two and three of Leadership Fundamentals.
- In FY 2023, we plan to develop continuing education resources to maintain skills for managers who are beyond their third year in a supervisory position.

### Strengthen the Performance Management Process

In 2020, we established the Reaching Every Supervisor or Leader Very Early (RESOLVE) program to provide supervisors with the tools to address employee underperformance. The RESOLVE program consists of manager and employee relations specialists working together to equip managers to address potential and current performance and conduct matters.

Our RESOLVE program is highly interactive, includes case scenarios to identify solutions, and covers the full scope of performance and conduct issues. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the program via multiple assessment tools, including a pre-and post-test questionnaire. The questionnaire assesses the knowledge gained from specific sessions and solicits feedback regarding the effectiveness of the training. Additionally, we will utilize a six-month post-RESOLVE session survey to assess how participants applied the training in their regular supervisory duties.

We developed additional LENS training for supervisors and managers to reinforce our performance management policies and procedures. We released a new video on implementing objective employee-level performance measures in performance plans to support our FY 2022 plans. We are seeking contractual support to develop additional numeric performance measures for selected positions in our FY 2023 plans. We also plan to implement a Performance Oversight Team with a dual focus on compliance and narrative feedback. We will conduct robust reviews of required performance documents agency wide, increasing our annual performance management auditing to approximately 10 percent of performance plans.

We utilize the electronic 7B (e7B) application to complete and track employee performance management documents and required acknowledgement statements (e.g., systems access, and handling of personally identifiable information), which were previously maintained in paper form. The application allows employees and management to electronically deliver and sign these documents, enhancing management and employee accountability.

- In FY 2021, we maintained 98 percent of all required, signed employee acknowledgement statements in our e7B system.
- In FY 2022, we plan to have 95 percent of Initial Discussions, Mid-year Performance Discussions, and Appraisal performance documents tracked electronically through our e7B application.
- In FY 2023, we plan to have 96 percent of Initial Discussions, Mid-year Performance Discussions, and Appraisal performance documents tracked electronically through our e7B application.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we plan to assess participant feedback and continue utilizing the RESOLVE program to provide supervisors with tools to address employee performance.

### Ensure Equity in Leadership Development

We promote a workplace that recognizes and celebrates our diverse employees' abilities and encourages the full contributions of all. We continually strive to expand and diversify applicant pools through targeted recruitment of underrepresented groups. We engage our Advisory Council Chairs within the Diversity and Inclusion Council, as the Advisory Councils have connections with the communities they serve and can play a key role in our efforts to broaden interest among underrepresented groups in national leadership development programs. We participate in diversity recruitment events through our established relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and minority serving institutions (MSIs) and universities and organizations that serve veterans, military spouses, and individuals with disabilities.

- In FY 2021, we conducted an internal equity assessment through meetings with a volunteer group of our employees from across the agency and identified potential challenges in the application process for our national leadership development programs.
- In FY 2022, based on the identified potential challenges, we will analyze of our national leadership development program's application process. Following the analysis, we will identify promising practices and areas for improvement to promote equity.
- In FY 2023, we plan to use our analysis, promising practices, and identified areas for improvement to enhance our national leadership development programs and policies to promote equity in all agency development programs.

## Performance Measures

### Performance Measure 2.2a: Ensure new supervisors receive timely training to improve their leadership skills and competencies

| Fiscal Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | At least 90% of new supervisors enroll in supervisor training within 90 days and complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment | At least 95% of new supervisors enroll in supervisor training within 90 days and complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment | At least 95% of new supervisors enroll in supervisor training within 90 days and complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment | At least 95% of new supervisors complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment | At least 95% of new supervisors complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Met | Not Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 84% of supervisors enrolled within 90 days. | 100% of supervisors enrolled within 90 days and 98% completed training within one year. | 100% of supervisors enrolled within 90 days and 54% completed training within one year. | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We enrolled 100 percent of supervisors in training within 90 days of their appointment date. However, 54 percent of new supervisors completed training within one year of their appointment date. (Low completion rate due to unavailability of training lessons while we made critical updates to certain related courses in LENS.) | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of new supervisors that complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment.**

## Performance Measure 2.2b: Strengthen manager accountability for effective performance management

| Fiscal Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 93% of performance-related documents completed and tracked electronically through our e7B system | 95% of required signed employee acknowledgements maintained in our e7B system | 97% of required signed employee acknowledgements maintained in our e7B system | 95% of Initial Discussions, Performance Discussions, and Appraisal performance documents tracked electronically through our e7B application | 96% of Initial Discussions, Performance Discussions, and Appraisal performance documents tracked electronically through our e7B application |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 94% | 96.5% | 98% | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We exceeded our target by maintaining 98 percent of required signed employee acknowledgements in our e7B system. | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of required employee acknowledgements that are completed and tracked electronically through our e7B system.**

# Strategic Goal 3:  Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs

One out of five Americans receives Social Security benefits at any given time and counts on us to provide accurate information and payments.  As good stewards, we continue to look for ways to do business better, by addressing the root causes of improper payments, improving payment accuracy (including overpayments and underpayments), bolstering full and open competition in the acquisition and grants process, and applying sound management principles to everyday work. We are committed to continually improve the administration of our programs and work to identify and address potential inequities.

## Strategic Objective 3.1:  Improve the Accuracy and Administration of Our Programs

Lead:  Deputy Commissioner for Analytics, Review, and Oversight and Deputy Commissioner for Systems

### Strategies

#### Support our cost-effective program integrity work to safeguard benefit programs to better serve our recipients

Dedicated program integrity funding helps ensure individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and it safeguards the integrity of benefit programs to better serve recipients by confirming eligibility, improving payment accuracy for both overpayments and underpayments, and preventing fraud.  In addition, program integrity funding allows us to conduct SSI redeterminations, conduct the anti-fraud cooperative disability investigations program, and support special attorneys for fraud prosecutions.  We will continue these efforts to ensure public confidence in our programs and operations and to ensure we are providing beneficiaries the correct benefits to which they are entitled.

#### Enhance our payment accuracy efforts, including overpayments and underpayments

We are committed to mitigating and preventing improper payments by leveraging audit recommendations, implementing automation and business process improvements, and enhancing data analytics.  We continue to pursue workflow adjustments, policy and notice changes, training and reminders for technicians, and automation solutions to improve post-entitlement accuracy. We will increase our outreach to underserved populations, simplify our policies and procedures to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits for which they are entitled, automate tools to alert beneficiaries of overpayments and underpayments, and continue to allow electronic payments.

### Expand the use of data analytics and predictive modeling

We will continue to strengthen and expand the use of large-scale data analytics, complex data modeling, and related technologies to detect, deter, and prevent fraud, as well as identify potential cross-benefit eligibility. We plan to enhance our enterprise fraud risk management program by introducing more risk assessment activities.

### Strengthen our cybersecurity program

We strive to maintain a highly effective cybersecurity program, to protect against security threats and comply with Federal policies and regulations. The continued strength and resilience of our cybersecurity program is critical to protecting the personally identifiable information we store, and enabling uninterrupted availability of our network, systems, and IT resources.

## Key Initiatives

### Modernize our Debt Management System

Currently, we use numerous systems to record, track, and manage our OASDI and SSI overpayments. We started a multi-year initiative to develop a streamlined, modernized enterprise Debt Management System (DMS) to enable us to more effectively and efficiently post, track, collect, and report on overpayments. Our new process allows individuals to repay their debt electronically via their bank's online bill pay service.

- In FY 2021, we released an online remittance option for repaying OASDI and SSI overpayments, implemented a lockbox service with the Department of the Treasury,[5] and released an automated process for writing-off delinquent and unproductive debts, which advances the debts to the next stage of the collection process.
- In FY 2022, we plan to deploy new automated remittance processing capabilities.
- In FY 2023, we plan to deploy new automated debt processing and accounting capabilities.

[5] Through the lockbox program, the Department of the Treasury agrees to let certain financial institutions process individual payments for program overpayments.

## Promote Timely Wage Reporting

### Focus Area for Improvement

We are highlighting Promote Timely Wage Reporting as a focus area for improvement.

Changes in a person's work and wages are a leading cause of improper payments in the DI and SSI programs. We use several sources to verify wage amounts, including pay stubs submitted by beneficiaries and recipients, annual earnings data from the Internal Revenue Service, and payroll information from The Work Number.[6] However, verifying wages is a manual process, which depends on beneficiaries and recipients timely self-reporting of wages to make correct DI and SSI payments.

Over the years, we developed channels to make it easier for DI beneficiaries, SSI recipients, and representative payees to report wages. We are prioritizing efforts to improve the process, as we know a number of our recipients have depended on in-person field office visits to complete reporting requirements. We developed the online wage reporting application, myWage Report (myWR), for DI beneficiaries to report earnings electronically via *my* Social Security. We later expanded myWR to allow SSI recipients, their representative payees, or their deemors (i.e., an ineligible spouse or parent living with the recipient) to report earnings electronically. In addition to the myWR online application, SSI recipients can use our telephone wage reporting system and our mobile wage reporting application to report their wages.

- In FY 2021, we created a training video that we shared with the public via digital and social media outlets (e.g., YouTube) to promote the use of telephone wage reporting, mobile wage reporting, and myWR.
- In FY 2022, we are expanding the reach of the training video by adding it to our Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook social media accounts. We also plan to enhance automation of wages received from the Payroll Information Exchange by refining the usability of third-party data, reducing manual workloads, and revising the business process to account for improvements.
- In FYs 2022–2023, we plan to enhance the mobile wage reporting application, including allowing DI beneficiaries to use the application and adding features to improve customer experience.

[6] The Work Number is an online wage verification company we approved to provide primary evidence of wages when pay slips are unavailable. Wage and employment information are provided in real time.

## Enhanced Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities

We are taking a holistic, analytical approach to our fraud risk management and prioritizing our anti-fraud efforts consistent with the *Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019* and the Government Accountability Office Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in Federal Programs. We are improving our use of data analytics and predictive modeling to better identify suspicious and evolving patterns of concerning activities in our workloads, allowing us to proactively detect and prevent fraud before issuing payments.

Between FYs 2018 and 2020, we completed fraud risk assessments in key areas including disability, electronic services, and the representative payee program. These assessments were consistent with our Enterprise Fraud Risk Management (EFRM) strategy,[7] established in FY 2019. We also developed strategies to mitigate specific risks identified in those assessments.

- In FY 2021, we initiated additional risk assessment activities in areas such as occupational (employee) fraud and the Title II program,[8] consistent with our EFRM strategy. We will continue our 5-year project to enhance our fraud allegation referral process, providing additional user functionality and enhancing management information.
- In FY 2022, we plan to initiate fraud risk assessments for debt management process.
- In FY 2023, we plan to reassess fraud risk in the disability workload.

## Expand Our Cooperative Disability Investigations Program

We partner with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), State DDSs and State and local law enforcement divisions to operate cooperative disability investigations (CDI) units. Generally, these units investigate suspected fraud before we award benefits and during the CDR process. We currently have 49 CDI units covering 47 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands. (see Figure 5.)

- In FY 2021, we added CDI coverage to 3 States (Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont), bringing CDI coverage to 47 total States.
- In FY 2022, we plan to provide CDI coverage to the 3 remaining States (Alaska, Delaware, and Pennsylvania) achieving our statutory goal of covering all 50 States and U.S. territories by October 2022.

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[7] EFRM is a systematic process to identify possible fraud risks, determine what controls are in place to reduce the likelihood or impact of those risks, and then determine the significance of the residual (remaining risks).

[8] The Title II program is also referred to as the Federal OASDI benefits program. While the Title II program includes benefits administered for disability insurance, the Title II fraud risk assessment does not cover disability. We completed the DI risk assessment separately in December 2017.

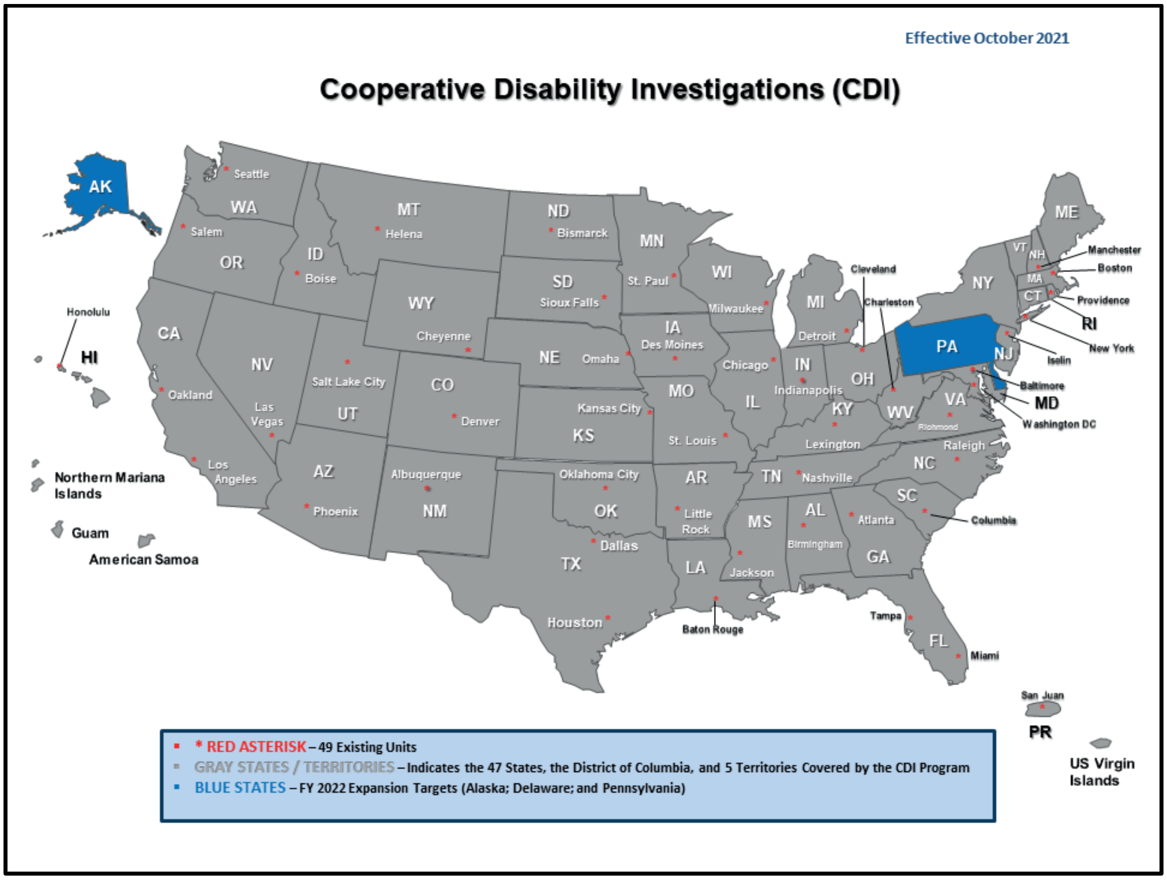



**Figure 5.** The CDI unit coverage through October 2021.

## Strengthen Our Information Security Program and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure

Maintaining the public's trust in our ability to protect sensitive data requires continuous monitoring of threats and continual improvement and strengthening of our cybersecurity program. We protect against cybersecurity incidents and risks through constant assessment of the threat landscape and use of advanced cybersecurity controls.

- In FY 2021, we continued to:
    - Align our practices with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework and other Federal initiatives including the Executive Order 14028 on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity;
    - Develop and begin implementing plans to provide a Zero Trust security architecture;
    - Increase our cybersecurity threat identification and remediation collaboration with our Federal partners and coordinate with our Office of Acquisition and Grants to implement the required supply chain safeguards;

- Enhance our Cybersecurity Risk Management Strategy and agency Risk Register, to make data driven decisions when addressing risks and allocating resources;
    - Enhance our Supply Chain Risk Program to ensure that IT products or services are monitored and assessed for security risks and vulnerabilities during all stages of their procurement and IT lifecycle;
    - Align our cybersecurity and privacy programs and practices with Federal guidelines, establishing the flexibility to adjust to various forms of cybersecurity threats and privacy risks in alignment with our ERM strategy; and
    - Collaborate with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to expand and mature our defensive cybersecurity capabilities under the Continuous Diagnostic and Mitigation program.
- In FY 2022, we will mature cyber risk management, governance, and integration with our ERM program. We will implement cloud-based security services to augment our strong network security with flexible and cost-effective solutions in alignment with Zero Trust principles. We will assess our network resiliency and collaborate with our Federal partners on effective contingency planning options.
- In FY 2023, we plan to expand role-based employee training for privacy protection best practices and compliance policies. We will also leverage privacy risk assessments to increase our privacy program's footprint, which includes planning, reviewing, and approving privacy protections for new and existing agency programs, systems, and applications.

### Ensure Timely and Accurate Payments to Claimants and their Appointed Representatives

There are times when a claimant files for benefits and requests an appointed representative. A fee agreement may be in place between claimants and their representatives and both parties expect timely and accurate payments following a favorable decision.

- In FY 2021, our PCs processed 99 percent of ALJ reversals within 60 days. We also updated our fee agreement (form SSA-1696) and improved our internal business process to approve fee agreement forms faster.
- In FY 2022, our PCs will pay monthly benefits for at least 95 percent of ALJ reversals within 60 days. We will continue to develop the Appeals and Appointed Representative Processing Service Portal (AARPS). AARPS will help provide accurate, consistent, and effective communication with our new and existing customers.
- In FY 2023, we will further prioritize representative fee actions and retroactive claimant benefits in our PCs. We will establish a new performance indicator that measures if we release retroactive benefits and representative fees within 120 days of an ALJ reversal.

## Performance Measures

### Performance Measure 3.1a: Improve the integrity of the Supplemental Security Income program by focusing our efforts on reducing overpayments (APG)[9] (see Figure 6.)

