

A More Efficient Social Security



Martin J. O'Malley was sworn in as Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (SSA) on December 20, 2023. Since day one, Commissioner O'Malley has been focused on transforming SSA's operations to improve how we deliver Social Security retirement, disability, and survivors benefits to more people than ever before.

Addressing Urgent Customer Service Needs

SSA is experiencing a customer service crisis. Commissioner O'Malley's top priorities are to:

- **Reduce Call Wait Times:** Long wait times on the national 800 number are a major frustration for customers and are unacceptable. Commissioner O'Malley aims to reduce these wait times.
- **Issue Faster Disability Decisions:** The average time it takes to process disability claims is too long. Commissioner O'Malley wants to speed up the decision-making process for both initial decisions and appeals.
- **Resolve Inequities in Overpayments and Underpayments:** People who are paid too much or too little through no fault of their own should not bear the financial burden for administrative errors. Commissioner O'Malley is working on ways to reduce payment errors and lessen the burden of repayments. See *Commissioner O'Malley's March 21, 2024 statement before Congress* for policy changes he's announced to reduce overpayment burdens.

Commissioner O'Malley's Approach

To achieve his vision for a more efficient and customer-friendly Social Security, Commissioner O'Malley prioritizes several key leadership approaches:

- **SecurityStat:** Building on his successes as former Mayor of Baltimore and Governor of Maryland, Commissioner O'Malley started "SecurityStat" at SSA. SecurityStat brings leadership and subject matter experts together every two weeks—on focused topics—to analyze data, identify problems and solutions, and make changes to improve customer service.
- **Servant Leadership:** Listening to and learning from both customers and agency employees, taking a collaborative approach to improve service.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** The agency collects a lot of data, and Commissioner O'Malley wants to use it more effectively to identify and address problems.



Securing today
and tomorrow

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Challenges Ahead

- **Funding:** SSA has been chronically underfunded. Its workforce is at the lowest level in 25 years while the number of beneficiaries keeps growing. Commissioner O'Malley stresses that SSA needs sustained and sufficient funding so that it can improve service.
- **Key Investments:** Commissioner O'Malley described what an increased budget would mean for our customers and our agency: "Key investments focus on improving the customer experience, reducing wait times at all stages of the disability process and on our National 800 Number, modernizing our information technology, improving overpayment and underpayment processes, and advancing equity by increasing access to our programs."
- **Employee Morale:** Overworked and undervalued employees can lead to poor customer service. Commissioner O'Malley is committed to addressing employees' concerns and implementing solutions from SecurityStat and ideas from employees.

A Vision for the Near Future

Commissioner O'Malley wants the American people to know:

SSA is committed to providing efficient, responsive, and customer-focused service to all who rely on its vital programs. He acknowledges the challenges and is confident that significant improvements can be made by working with employees and Congress.

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