

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN



ALWAYS SERVING | FORWARD LOOKING

Our Commitment To The American People

FISCAL YEARS 2014 – 2018



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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

For the past 78 years, Social Security has been an integral part of so many lives. Whether we paid a benefit or issued a Social Security number, we have consistently served the public with care and compassion. We work hard each day to fulfill our mission of protecting individuals and families against the loss of income when an unexpected disability or death occurs, or when reaching retirement age.

As the Acting Commissioner, I want to ensure that the agency is prepared to meet the changing service needs of the public. When the Social Security Act was signed in 1935, everything was done by hand on paper. Now, we could not imagine conducting business without technology. With all the advances in automation, it is imperative that we keep up with the changing times. As increasing numbers of customers want to conduct business with us online, we must consider technology that will enable us to meet this emerging customer expectation. In developing our goals and strategies, our guiding principal was to optimize our customers' satisfaction by incorporating technology into our processes and to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in all we do while encouraging and assisting customers to interact most efficiently with us. I also want to emphasize our steadfast commitment to preserving the public's trust by protecting our programs from waste, fraud and abuse.

I am very pleased to share our Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014–2018. Our plan will guide us as we make bold changes in technology and enhance service delivery. The plan serves as our blueprint for achieving our mission, focusing on the areas of:

- **Innovation and Quality;**
- **Integrity;**
- **Our Disability Program;**
- **Our Workforce; and**
- **Secure Information Technology.**

In line with the President's Second-Term Management Agenda, we are committed to delivering a world-class customer experience, which was a driving force behind each goal and objective. Each day our employees consistently serve thousands of persons with care and compassion. We pledge to re-invigorate our approach to customer service to ensure that as many people as possible have a positive experience when conducting business with us. We will enhance our service delivery by leveraging the benefits of innovative technology. In addition, we will continue to utilize customer feedback to inform and improve our services.



Nothing in this plan would be possible without our dedicated workforce. I am very pleased with the plan's focus on our employees – our greatest asset. The plan reflects our strategies for strengthening and supporting our workforce through training and development opportunities and emphasizes our succession planning activities. We will also ensure diversity and an open and inclusive culture that encourages innovation from all employees.

I am confident that our plan will serve as an excellent guide as we move forward. I want to thank those who contributed and took the time to provide feedback as reflected in our appendix. This plan incorporates all your invaluable contributions and input. I look forward to working with you in achieving our goals and serving the American public.

Carolyn W. Colvin

Carolyn W. Colvin
Acting Commissioner of Social Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Few government agencies touch as many lives as the Social Security Administration (SSA). The programs we administer provide benefits to about one-fifth of the American population and serve as vital financial protection for working men and women, children, disabled individuals, and the elderly. As of the end of fiscal year (FY) 2013, we provide benefits for approximately 4.5 million children under the age of 18, and on the other end of the age spectrum, we pay almost 60,000 centenarians. Our long-standing priority has been, and remains today, to deliver world-class service to every customer.

We face our share of challenges in keeping this commitment, from budget constraints and increasing workloads to workforce succession planning and the need to keep pace with rapid advances in technology. We must also consider the changing face of the American public. As we enhance our service delivery strategies, we must continue to consider the diversity of the population we serve. In addition, millions of Baby Boomers are passing through their most disability-prone years and beginning to retire. The number of Americans age 55 and older will increase by more than 10 million between 2015 and 2020, further increasing the demand for our services.

Responding to the challenges we face requires us to rethink the way we do business and develop innovative ways to meet our workload demands. Each challenge also presents an opportunity to innovate. The central focus of this strategic plan is to deliver the service the public expects and deserves and maintain our high level of performance. We will accomplish this by modernizing and improving in several key strategic metrics, including service delivery, program integrity, disability processes, workforce engagement, and information technology (IT). We will implement these strategies in line with the Administration's key initiatives and agenda, including a continued focus on the open government principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration in our daily operations.

"...we will RAPIDLY EXPAND THE AVAILABILITY of our online and secure self-service options..."

While we will continue to serve our customers in the way that is most convenient to them – in one of our offices, over the telephone, or through the Internet – we are especially committed to improving and expanding our online service offerings. Today, people routinely conduct their business online and demand the same online services from Government that they receive from private sector organizations such as banks, utilities, retailers, and insurance companies. Our aim is to meet that demand. Under this plan, we will rapidly expand the availability of our online and secure self-service options, and provide support to ensure our customers successfully complete their business at the first point of contact. We will build on the services we now offer through our convenient and secure online portal, **Social Security**, by providing even more services there.

We have a proud history of protecting the integrity of our programs and service to the public. We maintain some of the highest accuracy rates for managing large programs in the government. Still, as stewards of the American taxpayers’ money, we must be ever-vigilant. Over the next few years, we will focus on three areas to improve our program integrity: increasing the accuracy of our earnings recording and reporting systems; protecting the public’s data and securing our online services; and taking strong measures to improve payment accuracy in our Disability Insurance (DI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. Much of the improvement in protecting the integrity of our programs will come through technology, such as receiving more of our earnings data electronically or providing greater electronic protection for our customers’ information. In addition, we will make greater use of the information and data we have to help us identify fraud and improper payments. We will continue to explore additional use of information from other sources, both from other agencies as well as from the private sector, to ensure we pay all beneficiaries correctly.