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 94.00% (O/P) | 94.00% (O/P) | 94.00% (O/P) | 94.00% (O/P) | 94.00% (O/P) | 94.00% (O/P) | 94.00% (O/P) |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Not Met | Not Met | Not Met | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 92.71% (O/P) | 91.77% (O/P) | 91.87% (O/P) | 91.25% (O/P) | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | FY 2021 data will be available in summer 2022. | | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents our annual overpayment accuracy rate findings from our stewardship review of non-medical aspects of the SSI program. (The overpayment [O/P] accuracy rate is the percentage of all dollars paid that are free of O/P errors.)** [10]

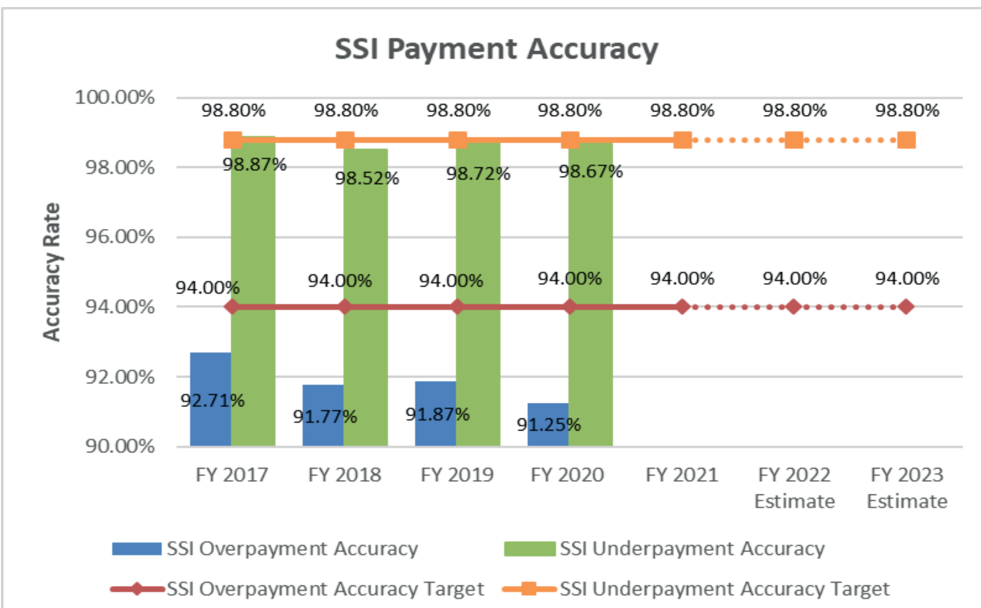



**Figure 6.** The SSI overpayment and underpayment accuracy rates and targets from FYs 2017 to 2023.

[9] FY 2021 is the last year that "Improve the Integrity of the Supplemental Security Income Program by focusing our efforts on Reducing Overpayments" is an APG. However, we will continue to track and report this measure in the Annual Performance Report and on paymentaccuracy.gov.

[10] "Ensure Stewardship of Our Programs" is a Strategic Goal in our *Agency Strategic Plan* (www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/asp). Each year, we report improper payment findings, both overpayments and underpayments, from our stewardship reviews of the non-medical aspects of the OASDI and SSI programs.

## Performance Measure 3.1b: Maintain a high payment accuracy rate by reducing overpayments, in the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program (see Figure 7.)

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 99.80% (O/P) | 99.80% (O/P) | 99.80% (O/P) | 99.80% (O/P) | 99.80% (O/P) | 99.80% (O/P) | 99.80% (O/P) |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Not Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 99.36% (O/P) | 99.77% (O/P) | 99.80% (O/P) | 99.83% (O/P) | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | FY 2021 data will be available in summer 2022. | | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the annual overpayment (O/P) accuracy rate findings from our stewardship reviews of the non-medical aspects of the OASDI program.** [11]

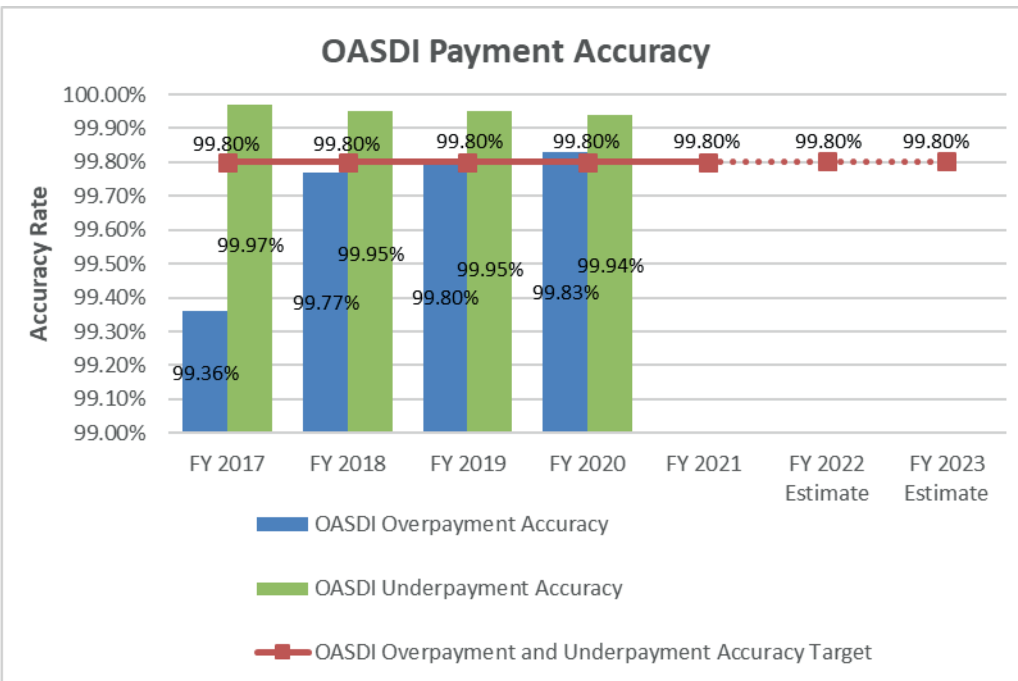



**Figure 7.** The OASDI overpayment and underpayment accuracy rates and targets from FYs 2017 to 2023.

[11] "Ensure Stewardship" is a Strategic Goal in our *Agency Strategic Plan* (www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/asp). Each year, we report improper payment findings, both overpayments and underpayments, from our stewardship reviews of the non-medical aspects of the OASDI and SSI programs.

## Performance Measure 3.1c: Modernize our Debt Management System

| Fiscal Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Implement online debt collection for benefit overpayments | Develop functionality to send an email confirmation as part of SSA's online remittance application | Deploy a new online payment process. | Deploy automated remittance processing capabilities | Deploy automated debt processing and accounting capabilities |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Not Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | Developed the initial release of an online remittance application, which provides individuals with the ability to access a payment portal and make payments via the Department of the Treasury's Pay.gov website | We delayed the implementation of the online remittance (iPaySSA) application while we reassessed potential risks | New online payment process successfully deployed | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We released our new billing notices with the Pay.gov URL, a new remittance identifier, and online bill pay via financial institutions, providing customers with service enhancements. We collected 323,585 transactions via Pay.gov totaling $79.4 million. Additionally, we deployed a second online payment process, Online Bill Pay via financial institutions. | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents our strategies to post, track, collect, and report our overpayment activity.**

## Performance Measure 3.1d: Ensure the quality of our decisions by achieving the State disability determination services net and decisional accuracy[12] rate for initial disability decisions

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 97% net accuracy | 97% net accuracy | 97% decisional accuracy | 97% decisional accuracy | 97% decisional accuracy | 97% decisional accuracy | 97% decisional accuracy |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met | Met | Not Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | 97% net accuracy | 98% net accuracy | 97% decisional accuracy | 96% decisional accuracy | 97% decisional accuracy | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | The public expects us to make timely and accurate decisions. We met our goal in FY 2021, by achieving a 97 percent DDS decisional accuracy for initial disability decisions | | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of correctly decided cases compared to all sampled cases.**

[12] Decisional Accuracy reflects all DDS medical determinations in which the determination was policy compliant at the time of the quality review and the initial determination did not change after a quality review obtained additional documentation. Net Accuracy reflects the percentage of correct initial State disability determinations and is based on the net error rate (i.e., the number of corrected deficient cases with changed disability decisions), plus the number of deficient cases not corrected within 90 days from the end of the period covered by the report, divided by the number of cases reviewed.

## Performance Measure 3.1e: Mature the Enterprise Fraud Risk Management Program

| Fiscal Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Operationalize AFES and implement eServices analytics | Complete eServices risk assessment, develop disability fraud risk profile, implement anti-fraud disability analytics | Complete the eServices fraud risk profile, the administrative issues fraud risk profile, and the representative payee fraud risk assessments | Complete the representative payee fraud risk profile, the SSI fraud risk assessment, and the occupational (employee) fraud risk assessment | Complete the SSI fraud risk profile, the occupational (employee) fraud risk profile, and the Title II fraud risk assessment | Complete the Title II fraud risk profile, the enumeration fraud risk assessment, and the debt management fraud risk assessment |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | We have not fully implemented the Anti-Fraud Enterprise Solution (AFES) but we deployed our first disability fraud analytic model and improved our eServices analytics and fraud detection | We completed the eServices risk assessment, developed the disability fraud risk profile, and implemented disability analytics | We completed the eServices fraud risk profile, the administrative issues fraud risk profile, and the representative payee fraud risk assessment | We completed the representative payee fraud risk mitigation strategy, and the draft SSI and occupational (employee) drafts for SSI fraud risk assessment | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We finalized the draft SSI fraud risk assessment and the occupational (employee) FRA, pending risk response mitigation planning. We finalized the Representative Payee Fraud Risk Mitigation Strategy. | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents our EFRM strategy to systematically assess fraud risks and determine whether any specific risks require actions to reduce the likelihood or impact of that risk.**

## Performance Measure 3.1f: Expand our CDI coverage

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Not Applicable | Add three CDI units | Add three CDI units | Add two to four CDI units | Add two to four CDI units | Add CDI coverage to the three remaining States |
| **Target Met** | Not Applicable | Met | Met | Met | Met | TBD |
| **Performance** | Added one CDI unit | Added three CDI units | Added three CDI units | Added four CDI units | Added CDI coverage for three States | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We provided CDI coverage to Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont. This year we used a hub concept to expand CDI units, which leverages existing CDI units to organize investigations and provide CDI coverage to neighboring States. The existing Providence CDI unit began organizing CDI investigations for Connecticut, and the existing Manchester CDI unit began organizing CDI investigations for Maine and Vermont. | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the number of additional CDI units needed to cover the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands**

### Performance Measure 3.1g: Maintain effective cybersecurity and privacy programs

| Fiscal Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity risk Management Assessment[13] | Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment | Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment | Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment | Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment | Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | Managing Risk score achieved | Managing Risk score achieved | Managing Risk score achieved | Managing Risk score achieved | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | Department of Homeland Security (DHS) assesses each agency's risk across several NIST aligned security domains and capabilities. After reviewing our cybersecurity program, DHS rated us as "managing risk" across all five NIST functions of Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, and Recover. | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents our annual overall risk score from the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Assessment.**

## Strategic Objective 3.2: Identify and Eliminate Potential Barriers to Access Contracts and Grants

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management

### Strategies

#### Identify and work to address potential barriers and bolster open competition in the acquisition and grants process

We will conduct market research in accordance with regulations to bolster full and open competition in the acquisition and grants process to the maximum extent practicable. We will devise best practices to encourage participation by institutions serving students of color, including direct communications with professional associations. We will also develop best

[13] Presidential Executive Order 13800, *Strengthening the Cybersecurity of Federal Networks and Critical Infrastructure*, and OMB Memorandum M-17-25 require Federal agencies to implement risk management measures and require OMB to assess how Federal agencies are managing their cybersecurity risk. Risk ratings are based on capabilities defined in the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. Potential risk ratings range from (1) High Risk, (2) At Risk, or (3) Managing Risk.

practices to secure contracts with qualified HUBZone, Woman-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and Small Disadvantaged Businesses.

### Disseminate acquisition and grant proposal requests widely to ensure responses from a broad range of organizations

We will meet with HBCUs and MSIs to learn more about their experience with our grantmaking process, potential barriers the process presented, and suggestions for eliminating barriers. We will meet with bidders and recipients of our contracts for HUBZone, Woman-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and Small Disadvantaged Businesses to learn about their experiences with our procurement process, barriers they encountered, and recommended solutions to eliminate these barriers.

## Key Initiative

### Advancing Equity in Procurement

We are striving to increase access to our research contract and grant opportunities for research institutions serving people of color and underrepresented groups. We are monitoring increases in the number of acquisitions and grants to research institutions serving people of color (e.g., HBCUs and MSIs) and underrepresented groups (e.g., Historically Underutilized Business [HUB] Zone, Woman-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and Small-Disadvantaged Businesses). In addition, we attend monthly interagency workgroup meetings to share best practices and information about Federal opportunities for HBCUs relating to grants and contracts.

- In FY 2021 we:
  - Conducted market research on equity and support for underserved communities through Federal government-based guidelines for research grants and contracts to broaden the range of bidders;
  - Prioritized HUBZone small businesses when we search for supply items on our Amazon Business account;
  - Enhanced the content of our acquisition forecast to provide more planning information to the small business community;
  - Updated a request for applications for the Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work Small Grant Program to include language specifically mentioning that we would like to see research that engages researchers of color and employs community engaged research methods; and
  - Encouraged all potential partners to collaborate with institutions serving people of color, scholars of color, and underserved communities.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we will:
  - Develop equity-based guidelines to increase access to and encourage participation in grant opportunities by HBCUs and MSIs;

- Implement leading practices to increase access to and encourage participation in procurement by small and disadvantaged businesses;
- Establish a framework and process to ensure grant recipients of Federal funds are complying with anti-discrimination civil rights provisions and all procurement solicitations and awards include the appropriate terms and conditions required to implement applicable laws or executive orders (e.g., Equal Opportunity clause[s]);
- Track the percentage of research grants and procurement opportunities that are awarded to HBCUs, MSIs, and small and disadvantaged businesses to evaluate and improve our outreach and engagement efforts and increase equitable access to our research grants and procurement opportunities; and
- Track the number of published research studies that apply new approaches (e.g., community-based methodologies) to improve our understanding of the diverse communities and their needs and revise our programs and policies in an equitable manner.

## Performance Measures

### Performance Measure 3.2a: Small Business Administration annual scorecard success in contracting with HUBZone, Woman-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and Small Disadvantaged Businesses

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Achieve an overall grade of “A” on the SBA scorecard | Achieve an overall grade of “A” on the SBA scorecard | Achieve an overall grade of “A” on the SBA scorecard | Achieve an overall grade of “A” on the SBA scorecard | Achieve an overall grade of “A” on the SBA scorecard | Achieve an overall grade of “A” on the SBA scorecard | Achieve an overall score of “A” on the SBA scorecard |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | Graded A | Graded A | Graded A | Graded A | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | FY 2021 data will be available in May 2022. | | | | | | |

**Data Definition: This target represents our overall grade from the Small Business Association (SBA) for awarding contracts to small businesses. Each Federal agency may receive an overall grade of an A+ for those that meet or exceed 120 percent of their goals, an A for those between 100 percent and 119 percent, a B for 90 to 99 percent, a C for 80 to 89 percent, a D for 70 to 79 percent, and an F for less than 70 percent.**

## Strategic Objective 3.3: Improve Organizational Performance and Policy Implementation

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy and Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management

### Strategies

#### Simplify our policies and modernize our processes

We will clarify our program rules for both customers and employees. Simplifying our program rules and policies will help us process benefits for our customers more quickly and make it easier for customers to complete business with us. We will remove or update outdated provisions and regularly engage internal and external stakeholders to assess and update policies. For example, we will continue to make significant progress in updating medical listings to reflect advancements in the medical industry and emerging research and consider stakeholder input.

#### Strengthen program and resource management

We will use proven program and project management techniques to protect taxpayer dollars and better serve our customers. We will leverage data, analyses, and program expertise to drive quicker and more accurate business decisions. We will utilize ERM best practices to manage our organizational challenges and ensure an enterprise approach in managing risks to deliver our mission.

#### Expand strategic partnerships with external partners

We will continue partnering with other Federal agencies to promote our services and *my* Social Security through their websites and customer interactions. By taking advantage of more data exchanges with other Federal and State agencies, we will increase the accuracy of our records, improve the customer experience, and increase organizational effectiveness.

### Key Initiatives

#### Develop an Occupational Information System

We often need information about occupational requirements to make a disability determination, but job requirements and the types of jobs in the workforce change over time. Since 2015, we have been working with the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to develop the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) to collect occupational information. We will use the ORS data, along with information from other occupational sources, to create a new Occupational Information System (OIS). After an initial three years of data collection (Wave 1), BLS began collecting occupational data on a five- year cycle. Wave 2 collection began in 2018, and Wave 3 collection will begin in late FY 2023.

- In FY 2021, BLS published ORS estimates from the second year of Wave 2 and completed collecting data for the third year.
- In FY 2022, BLS will collect data for the fourth year of Wave 2 and publish estimates from the third year.
- In FY 2023, BLS will collect data for the fifth, and final year of Wave 2 and publish estimates from the fourth year.

### Update the Listing of Impairments

The Listing of Impairments describes disabling impairments for each of the major body systems. We review these listings on a three-to-five-year cycle and update as necessary to reflect advances in medical knowledge, emerging research, and stakeholder input.

- In FY 2021, we published and implemented the musculoskeletal disorders final rule.
- In FY 2022, we plan to publish a proposed rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system and publish a final rule for digestive disorders and skin disorders body systems.
- In FY 2023, we plan to prepare a final rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system.

### Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners

We provide SSN verifications and exchange birth, death, prisoner, and benefit payment information, as permitted under law, with Federal, State, and private partners.  Our data exchanges improve organizational effectiveness and reduce costs by providing reliable data to determine benefits and improve administrative processes, which in turn saves costs and reduces improper payments.

- In FY 2021, we identified technical solutions for transferring data to support a computer-matching agreement to process U.S. citizen and non-citizen foreign travel data.  We analyzed the technical solutions for implementing systems functionality to exchange computer-matching data.
- In FYs 2022 and 2023, we will pursue new data exchange partners from government and private sectors.  We plan to expand our outreach efforts with the Data Exchange Community of Practice and the States Data Exchange Community of Interest, to engage more agencies and broaden the expansion of best practices toward streamlining the exchange of data.

## Performance Measures

### Performance Measure 3.3a: Update the Listing of Impairments

| Fiscal Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Publish a proposed rule to revise three body systems in the Listing of Impairments | Publish a final rule to revise the Musculoskeletal disorders system, and a proposed rule for the Cardiovascular, Digestive, and Skin body systems | Publish a final rule for the Musculoskeletal body system and a proposed rule for the Cardiovascular disorders body system | Prepare a proposed rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system and prepare a final rule for the digestive disorders and skin disorders body systems | Publish a proposed rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system. Publish a final rule for digestive disorders and skin disorders body systems. | Prepare a final rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Not Met | Not Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | The proposed rule is in process, with a publication goal of early to mid FY 2019 | We published the proposed rule for the Digestive and Skin disorders body systems in the Federal Register on 7/25/2019 | We published the final rule for the musculoskeletal body system in the Federal Register on 12/03/2020 | Prepared a proposed rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system and a final rule for the digestive disorders and skin disorders body systems | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We met our target by preparing a proposed rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system and a final rule for the digestive disorders and skin disorders body systems. | | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the number of proposed and final rules we will submit to OMB for review and approval to publish in the Federal Register.**

## Performance Measure 3.3b: Reduce our Real Property Footprint

| Fiscal Year | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Achieve a 25,000 USF reduction | Achieve a 19,500 USF reduction | Achieve a 87,000 USF reduction | Achieve a 39,000 USF reduction | Achieve a 10,000 USF reduction |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met | Met | TBD | TBD |
| **Performance** | Achieved a 39,205 USF reduction | Achieved a 89,406 USF reduction | Achieved a 159,000 USF reduction | TBD | TBD |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We achieved this reduction through relocation and additional projects in St. Louis, MO, Dallas, TX, Crystal City, VA, and San Francisco, CA, which enabled us to return space to the General Services Administration. | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the actual space occupied. Usable square feet (USF) does not include common areas of a building such as lobbies, restrooms, stairwells, storage rooms, and shared hallways.**

## Budgeted Workload Measure Results

In addition to the performance measures and targets we develop to demonstrate our incremental efforts to achieve our strategic goals, we have a number of budgeted workload performance measures that represent how much of our core workloads we will complete each year and how efficiently and effectively we complete this work. While budgeted workload measures support our strategic goals and objectives, the targets and outcomes are directly affected by our funding level each year. Thus, we present our budgeted workload measures separately in the following tables.

### Retirement and survivor claims completed[14]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 5,782,000 (4,196,566 received) | -5,801,000 | 6,009,000 | 6,222,000 | 6,243,000 | 6,615,000 | 6,534,000 |
| **Performance** | 5,619,831 | 5,862,065 | 6,020,702 | 6,120,255 | 6,081,969 | TBD | TBD |

### Initial disability claims receipts[15]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 2,499,000 | 2,476,000 | 2,295,000 | 2,399,000 | 2,491,000 | 2,231,000 | 2,570,000 |
| **Performance** | 2,442,592 | 2,353,970 | 2,345,615 | 2,212,858 | 2,009,254 | TBD | TBD |

### Initial disability claims completed

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 2,455,000 | 2,300,000 | 2,295,000 | 2,289,000 | 2,333,000 | 1,986,000 | 2,350,000 |
| **Performance** | 2,485,000 | 2,306,570 | 2,310,057 | 2,037,356 | 2,011,298 | TBD | TBD |

[14] Includes Medicare claims.

[15] The estimates for disability claims receipts and claims pending are highly variable due to COVID-19 and our evolving operational status.

## Initial disability claims pending

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 612,000 | 699,000 | 565,000 | 704,000 | 921,000 | 939,000 | 1,159,000 |
| Performance | 522,869 | 565,013 | 593,944 | 763,747 | 739,745 | TBD | TBD |

## Average processing time for initial disability claims[16]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 113 days | 111 days | 113 days | 125 days | 171 days | 185 days | 164 days |
| Performance | 111 days | 111 days | 120 days | 131 days | 165 days | TBD | TBD |

## Disability reconsiderations receipts

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | Not Applicable | 540,000 | 635,000 | 664,000 | 685,000 | 576,000 | 682,000 |
| Performance | 582,935 | 552,755 | 566,462 | 567,800 | 571,291 | TBD | TBD |

## Disability reconsiderations completed

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 581,000 | 518,000 | 597,000 | 554,000 | 601,000 | 526,000 | 617,000 |
| Performance | 595,588 | 541,806 | 544,148 | 552,601 | 515,698 | TBD | TBD |

## Disability reconsiderations pending

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 130,000 | 129,000 | 153,000 | 244,000 | 228,000 | 228,000 | 293,000 |
| Performance | 105,022 | 115,028 | 133,503 | 143,781 | 192,892 | TBD | TBD |

[16] Average processing times for our initial disability claims and appeals workloads will depend on the ability to obtain timely medical evidence and effectively schedule consultative exams.

## Average processing time for disability reconsiderations

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 105 days | 105 days | 102 days | 105 days | 152 days | 187 days | 168 days |
| Performance | 101 days | 103 days | 109 days | 122 days | 147 days | TBD | TBD |

## Hearings receipts

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 632,000 | 582,000 | 511,000 | 464,000 | 417,000 | 376,000 | 472,000 |
| Performance | 620,164 | 567,911 | 510,901 | 428,810 | 382,870 | TBD | TBD |

## Hearings completed

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 683,000 | 738,000 | 779,000 | 688,000 | 465,000 | 406,000 | 472,000 |
| Performance | 685,657 | 765,554 | 793,863 | 585,918 | 451,046 | TBD | TBD |

## Hearings pending[17]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 1,071,000 | 900,000 | 591,000 | 352,000 | 370,000 | 320,000 | 320,000 |
| Performance | 1,056,026 | 858,383 | 575,421 | 418,313 | 350,137 | TBD | TBD |

## Annual average processing time for hearings decisions[18]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Target | 605 days | 605 days | 515 days | 380 days | 310 days | 375 days | 335 days |
| Performance | 605 days | 595 days | 506 days | 386 days | 326 days | TBD | TBD |

[17] We assume the hearings backlog will be eliminated when we achieve a monthly average processing time of 270 days or less, which we expect to occur in September of FY 2023.

[18] Average processing time for hearings is an annual figure. Projections for end of year (September) processing time for hearings are 570 days and 270 days for FYs 2022 and 2023, respectively.

## National 800 Number calls handled[19]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 35,000,000 | 33,000,000 | 36,000,000 | 36,000,000 | 36,000,000 | 33,000,000 | 36,000,000 |
| **Performance** | 36,053,988 | 31,910,965 | 33,496,515 | 34,480,132 | 31,246,009 | TBD | TBD |

## National 800 Number average speed of answer[20]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 16 minutes | 25 minutes | 13 minutes | 17 minutes | 15 minutes | 19 minutes | 12 minutes |
| **Performance** | 13 minutes | 24 minutes | 20 minutes | 16 minutes | 14 minutes | TBD | TBD |

## National 800 Number agent busy rate

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 12.0% | 16% | 9% | 12% | 2% | 7% | 1% |
| **Performance** | 10.2% | 14.7% | 14.1% | 7.4% | 0.2% | TBD | TBD |

## Periodic continuing disability reviews completed

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 1,970,000 | 1,990,000 | 1,803,000 | 1,803,000 | 1,595,000 | 1,721,000 | 1,800,000 |
| **Performance** | 2,257,140 | 2,286,326 | 1,939,167 | 1,492,926 | 1,615,561 | TBD | TBD |

[19] National 800 Number Calls Handled data for FY 2021 does not include automated calls handled. Due to technical issues resulting from transitioning to a new telephone system, the total number of automated calls handled is not yet available for FY 2021. There were approximately 2.7 million automated calls handled through May 21, 2021 (not reflected in this table); data on automated calls handled from May 22nd to date is still pending.

[20] The Agency Priority Goal target to improve the National 800 Number service achieves an Average Speed of Answer of less than 12 minutes, including implementation of estimated wait time and call back options, by September 30, 2023.

## Full medical continuing disability reviews

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 850,000 | 890,000 | 703,000 | 703,000 | 495,000 | 621,000 | 700,000 |
| **Performance** | 874,411 | 896,508 | 713,156 | 463,264 | 510,510 | TBD | TBD |

## Supplemental Security Income non-medical redeterminations completed

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 2,562,000 | 2,900,000 | 2,822,000 | 2,150,000 | 2,360,000 | 1,928,000 | 2,166,000 |
| **Performance** | 2,589,638 | 2,913,443 | 2,666,287 | 2,153,109 | 2,367,391 | TBD | TBD |

## Social Security numbers completed

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 16,000,000 | 17,000,000 | 17,000,000 | 18,000,000 | 13,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 18,000,000 |
| **Performance** | 17,400,585 | 17,082,844 | 17,646,561 | 12,906,716 | 11,576,821 | TBD | TBD |

## Annual earnings items completed

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 273,000,000 | 281,000,000 | 285,000,000 | 288,000,000 | 284,000,000 | 284,000,000 | 288,000,000 |
| **Performance** | 279,381,782 | 284,306,239 | 288,089,658 | 288,748,604 | 277,359,601 | TBD | TBD |

## *Social Security Statements* issued[21]

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 10,000,000 | 14,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 14,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 |
| **Performance** | 13,724,897 | 14,971,689 | 11,347,689 | 19,285,438 | 11,977,451 | TBD | TBD |

[21] The *Social Security Statements* Issued measure includes paper statements only. It does not include electronic statements issued. In FY 2021, *my* Social Security users accessed their *Social Security Statements* 64 million times.

## Disability determination services production per workyear

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 301 | 302 | 302 | 304 | 264 | 247 | 275 |
| **Performance** | 306 | 310 | 303 | 255 | 238.6 | TBD | TBD |

## Office of Hearings Operations production per workyear

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 94 | 103 | 105 | 106 | 80 | 74 | 86 |
| **Performance** | 96 | 98 | 111 | 93 | 78 | TBD | TBD |

# Major Management and Performance Challenges

Each year, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) identifies our top management and performance challenges. In addition, our leadership also identifies challenges, which often overlap with the OIG report. A listing of acronyms for the responsible officials is in Appendix D, Summary of Key Management Officials' Responsibilities.

# Challenges Identified by the Office of the Inspector General

In FY 2021, OIG identified six top management issues for our agency.

## 1) The Social Security Administration's Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Pandemic

Components: DCARO, DCBFM, DCHO, DCO, DCRDP, DCS, DCHR, and OIG

Challenge: SSA continues to provide its customers with limited service in its field offices as most employees telework, a major challenge for an agency that, before the pandemic, served over 40 million customers a year in its field offices.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expand Equity and Outreach;
- Establish Enterprise Voice of Customer (VoC) Feedback Collection;
- Enhance the Digital Experience;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Enhance Online Appeals;
- Enhance Online Service Options for Appointed Representatives;
- Increase Online Options for New Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Replacement Cards;
- Modernize Information Technology;
- Improve 800 Number Services;
- Modernize the *Social Security Statement;*
- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Improve Employee Engagement;
- Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities; and
- Strengthen Our Information Security and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-Enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure.

## 2) Improve Administration of the Disability Programs

Components: DCBFM, DCHO, DCO, DCARO, DCRDP, DCHR, and DCS

Challenge: SSA continues to face challenges with pending disability hearings and related processing times, and the COVID-19 pandemic renewed challenges with pending disability claims and continuing disability reviews. Continued focus is necessary to simplify work incentive regulations and create new opportunities for returning disabled beneficiaries to work.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expand Equity and Outreach;
- Enhance Online Service Options for Appointed Representatives;
- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Expand Access to Electronic Medical Evidence;
- Modernize Disability Case Processing:
- Reduce the Hearings Backlog;
- Develop an Occupational Information System; and
- Update the Listing of Impairments.

## 3) Improve the Prevention, Detection, and Recovery of Improper Payments

Components: DCARO, DCBFM, DCO, DCRDP and OIG

Challenge: SSA must be a responsible steward of the funds entrusted to its care by minimizing the risk of making improper payments and recovering overpayments when they occur.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Reduce the Processing Center Backlog;
- Modernize our Debt Management System;
- Promote Timely Wage Reporting;
- Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities;
- Expand our Cooperative Disability Investigations Program; and
- Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners.

## 4) Improve Service Delivery

Components: DCARO, DCHO, DCHR, DCO, DCS, and OIG

Challenge: SSA faces growing workloads and the expected retirement of experienced employees as it pursues its mission to deliver quality service to the public.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Enhance the Digital Experience;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Enhance Online Appeals;
- Enhance Online Service Options for Appointed Representatives;
- Increase Online Options for New Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Replacement Cards;
- Modernize Information Technology;
- Improve 800 Number Services;
- Modernize the *Social Security Statement;*
- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Reduce the Hearings Backlog;
- Reduce the Processing Center Backlog;
- Enhancing Strategic Workforce Planning;
- Execute Talent Management and Succession Planning;
- Ensure Timely and Accurate Payments to Claimants and their Appointed Representatives;
- Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities; and
- Strengthen Our Information Security and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-Enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure.

## 5) Protect the Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability of SSA's Information Systems and Data

Component: DCARO, DCBFM, DCO, DCS, and OIG

Challenge: SSA must ensure its information systems are secure and sensitive data are protected.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Modernize our Debt Management System;
- Promote Timely Wage Reporting;
- Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities;
- Expand our Cooperative Disability Investigations Program;
- Strengthen Our Information Security and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-Enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure; and
- Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners.

## 6) Modernize Information Technology

Component: DCARO, DCO, DCS, and OIG

Challenge: SSA must continue modernizing its information technology to accomplish its mission despite budget and resource constraints.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Enhance the Digital Experience;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Enhance Online Appeals;
- Enhance Online Service Options for Appointed Representatives;
- Modernize Information Technology;
- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Increase Online Options for New Social Security Numbers and Replacement Cards;
- Expand Access to Electronic Medical Evidence;
- Modernize Disability Case Processing; and
- Strengthen Our Information Security and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-Enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure.

## Additional Challenges Identified by Our Leadership

### Meet Service Delivery Needs

Components: DCHO, DCO, DCRDP, and DCS

Everyone who is eligible for benefits under the programs we administer should receive them. We must identify and resolve any root causes of inequity in accessing our programs.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expand Equity and Outreach;
- Establish Enterprise Voice of Customer (VoC) Feedback Collection;
- Enhance the Digital Experience;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Enhance Online Appeals;
- Enhance Online Service Options for Appointed Representatives;
- Modernize Information Technology;
- Improve 800 Number Services;
- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Modernize Disability Case Processing; and
- Update the Listing of Impairments.

### Strengthen and Empower Our Workforce

Component: DCHR

We must treat our employees fairly and equitably.  That means supporting our employees in their chosen career paths and recognizing that their success is critical to the success of our organization.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility;
- Enhance Strategic Workforce Planning;
- Execute Talent Management and Succession Planning;
- Improve Employee Engagement;
- Invest in Training and Support for Managers;
- Strengthen the Performance Management Process; and
- Ensure Equity in Leadership Development.

## Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Components:  DCARO, DCO, DCRDP, and OIG

Fraud, waste, and abuse erode the public's trust in our ability to efficiently provide vital services.  Fraud prevention is critical to conserving valuable resources and meeting our mission to meet the changing needs of the public.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities;
- Expand Our Cooperative Disability Investigations Programs; and
- Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners.

## Keep Pace in the Disability Program with Medicine, Technology, and the World of Work

Components:  DCHO, DCO, DCRDP, and DCS

Medicine, technology, and the nature of work are constantly evolving.  We must create an agile and responsive organization committed to keeping pace with those changes and maximizing efficiencies throughout the disability program.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expand Access to Electronic Medical Evidence;
- Modernize Disability Case Processing;
- Develop an Occupational Information System; and
- Update the Listing of Impairments.

# Appendix A: Program Assessments

We routinely conduct studies and surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. Continuous evaluation of program data, research, and analysis assist us in identifying strengths and weaknesses in our programs. Program evaluation results assist us in developing strategies to address the major challenges we face and improve how we administer our programs. We complete many of our evaluations annually, while others may be quarterly, biennial, triennially, or one-time efforts. We have included a summary of findings for the most current reports available.

### Annual Evaluation Plan (Annually)

As required by the *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*, we developed an *FY 2022 Evaluation Plan* that describes our program evaluations to support our *FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan* and to lay the foundation for our *FYs 2022–2026 Learning Agenda*. Our plan describes the most significant program evaluations that we will complete during the year. The plan is available on our website at www.ssa.gov/data.

## Strategic Goal 1 – Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers

### ForeSee Experience Index E-Government Report (Quarterly)

The ForeSee Experience Index E-Government report measures customer satisfaction with government websites. The FY 2020 second half report noted that five of our websites, "Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs," "*my* Social Security" "iClaims - Disability," "Retirement Estimator," and "Business Services Online" topped the E-Government Satisfaction Index.

### Prospective Client Survey (Biennially)

The Prospective Client Survey queries people between ages 50 and 64 to identify service expectations and preferences of the upcoming wave of retirees. The most recent survey was in FY 2021. Key 2021 showed respondents expect to:

- Wait no more than 5 minutes to speak with an employee when they call the agency (80 percent percent);
- Receive a return call by the next day or sooner (96 percent);
- Obtain in-office appointments within 3 days (67 percent);
- Wait no more than 30 minutes to speak with an employee in the office (100 percent with appointments and 60 percent without); and
- Receive a response to an electronic inquiry no later than the next day (93 percent).

## Retirement Application Survey (Biennially)

The Retirement Application Survey measures customer satisfaction with the retirement application process and identifies service expectations and preferences for future service among recent retirees. In FY 2020, we found an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the retirement application process, with respondents rating their overall experience at 95 percent excellent, very good, and good. This rating reflects a slight increase from the FY 2018 satisfaction rating of 94 percent.

In FY 2020, almost half of the respondents—46 percent—noted they filed their applications for retirement benefits online, almost identical to the 45 percent in FY 2018. In-person filing dropped by one percentage point from 40 percent in FY 2018 to 39 percent in FY 2020. Telephone filing held steady at 15 percent in both years. Most respondents indicated they use the Internet, and 84 percent of those Internet users said they had already created *my* Social Security accounts. Among the remaining Internet users who had not yet created an account, half said they would be likely to create one. To identify perceived drawbacks of creating a *my* Social Security account, the survey asked Internet users who had not yet created accounts for the main reason why they might not be likely to do so. Almost half of the responders indicated they simply preferred to speak to a person when conducting Social Security business. We expect to complete the next survey in FY 2022.

## National 800-Number Caller Survey

Because of increased use of the National 800-Number as a primary service delivery, we are conducting this one-time survey from March 2021 through January 2022 to examine caller satisfaction with service they receive. The survey measures three aspects of customer satisfaction: overall service, access to service, and agent courtesy. Access refers to callers' perceptions of their ability to obtain the service they requested via the 800-Number. Cumulative survey results from the period of March 2021 through August 2021 show:

- 71 percent of callers were satisfied with overall service;
- 66 percent of callers were satisfied with access to service; and
- 89 percent of callers were satisfied with agent courtesy.

## Evaluation of the Ticket to Work and Other Employment Support Programs (Continuously)

The Ticket to Work and Other Employment Support Programs evaluation examines employment patterns and outcomes of disabled beneficiaries, including those beneficiaries who use employment services such as the Ticket to Work, Partnership Plus, and Work Incentives Planning and Assistance programs. We completed an independent 10-year evaluation of the Ticket to Work (TTW) program in 2013, which produced seven reports. All reports are publicly available at [www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/research.htm#Ticket](www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/research.htm#Ticket).

Overall, the TTW evaluation found that beneficiaries who use the program generally like it, and the program has increased the use of return-to-work services. In addition, those beneficiaries who participate in TTW have better outcomes than those who return to work without the help of SSA-financed employment services. However, we also found that the increase in service use and better outcomes by participants has not translated into net increases in the rate of benefit suspension or termination due to work wages or an increase in the average number of months spent in suspension or termination due to work wages. This finding suggests that TTW has primarily extended the types of services that were available under the previous program where services were offered only through State vocational rehabilitation agencies. To summarize, more beneficiaries are getting these services now, but the success rate has not measurably changed.

We completed contracts analyzing possible changes to how we implement the Ticket to Work program. The "WIPA Service Model Analysis Report," completed in 2020, developed 16 evidence-based recommendations for potential changes that we might consider for the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program service model. The "Employment Network (EN) Payment Structure Evaluation Report," completed in 2021, analyzes how EN payments could be structured if we replaced the current SSDI work incentive structure with one that would reduce SSDI benefits in a series of four steps based on earnings of 50, 100, 150, and 200 percent of the substantial gainful activity level.

We are planning a formal evaluation of the Ticket to Work program to begin in FY 2023. The evaluation will consist of surveys, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, an analysis of program data, or other data collection and analyses as appropriate. Expected topics will include, for example: program effectiveness and opportunities for improvement; consumer characteristics; service provision; and service equity. We expect the final evaluation report to be completed in FY 2027.

## Strategic Goal 2 – Build an Inclusive, Engaged, and Empowered Workforce

### Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (Annually)

We assess employee perspectives of organizational performance across several major human capital areas: recruitment, development, performance culture, leadership, job satisfaction, and personal work experiences. The 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results indicate both strengths and opportunities for improvement. The most positive employee perceptions center on knowledge of how jobs support agency goals and priorities, understanding of job expectations, respectfulness of supervisors, mission accomplishment, and work unit competence. Opportunities for improvement include questions that reference managing poor performers, workload reasonability, senior leaders, performance-based recognition, and involvement in decisions that affect work. Due to an Office of Personnel Management delay, the 2021 FEVS was administered in late Fall of 2021.

## Human Capital Evaluations (Annually)

We monitor and assess how well human capital policies and programs support our mission accomplishments.  These evaluations are critical for assessing organizational performance and determining how to improve processes.  Our Human Capital Evaluation System (HCES) also helps leadership assess the impact of human capital strategies designed to achieve agency goals.

The HCES is a mechanism to monitor and assess outcomes related to human capital management strategies, policies, programs, and activities.  We leverage business intelligence, analytics, and data-based decision-making structures to support our evaluation strategy by tracking agency progress on all milestones and performance measures through our Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP), HRStat reviews, and Independent Audit Program, as well as an annual Human Capital Review with the Office of Personnel Management.

Our HCOP describes plans for executing the human capital elements stated within our Agency Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Report and supports OMB's Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce, as described in Memorandum M-17-22.  To ensure our sustained success at both the agency and component levels, we developed mature structures and processes to support executive oversight and accountability and detailed plans for implementation of our key focus areas and corresponding initiatives.  We also established an ongoing evaluation process to identify challenges and make course corrections to achieve our target outcomes.

HRStat is a metric-based, analytical monitoring process that tracks human capital priorities and supports leadership data-driven decision making, as related to agency goals and performance outcome improvement strategies.

Independent Audit Program – We conduct a comprehensive Human Capital Framework (HCF) audit of all Servicing Personnel Offices (SPO) (i.e., currently 10 regions [including consolidated/closed SPOs], Office of Central Operations, and headquarters) on a cyclical basis so that each site is reviewed at least every 5 years.  We conduct audits virtually or onsite, if necessary.  Every audit includes a review of more than 50 agency- and OPM-defined outcomes across the following human resources functions:  training, performance management, labor-management/employee relations, civil rights and equal opportunity, staffing (including delegated examining unit hiring and merit promotion), workers' compensation, security and suitability, work-life, and classification.  We conducted two audits in FY 2021.  We found no significant issues while conducting one audit.  In the other audit, the overall number of required corrective actions was in alignment with other regions' HCF audits.  We consider the types of required corrective action, such as merit system violations, illegal appointments, and pay-setting errors, to be of greater concern than the number of errors, documentation errors, or processing timeliness.

## Management Directive 715 Report (Annually)

We provide the status of our efforts to establish and maintain effective equal employment affirmation actions programs under Section 717 of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and effective affirmation action programs under Section 501 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*.

In 2021, the Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity (OCREO) improved or continued efforts toward achieving the status as a Model Equal Employment Opportunity agency, as established in criteria by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). These initiatives include:

1) Identifying and eliminating barriers to equal employment opportunity (EEO) by completing an analysis of detected triggers that indicate potential barriers. OCREO also worked with stakeholders in the various components to assess potential barriers and provided updates to the Barrier Analysis Action Plan devised to identify and mitigate barriers.

2) Providing the agency head with a State of the Agency Briefing that describes our efforts to attain model EEO agency status and component briefings to senior executives with a comprehensive analysis of their components' workforce demographics via "State of the Component Briefings" issued in the second quarter of FY 2021. The analysis included workforce trends and identified areas in need of improvement based on low representational rates, as compared to the civilian labor force.

3) Revising Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) policy to increase management participation in ADR by requiring managers to get Deputy Commissioner-level concurrence to decline ADR. The ADR process is a tool to promote voluntary settlements early and throughout the EEO process, and to resolve workplace disputes in a positive and constructive manner at the lowest level. The ADR policy has ensured accountability of managers in the ADR process. As a result, we have yielded positive results with participation rates of managers increasing from 87.9 percent in FY 2020 to 91.2 percent in FY 2021.

4) Collaborating with the Office of Labor-Management and Employee Relations (OLMER) on implementing the *Notification and Federal Employee Anti-Discrimination and Retaliation Act* policy, under which OLMER conducts an independent review of complaints in any discrimination finding. The purpose of the independent reviews is to determine whether to recommend disciplinary action against management officials named in an EEO complaint. Under the No FEAR policy, OLMER may also review significant settlements. OLMER conducts these reviews on an *ad hoc* basis when OCREO receives either a finding from the EEOC or a settlement agreement that raises questions about the need for corrective action. OCREO submits findings and settlement agreements to OLMER for review, along with the Report of Investigation for the case. OLMER then analyzes whether to recommend disciplinary action and returns its recommendation to the component to consider taking action, if applicable.

5) Using eFile, which allows employees to initiate EEO complaints and to view the status of their cases electronically. This automated tool also allows OCREO to monitor and track the usage of EEO representative time for complainants and union representatives.

## Strategic Goal 3 – Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs

### Federal Information Security Modernization Act Report (Annually)

The *Federal Information Security Modernization Act* Report tells Congress whether our overall information technology security and privacy programs and practices comply with the *Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014*. In FY 2021, we made substantial improvements in our cybersecurity program by increasing emphasis on enterprise cyber governance and oversight by creating greater awareness of overarching issues and the related risk mitigation activities and establishing more accountability for completion of program objectives and milestones. Additionally, we continued expanding our executive compliance dashboard to reinforce and monitor our performance in meeting key security controls. We are pleased that Grant Thornton assesses that we have an effective Incident Response program for the second year in a row. In addition, we achieved higher maturity scores in the functions of Protect and Recover as compared to the prior year as well as higher scores across several individual metrics.

### Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Risk Management Assessment (Quarterly)

OMB and DHS generate the DHS Risk Management Assessment as required by Executive Order 13800 and outlined in OMB Memoranda M-17-25 to provide an assessment of risk for each agency based on information submitted by agencies for the *Federal Information Security Management Act* CIO metrics, which leverage the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. The report is sorted into Security Domains, and organized by the NIST Framework functions of Identify, Protect and Detect, Respond, and Recover with a risk rating of High Risk, At Risk, or Managing Risk. The risk levels per Security Domain are then used to calculate the overall risk level for the NIST function area. We have improved several areas from "At Risk" to "Managing Risk," and we maintain an assessment of "Managing Risk" overall on the report.

### Pre-Effectuation Review of Disability Determinations (Annually)

The Pre-Effectuation Review of Disability Determinations assesses the accuracy of DDS initial and reconsideration adult disability allowances as required in the Social Security Act. The results of the FY 2020 report are pending publication.

## Safeguard Security Report (Annually)

We provide examples of our policies and procedures to demonstrate how we safeguard personally identifiable information and Federal tax information. We submit this report to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on an annual basis.

## Safeguard Review (Triennially)

The Safeguard Review assesses the use of Federal tax information and the measures we employ to protect this information. This review is an onsite evaluation completed in collaboration with the IRS.

The IRS completed its full Safeguard Review of our agency in the summer of 2016. The review concluded with a closing conference in September 2016 and produced findings pertaining to both physical and IT security. We received one critical finding from the review and addressed it in June 2017. We report the findings from this review on a semi-annual basis through submission of a corrective action plan to the IRS. The IRS postponed the June 2020 Safeguard Review (Triennial), due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working with our IRS stakeholders to develop an approach for reviewing and testing the agency systems.

## Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds (Annually)

The Board of Trustees reports annually to Congress on the financial and actuarial status of the two Social Security trust funds. The 2021 report was signed on August 31, 2021. At the end of 2020, the OASDI program was providing benefit payments to about 65 million people: 49 million retired workers and dependents of retired workers, 6 million survivors of deceased workers, and 10 million disabled workers and dependents of disabled workers. During the year, an estimated 175 million people had earnings covered by Social Security and paid payroll taxes on those earnings. The total cost of the program in 2020 was $1,107 billion, while total income was $1,118 billion. The combined OASI and DI Trust Fund reserves are projected to become depleted in 2034, at which time continuing income to the trust funds would be sufficient to pay 78 percent of scheduled benefits. For the 75-year projection period, the OASDI actuarial deficit is 3.54 percent of taxable payroll.

## Annual Report to Congress on Medical Continuing Disability Reviews (Annually)

A legislatively mandated report provides summary information on medical CDRs conducted for a completed fiscal year.  The most recent report includes FY 2016 data.

## Report on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Non-medical Redeterminations (Annually)

This report provides summary information on non-medical redeterminations of SSI recipients conducted for a completed fiscal year.  The report includes actuarial estimates of the net Federal lifetime reductions in SSI and Medicaid benefits resulting from the reviews conducted during that fiscal year.  Our most recent report includes FY 2014 data.

## Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 Section 845(b) Report (Annually)

A legislatively mandated report provides summary information on work-related CDRs conducted for a completed calendar year.  The report includes actuarial estimates of the net lifetime reduction in OASDI benefits resulting from the CDRs conducted in that calendar year (CY).  The CY 2020 report is pending publication.

## Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program (Annually)

We report annually to the President and Congress on the status of the SSI program and provide 25-year projections of program participation and costs.  In January 2021, 7.88 million individuals received monthly Federal SSI payments averaging $570, a decrease of 106,000 recipients from the 7.99 million recipients with an average payment of $559 in January 2020.  By 2045, the end of the 25-year projection period, we estimate that the SSI recipient population will reach 8.55 million.  The projected growth in the SSI program over the 25-year period is largely due to the overall growth in the U.S. population, though the growth in the SSI recipient population is projected to be somewhat slower than the growth in the U.S. population.

## Enumeration Accuracy Report (Triennially)

We report the accuracy of original Social Security numbers (SSN) assigned during the fiscal year.  In FYs 2015 and 2018, the enumeration accuracy rates were 100 percent.  The next review is tentatively scheduled for late FY 2022.

## Evaluation of the Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation Predictive Model (Annually)

We assess the results of a predictive model used to score work issue CDR cases to ensure that we prioritize cases most likely to result in determinations of medical improvement.  Our tracking and assessment each year indicate the need for improved coordination with the processing centers in reviewing cases based on the scores' priority order. While our Enforcement Operation issues various types of alerts, we showed progress on the challenging task of separating enforcement alert events that do not result in work reviews. Our prime objective for the future is aligning the Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation predictive model with the quarterly and monthly earning work review process.

### Targeted Denial Review (Annually)

We assess the accuracy of initial and reconsideration disability denials made by the DDS. In FY 2021, we analyzed 25,816 cases and cited 663 decisional errors and 1,863 documentation errors. We returned 2,526 cases to the adjudicating components for correction—a return rate of 9.8 percent.

### Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Stewardship Review (Annually)

Our Stewardship Review measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits. FY 2021 results are expected in summer of 2022. Information about the improper payments, root causes, and corrective actions in our programs for FY 2021 (and previous years) can be found on www.paymentaccuracy.gov.

### Supplemental Security Income Stewardship Review (Annually)

The SSI Stewardship Review measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving SSI benefits by reviewing all non-medical factors of eligibility and payment. FY 2021 results are expected in summer of 2022. Information about the improper payments, root causes, and corrective actions in our programs for FY 2021 (and previous years) can be found on www.paymentaccuracy.gov.

### Supplemental Security Income Transaction Accuracy Review (Annually)

The SSI Transaction Accuracy Review (STAR) examines non-medical aspects of eligibility, such as income, resources, and living arrangement, to assess the adjudicative accuracy of SSI initial claims, redeterminations, and limited issues to ensure they are policy compliant. In FY 2020, the sample of 4,352 cases provided meaningful information about the quality of the non-medical aspects of these SSI transactions. The national case accuracy rates for FY 2020, defined as the percentage of cases free of either an O/P or a U/P, were 92.1 percent for O/P and 94.8 percent for U/P. In FY 2019, these rates were 90.4 percent and 94.0 percent, respectively. The change in the FY 2020 O/P and U/P case accuracy rates from those of FY 2019 was not statistically significant.

In addition to case accuracy, STAR measures the accuracy of payments authorized, or dollar accuracy. The national dollar accuracy rates for FY 2020 were 98.8 percent for O/P and 99.5 percent for U/P. In FY 2019, these rates were 98.5 percent and 99.5 percent, respectively.

The change in the FY 2020 O/P dollar accuracy rate from the FY 2019 rate is not statistically significant  FY 2021 results are expected in summer of 2022.

## Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Transaction Accuracy Review (Triennially)

We review non-medical factors of eligibility to assess recently processed retirement, survivors, and disability insurance claims to ensure compliance with operational policy.  For FY 2020, the overall OASDI O/P case accuracy was 99.3 percent, and the overall OASDI U/P case accuracy was 98.3 percent.  The case accuracy rates indicate that approximately 2-out-of-every 100 claims were incorrectly paid—about 0.7 out of 100 cases had O/Ps, and about 1.7 out of 100 cases had U/Ps.

The OASDI national dollar accuracy rates for FY 2020 were 99.4 percent for OPs and 98.5 percent for UPs.

# Appendix B:
# How We Ensure Our Data Integrity

We are committed to providing consistent, reliable, and valid data. We have internal controls to ensure that our data are quantifiable, verifiable, and secure. Our internal controls include:

- Audit trails;
- Integrity reviews;
- Separation of duties;
- Restricted access to sensitive data;
- Reviews at all levels of management; and
- Validation and verification in our System Development Life Cycles.

These same controls support the *Commissioner's Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act* Assurance Statement.

## Data Integrity Systems and Controls

We gather performance data using automated management information and other workload measurement systems. We assess the data in terms of four quality dimensions:

- Accuracy – Measures how well data adheres to specification (e.g., definitions, rules, and policies);
- Consistency – Measures consistency in internal and external reporting of data;
- Completeness – Measures missing occurrences or attributions of the data; and
- Timeliness – Measures the currency of the data (i.e., data are up-to-date and reporting occurs on time).

We conduct quality evaluations based on established internal methodologies. As we introduce new performance measures, we perform a comprehensive data assessment using the four quality dimensions. From the assessment results, we establish a baseline. After establishing the baseline, we automate continuous monitoring to sustain high-quality data. Continuous monitoring allows us to follow data trends and proactively remediate potential issues.

In our data quality program, we derive several accuracy and public satisfaction measures from surveys and work samples. These measures provide confidence levels of 95 percent or higher.

As part of our fiduciary responsibility to the public, we use an audit trail system (ATS) to protect our records and taxpayer funds from improper use. The ATS collects and maintains detailed information about our internal and public transactions. We store the data from programmatic and select Internet applications, so we can review transactions for fraud and abuse.

## Audit of Our FY 2021 Financial Statements

The *Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990* requires the OIG or an independent external auditor that it selects to audit our financial statements. OIG selected Grant Thornton LLP (Grant Thornton) to conduct the FY 2021 financial statement audit.

The auditor found we fairly presented the basic financial statements, in all material respects, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America for Federal entities. Grant Thornton's FY 2021 audit report marked the 28th consecutive year that we received an unmodified audit opinion on our financial statements. The auditor also found that our agency maintained, in all material respects, effective internal control over our financial reporting.

The audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The audit did not find instances of noncompliance with laws, regulations, or other materials tested.

# Appendix C:
# Changes to Performance Measures

## Results for Discontinued Fiscal Year 2021 Performance Measures

### Improve customer service in the hearings process by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing decision (FYs 2020 – 2021 APG)

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Decide 97% of the cases that begin the fiscal year 430 days old or older | Complete 97% of cases that begin the fiscal year 430 days old or older (~374,000 cases) | Complete 95% of cases that begin the fiscal year 350 days old or older (~355,000 cases) | Decide 98% of cases that begin the fiscal year 270 days old or older (~235,000 cases) | Decide 98% of cases that begin the fiscal year 190 days old or older (~235,000 cases) |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Met | Met | Not Met | Not Met |
| **Performance** | 96% | 98% | 98% | 92% | 71% |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | While impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from meeting our aged case goal, we made significant progress in reducing our hearings backlog. We reduced our hearings pending to 350,137 and we reduced our annual average processing to 326 days. | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of aged cases completed. Note that prior year targets vary, and we report our hearings performance through other channels in greater detail.**

### Implement the Electronic Consent-Based Social Security Number Verification Service

| Fiscal Year | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Implement eCBSV services for 10 permitted entities selected and enrolled during the initial enrollment period | Implement a second release of eCBSV services for additional permitted entities that applied during the July 2019 initial enrollment period |
| **Target Met** | Not Met | Met |
| **Performance** | Implemented eCBSV services for 8 available permitted entities | We successfully implemented the expanded rollout of the eCBSV to 100 percent of the permitted entities ready to begin using the eCBSV service. |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We expanded the number of permitted entities and completed all remaining service development activities. | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the enrollment of a permitted entity (i.e., financial institution or service provider, subsidiary, affiliate, agent, subcontractor, or assignee) as defined by section 509 of the Gramm Leach Bliley Act, governing the treatment of nonpublic personal information about consumers by financial institutions, which applied in the July 2019 initial enrollment period.**

## Expand Self-Service for Claims Status Inquiries

| Fiscal Year | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Implement event-based emails to SSA customers | Develop Claim Status enterprise service and update myAPS online service with new features |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met |
| **Performance** | Implemented event-based emails | Completed |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We released the myAPS - Claims Status Tracker, providing *my* Social Security users with detailed information about the status of their pending RSDI, SSI, and Medicare Initial Claims and Appeals. We also connected myAPS-CST to Plan and Prepare workspace. | |

**Data Definition: The target represents our goal to implement new functionality that allows our customers to receive proactive, consistent, and informative claims status updates.**

## Increase the percentage of beneficiaries whose successful work outcomes within three years of assignment resulted in a payment to an Employment Network (EN) or State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency

| Fiscal Year | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| **Target** | 7.1% | 7.2% |
| **Target Met** | Met | Met |
| **Performance** | 8.8% | 9.4% |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | We ended the year with 9.4 percent of all beneficiaries who assigned their Ticket to an EN or State VR agency in the last three years. We also generated a payment to an EN or State VR agency, which exceeded our target. | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of beneficiaries assigned a Ticket to Work to an EN or State VR agency within the last three years and who also generated a payment by the end of the current fiscal year.**

## Maintain customer satisfaction with our online services above Verint ForeSee's Threshold of Excellence (80)

| Fiscal Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Target** | Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services |
| **Target Met** | Met | Not Met | Not Met | Not Met | Not Met |
| **Performance** | Satisfaction rating of 85.5 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 83.5 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 83.1 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 84.5 for online services | Satisfaction rating of 83.0 for online services |
| **FY 2021 Performance Results** | While our overall satisfaction rating for FY 2021 (83) did not meet our target, we continue to exceed the ForeSee Threshold of Excellence (80). We are implementing an enterprise strategy to standardize customer feedback collection across all service channels. | | | | |

**Data Definition: The target represents the combined fiscal year average customer satisfaction rating for the following eight online services: Business Services Online, iClaim Disability, Medicare Extra Help, iClaim RIB, iAppeals, *my* Social Security, Retirement Estimator, and SSA Main Page.**

# Appendix D:
# Summary of Key Management Officials' Responsibilities

**Commissioner of Social Security (COSS)** manages all agency programs and staff and serves as the Chief Operating Officer, responsible for improving agency management and performance

**Deputy Commissioner of Social Security (DCOSS)** an appointed position, authorized to act on behalf of the COSS.

**Chief Actuary (OCACT)** plans and directs program actuarial estimates and analyses for our programs and for any proposed changes in programs and trust funds. OCACT provides technical and consultative services to the COSS, the Board of Trustees of the Social Security Trust Funds, Congress, and their respective staffs.

**General Counsel (GC)** advises the COSS, DCOSS, and all subordinate organizational components (except the Inspector General) on legal matters. GC also oversees the implementation of privacy protections and ensures that all privacy requirements are met, serving as the Senior Agency Official for Privacy.

**Inspector General (IG)** is a Senate-confirmed position that promotes economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in administering our programs and operations, and prevents and detects fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

**Director for Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity (OCREO)** ensures compliance with the laws and regulations that govern Federal-sector Equal Employment Opportunity, promotes an equitable and inclusive work environment, and serves as the agency lead for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

**Deputy Commissioner for Analytics, Review, and Oversight (DCARO)** oversees the review of program quality and effectiveness and makes recommendations for program improvement utilizing feedback from the adjudication of cases, predictive modeling, and other advanced data analysis techniques. DCARO also serves as the Chief Data Officer; coordinates the agency's anti-fraud initiatives; responds to the recommendations of external monitoring authorities; and serves as the accountable official for improper payments.

**Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management (DCBFM)** directs our comprehensive management programs including budget, financial policy, acquisition, grants, facilities and logistics management, and security and emergency preparedness. DCBFM also serves as the Chief Financial Officer, Performance Improvement Officer, the Program Management Improvement Officer, and the responsible official for Enterprise Risk Management and the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act.

**Deputy Commissioner for Communications (DCCOMM)** conducts our national public information and outreach programs and fosters the transparency of our operations.

**Deputy Commissioner for Hearings Operations (DCHO)** administers our nationwide hearings program in accordance with relevant Federal laws.

**Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources (DCHR)** administers our human resources programs, including training, human capital initiatives, personnel and employee relations, and labor management. DCHR also serves as the Chief Human Capital Officer and the senior accountable official on employee engagement initiatives.

**Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs (DCLCA)** develops and conducts our legislative program, serves as our liaison to Congress, and analyzes legislative and regulatory initiatives.

**Deputy Commissioner for Operations (DCO)** directs our network of field offices, National 800 Number teleservice centers, and processing centers. DCO also oversees the Chief Business Office and the State disability determination services.

**Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy (DCRDP)** advises the COSS on major policy issues and is responsible for all activities in the areas of program policy planning, policy research and evaluation, statistical programs, and overall policy development, analysis, and implementation. DCRDP serves as liaison with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and leads our efforts to improve the clarity, tone, and readability of our notices. DCRDP also leads our efforts in implementing the *Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*.

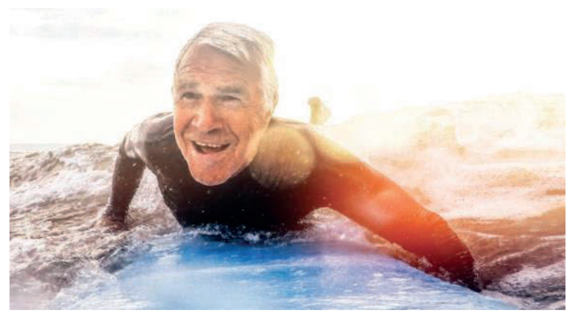
**Deputy Commissioner for Systems (DCS)** directs the strategic management of our systems and databases, which includes the development, validation, and implementation of new systems. DCS directs operational integration, strategic planning processes, and implementation of a systems configuration program. DCS is responsible for implementing the agency's IT Modernization Plan. DCS also serves as the Chief Information Officer.









Securing today
and tomorrow

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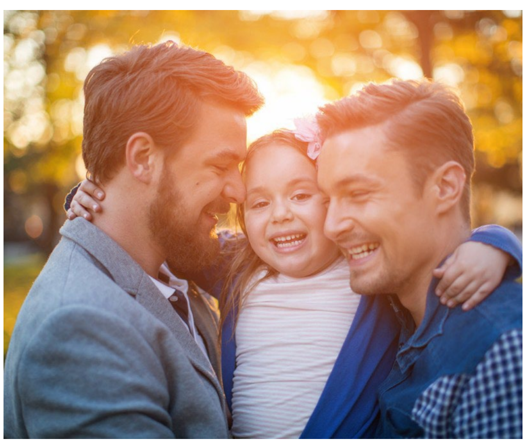
**Social Security Administration**

# Agency Strategic Plan | Fiscal Years 2022–2026



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# Message from the Acting Commissioner

I am pleased to present the Social Security Administration's *Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022–2026*. This plan communicates our vision to ensure equity in delivering Social Security services and improve the accessibility of our services to all. To fulfill that vision, we will improve access to Social Security services by addressing systemic barriers to full and equitable participation in our programs through: 1) optimizing the experience of SSA customers; 2) building an inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce; and 3) ensuring stewardship of SSA programs.

For nearly 90 years, we have provided income security for the diverse population we serve. Over 70 million people receive benefits each year. While our core programs remain unchanged, we must modernize our service model to best serve our customers.

Through customer engagement, we will strive to understand our customers' needs, ensure access to our programs, and deliver customer-focused service. By expanding our digital service options for individuals who prefer them, we will improve customer experience and service in our local offices. We are working to better assist those who need in-person support, including customers with critical situations, complex claims, or limited internet or mobile access.

Over the past several years, we have invested in modernizing our information technology (IT) to build our customers' confidence in doing business with us online. Though we have made progress, changing technology requires continued improvements to provide our customers with efficient service and to support our employees' work. We must also address cybersecurity threats. Our advances in IT, authentication, and security will help ensure we remain focused on making the right payment to the right person at the right time and protecting our customers' personal information.

The knowledgeable, dedicated, and talented workforce that administers our complex programs is essential to our success. We will invest in our employees, as we eliminate barriers to hiring and advancement to foster an inclusive workforce. We will treat our employees equitably and provide support for their chosen career paths. We will empower our employees to use their talents to achieve our strategic goals and continue to make smart decisions about our resources.

We must effectively manage our programs and projects, assess and mitigate risks, and change course when necessary. As good stewards of our programs, we must continue our quality reviews, cost-effective program integrity work, and payment accuracy efforts to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled. By expanding the use of data analytics and predictive modeling and increasing the number and scope of strategic partnerships with other Federal agencies, we will be better positioned to serve recipients by confirming eligibility and preventing waste, fraud, and abuse.

This strategic plan is our vision for how we will evolve as an organization to exceed the service delivery expectations of our customers in the next five years.  We remain committed to improving our customers' experience and safeguarding our programs.

Respectfully,

Kilolo Kijakazi

Baltimore, Maryland
March 28, 2022

## Vision

Provide income security for the diverse population we serve.

## Mission

Ensure equity and accessibility in delivering Social Security services by improving the customer experience and addressing systemic barriers to participation in our programs.

# Strategic Framework

Our Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022–2026, with goals that **Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers, Build an Inclusive, Engaged, and Empowered Workforce,** and **Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs** and the associated objectives and supporting strategies, provides the framework for achieving our vision and mission. These goals are informed by strategic opportunities, our assessment of program evaluations, and our enterprise risk management (ERM) process, which help us improve the effectiveness of our organization and program administration. In addition, our FYs 2022–2026 Learning Agenda describes our evidence-building roadmap to support our strategic goals and objectives. Our 10 priority questions, each aligned to a specific strategic objective, aim to provide valuable information to promote evidence-based decision-making and improve operational outcomes.

| Strategic Goals | Strategic Objectives | Supporting Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers | Identify and Address Barriers to Accessing Services | • Identify and address potential inequities in current policies and programs<br>• Increase support services for unrepresented claimants<br>• Conduct implicit bias training for employees<br>• Conduct and analyze customer satisfaction surveys to identify areas for improvement |
| | Expand Digital Services | • Better understand our customers' service preferences<br>• Address our customers' service needs<br>• Increase the use of secure digital services |
| | Build a Customer-Focused Organization | • Continue modernizing our information technology<br>• Improve timeliness and eliminate and prevent backlogs |
| Build an Inclusive, Engaged, and Empowered Workforce | Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Hiring and Advancement | • Conduct analyses to identify and address any systemic barriers present in hiring and advancement<br>• Broaden reach for hiring and promote retention |
| | Support Employees' Chosen Career Paths | • Invest in our employees<br>• Ensure inclusive leadership development |
| Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs | Improve the Accuracy and Administration of Our Programs | • Support our cost-effective program integrity work to safeguard benefit programs to better serve our recipients<br>• Enhance our payment accuracy efforts, including overpayments and underpayments<br>• Expand the use of data analytics and predictive modeling<br>• Strengthen our cybersecurity program |
| | Identify and Eliminate Potential Barriers to Access Contracts and Grants | • Identify and work to address potential barriers and bolster open competition in the acquisition and grants process<br>• Disseminate acquisition and grant proposal requests widely to ensure responses from a broad range of organizations |
| | Improve Organizational Performance and Policy Implementation | • Simplify our policies and modernize our processes<br>• Strengthen program and resource management<br>• Expand strategic partnerships with external partners |

## Programs

Few Government agencies touch the lives of as many people as we do. We administer three programs under the Social Security Act:

- **Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI):** Established in 1935, the OASI program provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their family members. In fiscal year (FY) 2022, we estimate we will pay OASI benefits to nearly 57 million beneficiaries on average each month. We estimate we will pay over $1 trillion to OASI beneficiaries in FY 2022.
- **Disability Insurance (DI):** Established in 1956, the DI program provides benefits for workers who become disabled and for their families. In FY 2022, we estimate we will pay DI benefits to nearly 10 million beneficiaries on average each month. We estimate we will pay over $150 billion to DI beneficiaries in FY 2022.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** Established in 1972, the SSI program provides financial support to aged, blind, and disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. In FY 2022, we estimate we will pay SSI benefits to nearly 8 million recipients on average each month (approximately 2.7 million of whom concurrently receive OASI or DI benefits). We estimate we will pay nearly $63 billion in SSI Federal benefits and State supplementary payments in FY 2022.

In addition, we support national programs administered by other Federal and State agencies, as required by law, such as Medicare, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, E-Verify, Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Federal Benefits for Veterans, as well as programs associated with the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act, and the Help America Vote Act.

## Organization

Nearly 60,000 Federal employees and approximately 15,000 State employees serve the public from a network of more than 1,500 offices across the country and around the world. Most of our employees serve the public directly or provide support to employees who do.

We administer our programs and services online, by phone, and in-person in our offices. Our customers can access services such as applying for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits; checking the status of an application or appeal; or requesting a replacement Social Security card.

Our National 800 Number handles over 30 million calls each year. Callers can conduct a variety of business transactions either by speaking directly with an agent or using our 24-hour automated services, which include requesting benefit verification letters, ordering replacement Medicare cards, and obtaining claim status updates.

Our processing centers handle complex Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability benefit payment decisions, as well as provide support to our National 800 Number. State agencies make disability determinations for initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews. Administrative law judges in our hearing offices and administrative appeals judges in our Appeals Council decide appealed cases.

For more information about our organization and its functions, visit our organizational structure webpage at www.ssa.gov/org.

## Strategic Goal 1: Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers

Through our OASI, DI, and SSI programs, we provide essential benefits to retirees, survivors, elderly, or blind and disabled individuals, including those with limited income and resources who rely on us to meet life's basic needs. We also support our nation's workforce who are paying into Social Security, by providing Social Security numbers, recording wages and earnings, and maintaining and improving services for workers and their families when they need to access our programs.

Serving our customers is at the heart of all we do. We listen to our customers and adjust how we do business to meet their needs. Partially in response to customer feedback, we have offered more services online, expanded ways to obtain claims status, and changed how employers share information with us. For example, we piloted an electronic wage filing that simplifies the process for employers to submit annual wage data. Now, we are strengthening our commitment to optimizing customer experience through all steps of accessing our programs. Optimizing the experience of our customers means we provide timely, accurate, and more efficient access to our services through the delivery channels customers prefer. Doing so requires a better understanding of our customers' evolving needs, advancing inclusive policies, and ensuring equity throughout our programs (e.g., targeted outreach to communities of color and underserved communities). It also requires that we continue to examine our current policies and procedures to ensure they are as efficient and equitable as possible.

We are dedicating agency resources to focus on customer experience and transforming the way we obtain and use customer feedback. We expect our customer experience strategies to result in continually improving service delivery. These strategies include adopting human-centered design and standardizing customer experience and satisfaction data collection.

### Strategic Objective 1.1 – Identify and Address Barriers to Accessing Services

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy*

> **1 PRIORITY QUESTION**
>
> *What are the effects of changes to our service delivery methods on the accessibility, use, efficiency, security, and equitable delivery of our services?*

Equity is the bedrock of American democracy, and our diversity is one of our country's greatest strengths. Entrenched disparities in our laws and public policies, and in our public and private institutions, have often failed to serve individuals and communities equitably. We must identify and address disparities that underserved communities and individuals may face in accessing our programs and services. We are improving our outreach to include diverse stakeholders and developing relationships with diverse advocates, civil rights organizations, and community organizations. In addition, answering Priority Question #1 will provide evidence on the characteristics of people who face barriers in accessing our services and will inform our efforts to deliver more effective and equitable services. More information about our efforts to serve all of our customers equitably, please refer to our Equity Action Plan (www.ssa.gov/policy/about/racial-equity-resources.html).

> **2 PRIORITY QUESTION**
>
> *To what extent are the Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs equitably serving and meeting the needs, including return-to-work efforts, of the population that Congress intended these programs to serve?*

We will increase accessibility by streamlining our applications and dedicating personnel to assist individuals identified as potentially eligible for our programs. Additionally, we will ensure unrepresented individuals at disability hearings have information about their service delivery options, understand their right to representation, and are prepared to participate in hearings with administrative law judges. We will use answers to Priority Question #2 to ensure the disability programs are meeting customer needs.

To support equitable and consistent administration of our programs and services for our customers, we will provide implicit bias awareness training for our employees and track and analyze customer satisfaction and complaints.

## Strategies:

### Identify and address potential inequities in current policies and programs

We will routinely engage in conversations with external stakeholders to discuss service delivery methods and how we can achieve efficiencies. We will extend our outreach campaigns to national organizations to reach underserved communities across the country. We will continue to develop and maintain a network of advocates and community-based organizations and meet with them regularly to address the needs of people facing barriers.

In addition, we will increase our collection of data by race and ethnicity and employ it to discern whether there are differences in the rate of participation in our programs or disparities in average benefit levels. If there are, we will assess the potential factors contributing to these differences and work to address them.

### Increase support services for unrepresented claimants

Our customers have a right to have a representative to help them conduct business with us. However, nearly 20 percent of claimants at the hearing level do not have representation. We will support unrepresented claimants at the hearing level during our administrative review process. Through improved outreach, our goal is to prepare unrepresented individuals to participate in the hearing process before an administrative law judge. We will also examine our processes and procedures for potential actions that may result in disparate outcomes for unrepresented individuals.

### Conduct implicit bias training for employees

We established a workgroup on implicit bias and worked with training experts to assess and develop new training and a proposed curriculum. We will devise and implement agency-wide policies and trainings to increase equity and equality in our programs. We will use pre- and post-training evaluations to better understand implicit bias within our organization and the impact of our trainings to mitigate bias.

### Conduct and analyze customer satisfaction surveys to identify areas for improvement

We will analyze data to identify areas for improvement. We will consider the perspectives of different data sources, such as our ongoing customer satisfaction, prospective client, and retirement application surveys. We will also review and analyze civil rights complaints submitted by the public.

## Long-term Performance Goals:

- Improve equity in our Supplemental Security Income program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities.
- Improve equity and benefit delivery in our programs through increased outreach and the detection of disparities using data collection and analysis.

## Strategic Objective 1.2 – Expand Digital Services

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Deputy Commissioner for Systems*

To optimize customer experience, we must better understand our customers' service needs and priorities. We will collect customer feedback through various touchpoints as they seek access to our programs, target solutions to address that feedback, and monitor and improve our processes to meet customers' evolving needs.

Because customers increasingly do business with us online and by phone, we will continue to enhance our digital services—including online, and self-service options—to allow customers to complete more transactions with us using their preferred contact method. The resulting analysis and assessment from Priority Question #3 will provide additional evidence and data to prioritize changes that will facilitate the use of our digital services.

**3 PRIORITY QUESTION**

*What are the key factors that influence the public's use of our online services, including the services we deliver through my Social Security, and what are the effects of methods to modify these key factors on our customers' decisions to create my Social Security accounts and use our online services?*

## Strategies:

### Better understand our customers' service preferences

To improve the customer experience, we will deepen our understanding of our customers, including what drives their evolving service preferences. We will learn more about our customers' journey through various service channels and touchpoints. We will use Voice of Customer feedback to understand our customers' needs and preferences and adjust to improve their experience. Specifically, an enterprise-wide Voice of Customer feedback will allow us to capture real-time customer feedback across all service channels, which we will use to identify customers' pain points and assess effectiveness of current and new processes.

### Address our customers' service needs

We will implement industry leading customer experience best practices to analyze our customers' journeys from start to finish. Through this analysis, we will identify opportunities for improvement and develop and implement solutions that will improve our customers' experiences. Solutions will include expanding options that provide a fully digital service experience for many of our services on a variety of electronic devices and from any location with internet service. We will also introduce new online options and continue to provide and improve service through our phone and in-office service channels. For example, customers will be able to express an intent to file for SSI benefits online and use a mobile-accessible, online process to upload forms and other documentation.

### Increase the use of secure digital services

While we provide the public with additional digital services such as online, remote, and self-service options that represent the best of current technology, we must do so in a way that maintains our strong commitment to protect our customers from current and emerging threats including identity theft and scams to steal money or personal information. The combination of additional service options and secure access allows our customers to confidently use our digital services.

## Long-term Performance Goals:

- Increase the number of services and forms available on our secure digital platforms to provide more convenient, user-friendly, and secure digital self-service options.
- Increase the usage of our secure digital services so that customers can conduct business with us at their convenience.

## Strategic Objective 1.3 – Build a Customer-Focused Organization

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Operations, Deputy Commissioner for Hearings Operations, and Deputy Commissioner for Systems*

We are aligning our operating model, service delivery strategy, and information technology (IT) strategy to better support our customers, including people facing barriers to our services.

Our *IT Modernization Plan*, initiated in FY 2018, laid the groundwork for transforming our legacy systems and enhancing our service delivery. Building on the plans described in our *IT Modernization Plan, 2020 Update*, we will modernize our infrastructure to keep pace with customer demands and industry standards. In addition, we will automate more customer communications including increase in inventory of notices available online, and expand our use of emails, texts, and video to respond to customer questions quickly. We will expand the ability to securely upload forms, documentation, evidence, and correspondence without the need for service-specific tools or traveling to a field office. We will also improve communications with customers and streamline application processes. The findings in Priority Questions #4, #5, and #6 will provide us with information to deliver clearer and more effective communication, improve our knowledge of how people access information on our programs, and give us insights into effective ways to communicate with the public about our disability programs.

**4 PRIORITY QUESTION**

*What are the effects of changes to our communication methods on customer satisfaction, program integrity, and administrative efficiency?*

**5 PRIORITY QUESTION**

*Does redesigning the Social Security Statement and providing supplemental fact sheets with customized information on Social Security's programs improve people's knowledge of the programs and increase the use of internet services?*

**6 PRIORITY QUESTION**

*Does the working-age population have accurate knowledge of the Social Security disability programs, and to what extent does the working-age population's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the Social Security disability programs influence the decision to pursue benefits?*

### Strategies:

#### Continue modernizing our information technology

We will provide employees with effective, easy-to-use tools that help them serve our customers more efficiently. We will continue to improve self-service support tools and video options, allowing our customers to choose how and when to conduct transactions and receive immediate access to available online records, support, and service. Improvements in our IT will, for example, improve the accuracy and timeliness of our decisions and enable the public to provide medical evidence and schedule appointments online.

### Improve timeliness and eliminate and prevent backlogs

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our operations and caused backlogs to grow in several parts of our organization. The number of initial disability claims pending and the average processing time for these claims has increased. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to influence fundamental parts of our initial disability claims process such as the reduced number of medical providers willing to conduct in-person consultative examinations. We have made it a priority to improve the average processing time for initial claims generally and work down older cases, even as our initial claims receipts are projected to increase. Our Agency Priority Goal (APG) on initial disability claims reflects this commitment.

We will identify opportunities in policies, workloads, and processes for improving and enabling efficient and effective operations. We will improve claims systems, such as the disability claims processing system, by increasing our access to electronic medical information to make timely and policy-compliant disability determinations and improve our customers' disability application experience.

While we are striving to eliminate the hearings backlog in FY 2023, we are exploring technology enhancements, including greater automation and policy and process efficiencies to eliminate and prevent hearings delays and backlogs. We will explore automation options for other backlogs, such as initial disability claims and our processing center workloads and improve National 800 Number service performance.

## Long-term Performance Goals:

- Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number.
- Improve the customer experience by reducing the average processing time for initial disability claims and by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for initial disability determinations.
- Increase our customers' ability to electronically transact business with the agency to increase equity and accessibility to our services.

# Strategic Goal 2: Build an Inclusive, Engaged, and Empowered Workforce

Through their compassion and dedication, our talented employees are the heart of the agency. A trained, inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce, with the proper tools to do their jobs, is critical to our success. However, we are currently challenged by an increasing number of retirements and staff attrition that is causing a loss of institutional knowledge and complicating knowledge transfer. Based on staff feedback from employee surveys and exit interviews, we have learned about potential causes of attrition, which we are working to address. These efforts include hiring and retaining exceptional people, supporting their chosen career paths, continually offering them tools to do their jobs, and investing in our employee development and training programs.

To improve organizational performance and effectiveness, we are aligning our human capital policies to support in-person and remote customer service delivery. We will use these policies, as well as existing and emerging technologies, to attract, train, develop, and retain our workforce.

We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. We are promoting equity by developing and implementing diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness training for all employees. We will ensure our hiring and promotion practices promote equity as we continue to build a workforce that reflects and delivers customer-focused service to diverse populations.

## Strategic Objective 2.1 – Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Hiring and Advancement

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources and Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity*

We are committed to promoting diversity, inclusion, fairness, and equity. The diversity of our workforce is one of our greatest strengths. Our goal is to attract and retain employees who reflect the public we serve, are committed to our mission, and dedicated to providing quality customer experience. We will promote a workplace that recognizes and celebrates our employees' unique abilities and encourages the full contributions of all. The findings from our evidence-building activities related to Priority Question #7 in our Learning Agenda will inform our efforts to achieve this objective.

> **7 PRIORITY QUESTION**
>
> *To what extent are there systemic barriers to hiring, developing, and advancing a diverse and talented workforce and what are the effects of our Action Plan to mitigate those barriers in support of our goal to build an inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce?*

We will continuously strive to expand applicant pools through targeted recruitment of underrepresented groups. We will engage our Advisory Council Chairs within the Diversity and Inclusion Council, who have connections with the communities they serve and can play a key role to broaden our recruitment efforts among underrepresented groups. We will also seek talented candidates through collaborations with universities—such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) internship programs, inter-agency partnerships, and agency-wide developmental programs.

## Strategies:

### Conduct analyses to identify and address any systemic barriers present in hiring and advancement

To ensure a workforce that reflects the diversity of our customers at all levels of the organization, we will conduct analyses to determine if systemic barriers exist and work to remove any barriers we find. We will implement changes in hiring and career advancement, particularly around training. We will rethink our workplace culture, as necessary, to further these commitments.

### Broaden reach for hiring and promote retention

Increased workplace flexibility and the increasing use of online services allows us to broaden our geographic reach for hiring and retention in a way that complements our efforts to promote diversity and equity in hiring and advancement, where flexibilities are compatible with how we deliver our mission. Exploring workplace flexibilities, such as remote work when it fits within mission requirements; create greater interest in Federal employment with us; provide the opportunity for stability, attractive pay, and benefits packages; and offer opportunities for the best qualified job candidates regardless of their physical location.

## Long-term Performance Goal:

- Increase workforce diversity through improved recruitment, hiring, and retention.

## Strategic Objective 2.2 – Support Employees' Chosen Career Paths

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources*

We will invest in our employees, increase their engagement, and support their efforts to create fulfilling careers. We will offer dynamic career paths and opportunities for professional growth—helping employees become experts and encouraging participation in cross-government initiatives, such as through leadership development programs.

We will prioritize career growth and leadership development. Our performance management system will equitably reward high performance and incorporate well-defined and clearly communicated standards for success. Employees will receive meaningful individualized feedback on a continual basis to guide their development. Our employee-centered programs will foster skills development and facilitate knowledge transfer. We will assess training needs at the organizational level as well as the individual level, as our programs continually improve. Our training programs will be dynamic, address critical skill gaps, and will be crafted and adjusted according to our mission.

## Strategies:

### Invest in our employees

We will provide agency managers with the tools and resources to enhance their skills and competencies, optimize organizational performance, address current and future workforce needs, and attract the talent we need to achieve our business goals. We will modernize our talent management systems to support interactive and job-specific activities across the employee lifecycle, further supporting management accountability for improved employee performance and engagement. We will create opportunities for our employees to design, develop, and implement strategies to improve service to our customers and performance across the agency. These measures should boost employee engagement and employee empowerment, which will improve the employee experience, and lead to improvements in our customer experience.

### Ensure inclusive leadership development

One of our greatest challenges is maintaining operations when experienced employees leave the agency. For example, as of October 1, 2021, approximately 25 percent of our employees were eligible to retire. To ensure continuity in our public service, we will invest in our future leaders by developing job-enrichment opportunities to facilitate the transfer of job knowledge from employees eligible for retirement to retained employees. Employees will have opportunities to participate in development programs that will broaden their skills and prepare them for leadership positions.

## Long-Term Performance Goals:

- Increase employee engagement and empowerment as measured in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.
- Expand and maximize leadership development opportunities to promote employee retention and strengthen succession planning.

## Strategic Goal 3: Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs

One out of five Americans receives Social Security benefits at any given time and counts on us to provide accurate information and payments. As good stewards, we continue to look for ways to do business better, by addressing the root causes of improper payments, improving payment accuracy (including overpayments and underpayments), bolstering full and open competition in the acquisition and grants process, and applying sound management principles to everyday work. We are committed to continually improve the administration of our programs and work to identify and address potential inequities.

### Strategic Objective 3.1 – Improve the Accuracy and Administration of Our Programs

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Analytics, Review, and Oversight and Deputy Commissioner for Systems*

As good stewards of our programs, we must protect the privacy of our customers and integrity of our programs, and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. We will continue our effective program integrity work—including medical and work continuing disability reviews, SSI non-medical redeterminations, and the cooperative disability investigation program—which saves billions of program dollars with a proportionally small investment of administrative resources. We will develop, drive, and prioritize business processes, policies, and automation improvements that ensure appropriate benefit decisions and target the root causes of improper payments. Answers to Priority Question #8 will provide a clearer picture of why cases are remanded and assist in developing recommendations for business process changes. We will continue to collaborate with our Office of the Inspector General, and support its work to combat fraud, including Social Security-impersonation schemes, and to educate the public to avoid scams. These efforts also help to ensure public confidence in our programs and operations.

**8 PRIORITY QUESTION**

*What factors contribute to Federal court remands of disability decisions, and what are the effects of modifying relevant factors on the percentage of final decisions that are affirmed upon judicial review?*

Data analytics and predictive modeling give us more tools to detect and prevent fraud and cybersecurity threats. Through our cybersecurity program, we protect the public's information in our records, ensure continued payments to millions of beneficiaries, and enable the uninterrupted availability of our network, systems, and IT resources. We must remain vigilant to potential cybersecurity threats and ensure a safe and resilient environment.

## Strategies:

### Support our cost-effective program integrity work to safeguard benefit programs to better serve our recipients

Dedicated program integrity funding helps ensure individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and it safeguards the integrity of benefit programs to better serve recipients by confirming eligibility, improving payment accuracy for both overpayments and underpayments, and preventing fraud. In addition, program integrity funding allows us to conduct SSI redeterminations, conduct the anti-fraud cooperative disability investigations program, and support special attorneys for fraud prosecutions. We will continue these efforts to ensure public confidence in our programs and operations.

### Enhance our payment accuracy efforts, including overpayments and underpayments

We are committed to mitigating and preventing improper payments by leveraging audit recommendations, implementing automation and business process improvements, and enhancing data analytics. We continue to pursue workflow adjustments, policy and notice changes, training and reminders for technicians, and automation solutions to improve post-entitlement accuracy. We will increase our outreach to underserved populations, simplify our policies and procedures to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits for which they are entitled, automate tools to alert beneficiaries of overpayments and underpayments, and continue to allow electronic payments.

### Expand the use of data analytics and predictive modeling

We will continue to strengthen and expand the use of large-scale data analytics, complex data modeling, and related technologies to detect, deter, and prevent fraud, as well as identify potential additional benefits. We plan to enhance our enterprise fraud risk management program by introducing more risk assessment activities.

### Strengthen our cybersecurity program

We strive to maintain a highly effective cybersecurity program to protect against security threats and comply with Federal policies and regulations. The continued strength and resilience of our cybersecurity program is critical to protecting the personally identifiable information we store, and enabling uninterrupted availability of our network, systems, and IT resources.

## Long-term Performance Goal:

- Improve the integrity of the Supplemental Security Income program by reducing overpayments and underpayments to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

## Strategic Objective 3.2 – Identify and Eliminate Potential Barriers to Access Contracts and Grants

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management*

Government programs should equitably serve all eligible individuals, and government contracting and grant opportunities should be equitable for all eligible providers of goods and services. We will build long-term relationships with academic and professional associations and develop equity-based guidelines to encourage participation in agency research grant and contract opportunities by HBCUs and MSIs.

We will also encourage access and participation from Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zones, Woman-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and Small Disadvantaged Businesses by recognizing and removing hurdles they may face in taking advantage of agency procurement opportunities.

### Strategies:

#### Identify and work to address potential barriers and bolster open competition in the acquisition and grants process

We will conduct market research in accordance with regulations to bolster full and open competition in the acquisition and grants process to the maximum extent practicable. We will devise best practices to encourage participation by institutions serving students of color, including direct communications with professional associations. We will also develop best practices to secure contracts with qualified HUBZone, Woman-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and Small Disadvantaged Businesses.

#### Disseminate acquisition and grant proposal requests widely to ensure responses from a broad range of organizations

We will meet with HBCUs and MSIs to learn more about their experience with our grantmaking process, potential barriers the process presented, and suggestions for eliminating barriers. We will meet with bidders and recipients of our contracts for HUBZone, Woman-Owned, Veteran-Owned, and Small Disadvantaged Businesses to learn about their experiences with our procurement process, barriers they encountered, and recommended solutions to eliminate these barriers.

### Long-term Performance Goal:

- Improve access to contracting and grant opportunities for underrepresented groups and research institutions serving people of color.

## Strategic Objective 3.3 – Improve Organizational Performance and Policy Implementation

***Lead:*** *Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy and Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management*

We continually improve our program and administrative policies by updating, simplifying, and advancing policy to make our programs more responsive, less burdensome, and easy for our employees to apply consistently. For example, Priority Question #9 will examine whether potential program simplification can reduce burden for claimants and beneficiaries while maintaining program integrity. We will continue to improve the management of our programs and projects by implementing quality standards and using proven project management techniques.

**9 PRIORITY QUESTION**

*What are the effects of simplifying administrative rules and requirements on reducing the burden on program participants and supporting program integrity?*

Expanding our ERM program, project management, and data science capabilities will help us better anticipate and prepare for challenges in our operating environment. We will use data analysis to drive smart and accurate business decisions and mitigate risks. We will continue to create agency spaces that address our employee and business needs, now and into the future. Additionally, we are building data-sharing partnerships to help us better manage our workloads and resources, obtain evidence-based data to inform policy decisions, simplify and improve our programs, and ensure the delivery of our vital services to all communities. For example, the answers to Priority Question #10 will help us explore collaborations with other Federal agencies and define potential projects that remove barriers to accessing needed services, remove employment barriers, and improve the administration of our programs.

**10 PRIORITY QUESTION**

*What are the effects of improving collaboration and enhancing data sharing with external agencies on saving citizens time from reporting required information, reducing labor market barriers, improving program solvency projections, improving program administration, and reducing improper payments?*

### Strategies:

#### Simplify our policies and modernize our processes

We will clarify our program rules for both customers and employees. Simplifying our program rules and policies will help us process benefits for our customers more quickly and make it easier for customers to complete business with us. We will remove or update outdated provisions and regularly engage internal and external stakeholders to assess and update policies. For example, we will continue to make significant progress in updating medical listings to reflect advancements in the medical industry and emerging research and consider stakeholder input.

### Strengthen program and resource management

We will use proven program and project management techniques to protect taxpayer dollars and better serve our customers. We will leverage data, analyses, and program expertise to drive quicker and more accurate business decisions. We will utilize ERM best practices to manage our organizational challenges and ensure an enterprise approach in managing risks to deliver our mission. We will reassess the long-term future of agency facilities and our real property portfolio, while fulfilling workspace needs, optimizing space utilization, and achieving cost savings.

### Expand strategic partnerships with external partners

We will continue partnering with other Federal agencies to promote our services and *my* Social Security through their websites and customer interactions. By taking advantage of more data exchanges with other Federal and State agencies, we will increase the accuracy of our records, improve the customer experience, and increase organizational effectiveness.

## Long-term Performance Goals:

- Improve customer experience and equity in our disability programs by continuously updating our medical criteria to reflect advances in medical knowledge.
- Increase our data exchange partners by expanding outreach efforts with the data exchange community of practice and the States' data exchange community of interest.

# Appendix I: Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act

The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 was signed into law in January 2019. The law incorporates many of the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking (2017) to improve the use of evidence and data to generate policies and inform programs in the Federal government.

The law requires the development of a Learning Agenda, an Evaluation Plan, and a Capacity Assessment of the statistics, evaluation, research, and analysis efforts. The goal is to ensure that Federal agencies generate evidence of what works in Government and use that information to improve people's lives.

**Learning Agenda**

The Fiscal Years 2022–2026 Learning Agenda (www.ssa.gov/data/) describes our evidence-building roadmap to support the goals described in this strategic plan. We identified 10 priority questions that correspond to our strategic plan goals. The priority questions include short-term and long-term questions related to our mission, strategic planning, and agency operations. We expect that answers to our priority questions will provide valuable information about our agency's performance and promote evidence-based decision-making.

We gathered information from internal and external stakeholders to develop our Learning Agenda. Our Evaluation Officer established a working group with two representatives from each of our 11 major offices to obtain their input and identify priority questions.

The working group compiled a list of potential priority questions based on the information gathered from internal and external stakeholders and completed a process of refining and prioritizing the questions. After consultating with agency executives, we arrived at 10 priority questions identified in this Learning Agenda:

| # | Priority Question |
|---|---|
| Strategic Goal 1 – Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers | |
| **1** | What are the effects of changes to our service delivery methods on the accessibility, use, efficiency, security, and equitable delivery of our services? |
| **2** | To what extent are the Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs equitably serving and meeting the needs, including return-to-work efforts, of the population that Congress intended these programs to serve? |
| **3** | What are the key factors that influence the public's use of our online services, including the services we deliver through *my* Social Security, and what are the effects of methods to modify these key factors on our customers' decisions to create *my* Social Security accounts and use our online services? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **4** | What are the effects of changes to our communication methods on customer satisfaction, program integrity, and administrative efficiency? |
| **5** | Does redesigning the Social Security Statement and providing supplemental fact sheets with customized information on Social Security's programs improve people's knowledge of the programs and increase the use of internet services? |
| **6** | Does the working-age population have accurate knowledge of the Social Security disability programs, and to what extent does the working age-population's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the Social Security disability programs influence the decision to pursue benefits? |
| Strategic Goal 2 – Build an Inclusive, Engaged, and Empowered Workforce | |
| **7** | To what extent are there systemic barriers to hiring, developing, and advancing a diverse and talented workforce and what are the effects of our Action Plan to mitigate those barriers in support of our goal to build an inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce? |
| Strategic Goal 3 – Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs | |
| **8** | What factors contribute to Federal court remands of disability decisions, and what are the effects of modifying relevant factors on the percentage of final decisions that are affirmed upon judicial review? |
| **9** | What are the effects of simplifying administrative rules and requirements on reducing the burden on program participants and supporting program integrity? |
| **10** | What are the effects of improving collaboration and enhancing data sharing with external agencies on saving citizens time from reporting required information, reducing labor market barriers, improving program solvency projections, improving program administration, and reducing improper payments? |

For each priority question, we provide background information and actions we will take to answer the question.

**Capacity Assessment**

Our Capacity Assessment provides a baseline that we will use to measure improvements to the coverage, quality, methods, effectiveness, and independence of our evaluation, research, statistics, and data analysis. The Fiscal Years 2022–2026 Capacity Assessment (www.ssa.gov/data/) includes the following information:

1. A list of the activities and operations of the agency that are currently being evaluated and analyzed.
2. The extent to which the evaluations, research, and analysis efforts and related activities of the agency support the needs of various divisions within the agency.

3. The extent to which the evaluation research and analysis efforts and related activities of the agency address an appropriate balance between needs related to organizational learning, ongoing program management, performance management, strategic management, interagency and private sector coordination, internal and external oversight, and accountability.
4. The extent to which the agency uses methods and combinations of methods that are appropriate to agency divisions and the corresponding research questions being addressed, including an appropriate combination of formative and summative evaluation research and analysis approaches.
5. The extent to which evaluation and research capacity is present within the agency to include personnel and agency processes for planning and implementing evaluation activities, disseminating best practices and findings, and incorporating employee views and feedback.
6. The extent to which the agency has the capacity to assist agency staff and program offices to develop the capacity to use evaluation research and analysis approaches and data in the day-to-day operations.

Additional information on both the Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment is available on our website at www.ssa.gov/data.

# Appendix II: Measuring Our Progress

We have identified three Agency Priority Goals (APGs) for FYs 2022–2023. These goals are aggressive and directly support our strategic plan, specifically Strategic Goal 1 (Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers). To ensure our success in these areas, we conduct quarterly internal progress reviews and take necessary action to improve our results and reduce costs. As we approach the FYs 2024–2025 cycle, we will determine the next set of APGs.

1. Improve equity in our Supplemental Security Income program through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities.
    - By September 30, 2023, increase the number of all SSI applications by 15 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline, restoring rates closer to pre-pandemic levels.
    - By September 30, 2023, increase the number of SSI applications from underserved communities by 25 percent, relative to the 2021 baseline.
2. Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number.
    - By September 30, 2023, achieve an average speed of answer of less than 12 minutes, including implementation of estimated wait time and call back options.
3. Improve the customer experience by reducing the average processing time for initial disability claims and by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for initial disability determinations.
    - By September 30, 2023, achieve an average processing time for initial disability claims of 164 days.
    - By September 30, 2023, decide 85 percent of pending initial disability claims that begin the fiscal year 180 days old or older.

**Other Measurement**

We monitor, track, and evaluate progress toward accomplishing our performance goals and targets on an ongoing basis. The Acting Commissioner and other agency executives review a monthly performance report, which assesses agency progress in achieving the performance targets in our Annual Performance Plan and Report (www.ssa.gov/agency/performance). We develop performance expectations at the beginning of the fiscal year and use them to assess progress throughout the year. The lead executive responsible for each performance goal provides a brief explanation for any performance that is behind expectation.

The Government Performance and Results Act, Modernization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-352) requires agencies address Federal Cross-Agency Priority Goals in Agency Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans. Please refer to www.performance.gov for information on Federal Cross-Agency Priority Goals and the agency's contribution to those goals.

# Appendix III: Assessing Our Programs

We routinely conduct studies and surveys to assess the effectiveness of our programs. Continuous assessment of the collection of program data, research, and analyses assists us in identifying strengths and weaknesses in our programs. Information from the program assessments assist us in developing strategies to address the major challenges we face and improve the day-to-day administration of our programs. We complete many of our reviews annually while others may be one-time efforts. The following charts describe some of our significant assessments and the timeframe for completion.

| Assessment | Description |
|---|---|
| **Overall Programs Evaluation** | |
| Annual Evaluation Plan (Annually) | As required by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, we developed a FY 2023 Evaluation Plan that describes our program evaluations to support our FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan or to lay the foundation for our FYs 2022–2026 Learning Agenda |
| **Strategic Goal 1 – Optimize the Experience of SSA Customers** | |
| Prospective Client Survey (Biennially) | Queries people between ages 50 and 64 to identify service expectations and preferences of the upcoming wave of retirees. |
| Retirement Application Survey (Biennially) | Measures customer satisfaction with the retirement application process and identifies service expectations and preferences for future service among recent retirees. |
| Evaluation of the Ticket to Work and Other Employment Support Programs (Continuously) | Examines employment patterns and outcomes of disabled beneficiaries, including those beneficiaries who use employment services such as the Ticket to Work, Partnership Plus, and Work Incentives Planning and Assistance programs. We completed an independent 10-year evaluation of the Ticket to Work (TTW) program in 2013, which produced seven reports. Since 2013, we have transitioned to evaluating TTW and other employment support programs through internal research, funding collaborative and external research through our Retirement and Disability Research Consortium, and other grant programs. |

| Strategic Goal 2 – Build an Inclusive, Engaged, and Empowered Workforce | |
|---|---|
| Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (Annually) | Assesses employee perspectives of organizational performance across several major human capital areas: recruitment, development, performance culture, leadership, job satisfaction, and personal work experiences. |
| Human Capital Evaluations (Annually) | Monitors and evaluates how well human capital policies and programs support our mission accomplishments. This evaluation is a critical step in assessing organizational performance and determining how to improve processes. Our Human Capital Evaluation System also helps leadership assess the impact of human capital strategies designed to achieve agency goals. |
| Management Directive 715 Report (Annually) | Provides the status of our efforts to establish and maintain effective equal employment affirmation actions programs under Section 715 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and effective affirmation action programs under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. |
| **Strategic Goal 3 – Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs** | |
| Federal Information Security Modernization Act Report (Annually) | Reports to Congress whether our overall information technology security and privacy programs and practices comply with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014. |
| Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Risk Management Assessment (Quarterly) | Responds to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and DHS-generated DHS Risk Management Assessment as required by Executive Order 13800 and outlined in OMB Memoranda M-17-25 to provide an assessment of risk for each agency based on information submitted by agencies for the Federal Information Security Management Act Chief Information Officer metrics, which leverage the National Institute of Standards and Technology Cybersecurity Framework. |
| Pre-Effectuation Review of Disability Determinations (Annually) | Assesses the accuracy of disability determination services (DDS) initial and reconsideration adult disability allowances as required in the Social Security Act. |
| Safeguard Security Report (Annually) | Provides examples of our policies and procedures to demonstrate how we safeguard personally |

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| | identifiable information and Federal tax information. We submit this report to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on an annual basis. |
| Safeguard Review (Triennially) | Evaluates the use of Federal tax information and the measures we employ to protect this information. This review is an onsite evaluation completed in collaboration with the IRS. |
| Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds (Annually) | Reports annually to Congress on the financial and actuarial status of the two Social Security trust funds. |
| Annual Report to Congress on Medical Continuing Disability Reviews (Annually) | Provides summary information on medical continuing disability reviews (CDR) conducted for a completed fiscal year. The report includes actuarial estimates of the net Federal lifetime benefit reductions in Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance, SSI, Medicare, and Medicaid benefits resulting from the reviews conducted during that fiscal year. |
| Report on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Non-medical Redeterminations (Annually) | Provides summary information on non-medical redeterminations of SSI recipients conducted for a completed fiscal year. |
| Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 Section 845(b) Report (Annually) | Provides summary information on work-related CDRs conducted for a completed calendar year. |
| Annual Report of the SSI Program (Annually) | Reports annually to the President and Congress on the status of the SSI program and provides 25-year projections of program participation and costs. |
| Enumeration Accuracy Report (Triennially) | Reports the accuracy of Social Security numbers assigned during the fiscal year. |
| Evaluation of the CDR Enforcement Operation Predictive Model (Annually) | Evaluate the results of a predictive model used to score work issue CDR cases to ensure that we prioritize and work cases most likely to result in overpayments. Our tracking and evaluation each year indicate the need for improved coordination with the processing centers in reviewing cases based on the scores' priority order. |
| Targeted Denial Review (Annually) | Assesses the accuracy of reconsideration disability denials made by the DDS. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Stewardship Review (Annually) | Measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits by reviewing all non-medical factors of eligibility and entitlement. |
| SSI Stewardship Review (Annually) | Measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving SSI benefits by reviewing all non-medical factors of eligibility and payment. |
| SSI Transaction Accuracy Review (Annually) | Reviews non-medical aspects of eligibility to evaluate the adjudicative accuracy of SSI initial claims, redeterminations, and limited issues to ensure compliance with operational policy. |
| Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Transaction Accuracy Review (Triennially) | Reviews non-medical factors of eligibility to evaluate recently processed retirement, survivors, and disability insurance claims to ensure compliance with operational policy. |

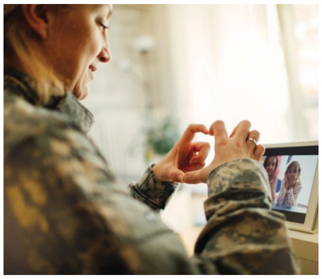
# Appendix IV: Communications and Outreach

In developing this strategic plan, we engaged and consulted with various internal and external stakeholders regarding our focus areas over the next five years. Our internal management engagement included discussion with senior leadership and the National Council of Social Security Management Associations. We engaged our employees through several workgroups, solicited for input through email, conducted internal briefings and held discussions with our three unions: American Federation of Government Employees, National Treasury Employees Union, and International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.

For external stakeholder engagement, we held briefings with advocate groups that represent a wide variety of claimants, including tribal, the under-served, and communities of color. The advocates provided constructive feedback on how we can better implement our Agency Strategic Plan. We also briefed the Social Security Advisory Board on our priorities and high-level framework. We used our work on the agency's Learning Agenda to seek feedback from the public. We also had discussions with members of Congress and their staffs.

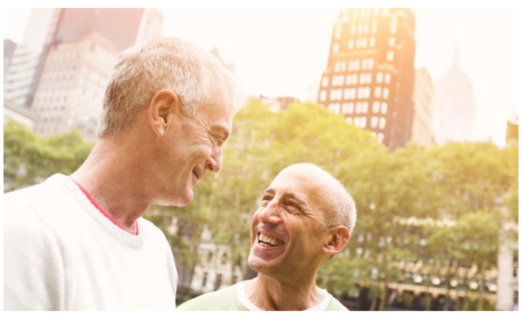
As we implement this plan, we will continue our outreach to appropriate stakeholders and engage with both external and internal audiences, particularly our employees. We will continue to report progress on our activities and collect ideas and feedback to improve our services.

We will also continue to engage the public through Social Security's blog and website, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and our mobile presence. Through these platforms, we will share information and provide opportunities for collaboration and participation with our customers.







Securing today
and tomorrow

**Social Security Administration** | March 2022
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**Social Security Administration**
**Fiscal Year 2021**
**Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 Section 845(a) Report**

## Bipartisan Budget Act Reporting Requirements

Section 845(a) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA 845(a)) requires the Social Security Administration (SSA) to include in our annual budget a report on our activities to prevent fraud and improper payments. This report satisfies that requirement with respect to SSA's activities conducted in fiscal year (FY) 2021 and gives information on SSA's expected activities in this area for FY 2022. BBA 845(a) directs the agency to include in this report the following:

- The total amount spent on fraud and improper payment prevention activities;
- The amount spent on cooperative disability investigations (CDI) units;
- The number of cases of fraud prevented by CDI units and the amount spent on such cases;
- The number of felony cases prosecuted under section 208 and the amount spent by our agency in supporting the prosecution of such cases;
- The number of such felony cases successfully prosecuted and the amount spent by our agency in supporting the prosecution of such cases;
- The amount spent on and the number of completed:
    - Continuing disability reviews (CDR) conducted by mail;
    - Redeterminations (RZ) conducted by mail;
    - Medical CDRs conducted pursuant to sections 221(i) and 1614(a)(3)(H) of the Social Security Act (Act);
    - RZs conducted pursuant to section 1611(c) of the Act; and
    - Work-related CDRs to determine whether earnings derived from services demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA);
- The number of cases of fraud identified resulting in benefit termination as a result of medical CDRs, work-related CDRs and RZs, and the amount of resulting savings for each such type of review or RZ; and
- The number of work-related CDRs in which a beneficiary improperly reported earnings derived from services for more than three consecutive months, and the amount of resulting savings.

A brief overview of our programs and anti-fraud activities as well as information required by BBA 845(a) follows.

## Overview of Our Programs

Considered one of the most successful large-scale Federal programs in our Nation's history, the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) programs provide social insurance for most of our population. Workers earn coverage for retirement, survivors, and disability benefits by working and paying Social Security taxes on their earnings. About 9 out of 10 individuals age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits. The Disability Insurance (DI) program provides benefits to people who cannot work because they have a medical condition that is expected to last at least one year or result in death. Individuals who have worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes and certain members of their families can qualify for DI benefits.

We also administer the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, which provides monthly payments to people with limited income and resources who are aged, blind, or disabled. Adults and children under the age of 18 can receive payments based on their own disability or blindness. General tax revenues fund the SSI program.

We pay benefits to about 65 million OASDI beneficiaries (including 2.6 million concurrent beneficiaries also receiving SSI) and almost 8 million SSI recipients on average each month. We paid over $1.1 trillion in FY 2021.

**Our Anti-Fraud Efforts**

Combatting fraud is an agency priority. We have centralized our anti-fraud efforts to employ data analytics and predictive models to prevent fraud, assess and mitigate fraud risks, ensure consistent anti-fraud policies, refine employee training, and solidify relationships with other Federal, State, and private partners to identify individuals who wrongfully obtain OASDI and SSI payments.

We continue our efforts to review potentially fraudulent eServices transactions to detect and mitigate fraud committed through the mySSA portal. We proceed to develop and refine our business processes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our eServices reviews. Additionally, we continue collaborations with several agencies to establish data exchange agreements that will allow us to improve our fraud detection and mitigation efforts.

Our Enterprise Fraud Risk Management (EFRM) strategy establishes a business process and long-term schedule for completing fraud risk assessments across nine major program areas. In accordance with our EFRM strategy, we complete fraud risk assessments annually and develop mitigation strategies to further reduce specific risks identified in those assessments. In FY 2021, we completed two risk assessments and started the pre-planning process for another. By the end of FY 2022, we will have initiated all nine risk assessments. Once we complete all initial fraud risk assessments, we will conduct ongoing reassessments of each area at least every three years. In addition to the pre-planned fraud risk assessments listed in the EFRM strategy, we conduct ad hoc fraud risk assessments at the request of other SSA components.

In FY 2021, we expanded our fraud training offerings for agency employees, developing disability trainings related to identifying exaggerated symptoms and identifying potentially fraudulent medical evidence. We developed comprehensive trainings on administrative sanctions and fraud risk assessments. We expanded our mandatory annual anti-fraud training to provide multiple topics from which employees could choose, including death reporting and processing, procurement fraud, direct deposit fraud blocks, and fraud prosecutions.

In addition, SSA took a comprehensive approach to address the nationwide increase in impersonation scams. We communicated scam awareness information through various social media platforms, our websites, and in media interviews. We sent scam alert emails to 38.2 million *my* Social Security account holders and added scam alert language to the outside of envelopes associated with more than 250 million public notices. We filmed a public service announcement with the Commissioner that was shared in SSA field offices, major retail outlets across the country, and broadcast media, generating 2.8 billion viewing and listening impressions. SSA and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) partnered for the third year in a row to organize a significant targeted outreach event by designating a highly successful annual National "Slam the Scam" Day, in connection with the Federal Trade Commission's National Consumer Protection Week, to raise public awareness using social media events and news coverage to reach more people.

**Our Improper Payment Prevention Initiatives**

The Improper Payments Oversight Board provides leadership, oversight, and accountability for the agency's improper payment initiatives. In FY 2021, we collaborated with components to complete the Improper Payments Alignment Strategies (IPAS). The IPAS outlines how we determine underlying causes of errors, develop corrective actions with key stakeholders, and identify cost-effective actions to reduce improper payments. We held discovery sessions with component subject matter experts to identify and explore new mitigation strategies and corrective action plans. We developed a comprehensive approach to prioritize and drive business process, policy, and automation improvements by strategically aligning the new and existing initiatives that will have the most significant impact in the detection and prevention of improper payments to help confirm that SSA is providing the correct benefit amounts only to those who qualify.

In FY 2022, we will develop a framework to measure the effectiveness of the completed corrective actions. By the end of FY 2022 we will identify measurable actions and benchmarks that could be used to demonstrate the progress of the corrective actions in at least three IPASs. We will continue the evaluation process with the remaining IPASs in FY 23 and beyond, and continue to monitor the mitigation strategies and corrective actions to improve effectiveness.

**Bipartisan Budget Act Reporting Requirements**

Total Expenditures on Fraud and Improper Payment Prevention Activities[1]

In FY 2018, we issued the Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2018-2022.[2] Our FY 2021 total operating expense for the Ensure Stewardship strategic goal was $2.695 billion. These expenditures included key program integrity (PI) workloads and other stewardship activities, some of which are specific to our anti-fraud efforts. Distinguishing between specific efforts to reduce fraud and improper payments is challenging, as both are key elements of our PI workloads. Most improper payments we detect do not involve any evidence of intent to commit fraud.

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[1] For more information on our improper payment prevention activities, refer to the Payment Integrity section of the Fiscal Year 2020 Agency Financial Report at https://www.ssa.gov/finance/.
[2] For more information on the Agency's Strategic Plan for FY 2018-2022, refer to https://www.ssa.gov/agency/asp/.

Rather, they involve complex rules about eligibility for program benefits and delays in receiving information about changes in beneficiaries' circumstances.

Although we do not have the detailed data necessary to compute the specific expenditures for each of our anti-fraud-related activities, we verify that we distribute the total correct costs to the proper goals. We modified our process to better track the SSA costs separately for CDI units. We identify agency and disability determination services' (DDS) CDI payroll and other object costs through specific and separate common accounting numbers. We determine the proportion of costs already distributed to the PI workloads and remove those costs from the CDI costs to avoid double counting.

Total Expenditures on CDI Units, the Number of Cases of Fraud Prevented by CDI Units, and the Amount Spent on Such Cases

The CDI program is a key anti-fraud initiative that plays a vital role in combatting fraud, similar fault, and abuse in our disability programs. CDI units investigate claimants and beneficiaries, as well as third parties who we suspect commit or facilitate disability fraud on initial disability claims and post-entitlement events. CDI units consist of personnel from our agency, OIG, DDSs, and State and local law enforcement.

We continue to expand our CDI program and are on track to meet our goal of providing CDI coverage to all 50 states and U.S. territories by October 1, 2022. We currently have 49 units, covering 47 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In FY 2021, we spent approximately $41.2 million to operate our CDI units, of which $30.8 million was SSA's cost, and approximately $10.4 million[1] was OIG's cost. These expenditures included personnel costs, training, travel, facilities, and equipment. In FY 2021, CDI investigations resulted in the cessation or denial of 1,078 claims and 74 judicial actions (i.e., sentencing, pre-trial diversion, civil settlement, and civil monetary penalties), which contributed to OIG projecting more than $86 million in savings to SSA programs and monies[2] of over $58 million.

We do not track CDI-related costs on a per-investigation basis. We estimate the average cost per CDI investigation is $19,915 based on 2,072 CDI investigations closed[3] during FY 2021.

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[1] The FY 2021 appropriations language provides that SSA may transfer up to $11.2 million to the SSA OIG for the operation of the CDI units (Pub. L. No. 116-260). This anti-fraud activity is an authorized use of the dedicated program integrity allocation adjustment.

[2] SSA monies include recoveries, restitution, fines, penalties, judgments, and settlements.

[3] In October 2020, we changed how we categorized our open cases to include both full investigations, and preliminary investigations where we took some investigative action but lacked enough information to determine whether the alleged act likely occurred. This approach more accurately reflects our investigative efforts and is consistent with investigative case structure codified in the Attorney General's Guidelines for Domestic Federal Bureau of Investigations Operations. The implementation of this new methodology was undertaken in FY 2021 in connection with the rollout of a new case management system.

For FY 2022, we plan to spend approximately $42.9 million to operate our CDI units, of which approximately $30.8 million is SSA's cost, and $12.1 million[1] will be transferred to OIG pending an annual appropriation.

The Number of Felony Cases Prosecuted under Section 208 and the Amount Spent in Supporting the Prosecution of Such Cases; the Amount of Such Felony Cases Successfully Prosecuted and the Amount Spent in Supporting the Prosecution of Such Cases[2]

Our employees refer allegations of potential fraud to OIG for investigation. OIG conducts criminal investigations and refers cases to U.S. Attorney's Offices (USAO) within the Department of Justice (DOJ), or to State and local prosecuting authorities, for prosecution.[3] We primarily rely on the USAOs to prosecute Social Security fraud, which is a Federal crime. The federal prosecutors have discretion whether to accept fraud cases for prosecution and what Federal statutes to charge.[4] As an initiative to increase Federal Social Security fraud prosecutions, the Office of the General Counsel has provided DOJ with attorneys who are sworn in and serve as Special Assistant United States Attorneys (SAUSA) in multiple USAOs throughout the country. The SAUSA's focus is solely to prosecute Social Security fraud. The goal of this initiative is to increase the number of prosecutions for fraud involving Social Security programs.

Since FY 2003, SAUSA prosecutions have resulted in federal court orders of over $342 million in restitution and more than 2,370 convictions. We ended FY 2021 with 35 SAUSAs in 33 Federal judicial districts. In FY 2021, our SAUSAs successfully prosecuted 262 criminal cases under section 208 of the Act [42 U.S.C. §408] and other statutes.[5] Based on these cases, federal courts ordered payment of over $31.8 million in restitution to the Government, over $17 million of which was to SSA's Trust Funds. The estimated FY 2021 costs of SAUSAs to obtain these convictions was $5.9 million, including the salary and benefit costs of these attorneys.

Program Integrity Expenditures and Numbers

We are committed to ensure eligible individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and to safeguard the integrity of benefit programs to better serve the public. We conduct medical and work CDRs to ensure that only beneficiaries who still qualify to receive benefits under the OASDI and SSI programs continue to receive those benefits. For those receiving SSI, we also

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[1] P.L. 116-260 allows SSA to transfer $11.2 million in FY 2021 from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs associated with jointly operated CDI units. The FY 2022 CR continues this transfer in FY 2022 of up to $11.2 million. The FY 2022 Budget requests a $12.1 million transfer in FY 2022

[2] Consistent with our 2019 report, this section of our report focuses on how SSA expended funds made available for the prosecution of fraud in the programs and operations of SSA by SAUSAs.

[3] This report does not include financial information pertaining to the success of OIG investigations.

[4] Social Security fraud criminal cases are prosecuted under many different fraud statutes. Because this report is limited to cases prosecuted under section 208 (42 USC 408) and its functional equivalent, 18 USC 641 (theft of public funds), it does not represent the total number of Social Security cases involving fraud against our programs successfully prosecuted. To learn more about OIG's activities and investigations, please see: OIG's *Semiannual Reports to Congress* at https://oig.ssa.gov/semiannual-reports/.

[5] Our SAUSAs sometimes exercise their discretion to charge 18 USC 641 rather than 42 USC 408 for the same fraudulent conduct to enhance the agency's prospect of obtaining court-ordered restitution, which is mandatory under section 641 and discretionary under section 408.

perform non-medical redeterminations to determine whether recipients continue to meet the program's non-medical eligibility criteria.

***Periodic Medical Continuing Disability Reviews***

The American public expects and deserves outstanding stewardship of the Social Security Trust Funds and general revenues that finance our programs. One of our most important PI tools is the medical CDR. CDRs are periodic reevaluations to determine whether disabled beneficiaries continue to be eligible for benefits because of their medical conditions. We schedule almost all medical CDRs based on a beneficiary's likelihood of experiencing medical improvement (MI) that may make the beneficiary ineligible for benefits rather than on suspicion or evidence of fraud. A finding of MI does not mean the beneficiary committed fraud; however, our ability to perform additional CDRs may allow us to detect potentially fraudulent or suspicious activities. There are no improper payments associated with medical CDRs. Benefits for individuals who have medically improved are improper only if the agency fails to suspend payment after we fully complete the CDR appeals process or the individual fails to cooperate with the CDR.

When an adult beneficiary's medical review diary matures, we conduct periodic CDRs using one of two methods: a full medical review or an abbreviated review mailer. We decide which method to use after we profile all cases and identify individuals with a higher probability of no longer meeting our standard of disability and the likelihood of MI related to the beneficiary's ability to work. For individuals with a higher likelihood of MI, we send their cases to the DDSs for full medical reviews. For individuals with a lower likelihood of MI, we send a mailer and use information gathered to determine any indication of MI. If we find an indication of MI, we then send the case to a DDS for a full medical review. If there is no indication of MI, we set a new medical review diary and schedule the case for a future CDR. Every year, we refresh the case priority selections based on the results of a predictive statistical scoring model.

We conduct some CDRs outside the centralized process based on events, such as voluntary or third-party reports of MI. We send these CDRs to the DDSs for full medical reviews. In addition, there is a subset of cases where the medical review diary matures, but we curtail further development for technical reasons, such as the suspension or termination of benefits for non-medical reasons. Current estimates indicate that CDRs conducted in 2023 will yield a return on investment (ROI) of about \$8 on average in net Federal program savings over 10 years per \$1 budgeted for dedicated PI funding, including OASDI, SSI, Medicare, and Medicaid program effects.

***Work-Related Continuing Disability Reviews***

When a disabled OASDI beneficiary is receiving benefits and earning wages, we review his or her case to determine if the beneficiary is performing SGA, and if eligibility for benefits should continue. We commonly refer to this process as a "work CDR."

The table below reflects actual CDR workload volumes for FY 2021.

| FY 2021 Actual Volumes | Title II | Title XVI | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Full Medical CDRs | 170,930 | 339,580 | 510,510 |
| CDR Mailers | 700,495 | 404,556 | 1,105,051 |
| Work CDRs | 289,306 | - | 289,306 |
| *Note: The split of full medical CDRs between titles II and XVI for FY 2021 is estimated.* | | | |

In FY 2021, we spent $569 million[1] on periodic medical CDRs, which included the cost of CDR mailers. We spent an additional $212 million[2] on work CDRs.

We learn about work activity in two primary ways: self-reported wages and earnings enforcements. We initiate work CDRs when beneficiaries directly self-report their work or earnings as required by law. DI beneficiaries must report any changes in work activity, and we must determine whether such work constitutes SGA. DI beneficiaries, SSI recipients, and representative payees report work activity through their local field offices, by calling the National 800 Number, or by using the internet reporting application—myWageReport. The application provides a receipt of the report.

We also generate work CDRs through earnings enforcement. The Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation (CDREO) uses annual earnings data provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to identify records likely to have large overpayments. We also initiate work CDRs based on quarterly earnings received by the Office of Childhood Support Enforcement. The quarterly earnings are timelier than IRS data and allow us to learn about unreported work activity sooner.

Section 824 of the BBA also provides us the ability to contract with third party payroll providers to obtain monthly payroll data. We use the monthly earnings obtained from the payroll provider(s) to identify work CDRs. In FY 2022, we plan to enhance automation of wages received from the Payroll Information Exchange by incorporating the monthly wage data into our enforcement operation.

The following table reflects enacted CDR workload volumes for FY 2022.

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[1] This figure represents the total workload costs chargeable to PI, CARES Act efforts, and our Information Technology modernization (IT Mod) efforts. The total amount includes $254 million in costs allocated to DI, retirement and survivors insurance (RSI), and hospital insurance/supplementary medical insurance/Part D (HI/SMI/Part D) and $315 million in costs allocated to SSI.
[2] This figure represents the total workload costs chargeable to PI, CARES Act, and IT Modernization. This figure includes about $91 million in costs allocated to DI, $62 million in costs allocated to RSI, and $59 million in costs allocated to HI/SMI.

| FY 2022 Estimated Volumes | Title II | Title XVI | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Full Medical CDRs | 313,708 | 307,292 | 621,000 |
| CDR Mailers | | | 1,100,000 |
| Work CDRs year-to-date (YTD)[i] | 103,966 | | 103,966 |

*[i]/We do not develop official volume projections for work CDRs; therefore, we have included our most recent FY 2022 YTD figures, which are through February.*

In FY 2022, we anticipate spending approximately $916 million[1] on full medical CDRs, CDR mailers, and work CDRs. Since work CDRs are not an agency-controlled workload, we do not develop official volume projections for that workload in a given fiscal year. Historically, work CDR volumes are consistently 250,000–300,000 annually.

In formulating the budget, we fully incorporate the projected costs of work CDRs into the total projected costs for CDRs.

***Supplemental Security Income Non-Medical Redeterminations***

Another important PI workload is the SSI RZ, conducted under section 1611(c) of the Act, which is a periodic review of non-medical eligibility factors, such as income and resources. The RZs can identify overpayments, underpayments, or both.

Changes in recipients' living arrangements, income, and resources can affect both their eligibility for SSI and the amount of their payments. To ensure the accuracy of SSI payments, we conduct scheduled or unscheduled RZs at periodic intervals that vary depending on the likelihood of payment error. We select most scheduled reviews using a predictive statistical model that we implement each year to prioritize reviews with the highest expected overpayment amount. We conduct other scheduled RZs as a limited review of a certain aspect of eligibility, resulting primarily from a computer match against other data sources. Typically, information reported by recipients, representative payees, or other third parties result in the initiation of an unscheduled RZ.

RZs are a key workload that ensures the integrity of the SSI program, and maintains and improves payment accuracy. We estimate that non-medical RZs conducted in 2023 will yield a ROI of approximately $3 on average of net Federal program savings over 10 years per $1 budgeted for dedicated PI funding, including SSI and Medicaid program effects.

We do not conduct SSI RZs via mail as we determined they are not cost effective.

In FY 2021, we spent $806 million[2] to conduct 2,367,391 SSI RZs pursuant to section 1611(c) of the Act.

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[1] This figure includes an estimated $463 million in costs allocated to Social Security Disability Insurance, RSI, and HI/SMI/Part D and $453 million in costs allocated to SSI.

[2] This figure represents the total workload costs chargeable to PI, CARES Act efforts, and our IT Modernization efforts.

In FY 2022, we plan to spend $636 million to conduct 1,928,000 SSI RZs.

The Number of Cases of Fraud Identified for Which Benefits Terminated Due to Medical CDRs, Work-Related CDRs, and Redeterminations, and the Amount of Resulting Savings for Each Such Type of Review or Redetermination

We do not track the number of instances of identified fraud where we terminated benefits because of medical CDRs, work CDRs, or RZs. This data element is on our list of future enhancements to the Allegation Referral Intake System.

The Number of Work-Related CDRs in Which a Beneficiary Improperly Reported Earnings Derived from Services for More Than Three Consecutive Months and the Amount of Resulting Savings

Since DI beneficiaries are not required to report earnings monthly, we define "improperly reports earnings" to mean a DI beneficiary who reports inaccurate information or does not report a change in work activity. We identify non-reporters through our IRS earnings match, commonly referred to as CDREO. The number of cases alerted through CDREO in FY 2021 was 42,484.[1]

[1] Historically, about 40 percent of these alerted cases result in completed work CDRs.

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Securing today
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