DEMAND FOR SSA SERVICES WILL GROW

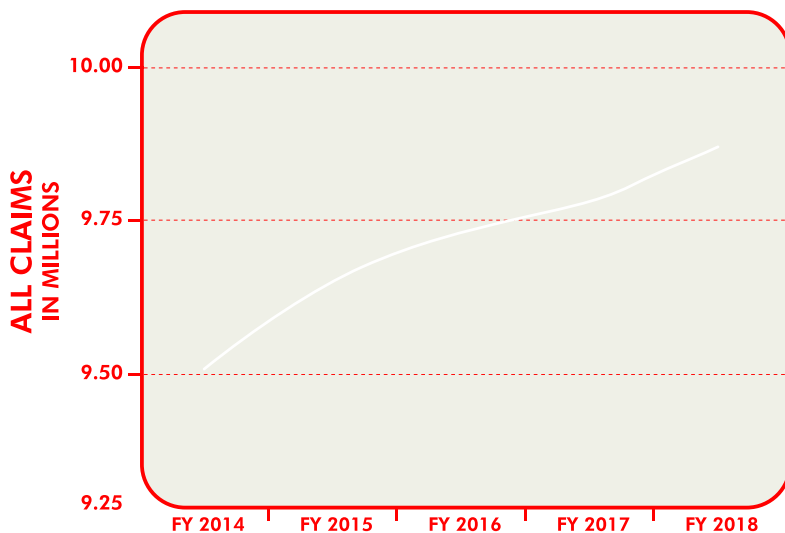


Figure 1: The demand for SSA services will grow from FY 2014 through 2018.

We expect the demand for SSA services to grow in the coming years. A large part of our workload is administering the disability program, so we will work hard to serve the public through a stronger, more responsive disability program. We again will find additional ways to use data and technology to help us improve the quality, consistency, and timeliness of our disability decisions. We will expand the use of data analytics (i.e., examining data to draw conclusions about the information to help in making

business decisions) to reduce inefficiencies and simplify rules. To help shorten an applicant’s waiting time for a decision on a disability claim, we will increase our use of health IT, which accelerates access to electronic medical records. By leveraging the latest technology, we are developing a new unified case processing system that will help us achieve greater consistency

OUR VALUES

1. Our Vision

Provide the highest standard of considerate and thoughtful service for generations to come

2. Our Mission

Deliver Social Security services that meet the changing needs of the public

3. Our Motto

Social Security Benefits America

4. Our Service Principles

We serve with empathy, creativity, integrity, and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand by following these service principles:

- Adherence to the law
- Clarity
- Commitment to best demonstrated practices
- Cultural sensitivity
- Honesty
- Prevention of waste, fraud, and abuse
- Protection of privacy and personal information
- Recruitment and training of the best public servants
- Safety of the public and our employees

SUMMARY OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: *Deliver Innovative, Quality Services*

Objectives:

- I. Develop and Increase the Use of Self-Service Options *
- II. Enhance the Customer Experience by Completing Customers' Business at the First Point of Contact *
- III. Partner with Other Agencies and Organizations to Improve Customers' Experience and Align with the Administration's One-Government Approach
- IV. Evaluate Our Physical Footprint to Incorporate Improved Service Options

Goal: *Strengthen the Integrity of Our Programs*

Objectives:

- I. Transform the Way We Record Earnings to Enhance Data Accuracy
- II. Protect the Public's Data and Provide Secure Online Services
- III. Increase Payment Accuracy *

Goal: *Serve the Public through a Stronger, More Responsive Disability Program*

Objectives:

- I. Improve the Quality, Consistency, and Timeliness of Our Disability Decisions
- II. Maximize Efficiencies throughout the Disability Program
- III. Enhance Employment Support Programs and Create New Opportunities for Returning Beneficiaries to Work

Goal: *Build a Model Workforce to Deliver Quality Service*

Objectives:

- I. Attract and Acquire a Talented and Diverse Workforce that Reflects the Public We Serve
- II. Strengthen the Competency, Agility, and Performance of Our Workforce to Align with the Needs of the Public
- III. Foster an Inclusive Culture that Promotes Employee Well-Being, Innovation, and Engagement
- IV. Enhance Planning and Alignment of Human Resources to Address Current and Future Public Service Needs

* Our Agency Priority Goals for FY 2014-2015 fall under these Objectives.



Goal: *Ensure Reliable, Secure, and Efficient Information Technology Services*

Objectives:

- I. Maintain System Performance and the Continuity of IT Services
- II. Enhance and Execute Plans to Modernize Our Systems
- III. Incorporate Innovative Advances in Service Delivery
- IV. Continuously Strengthen Our Cybersecurity Program

All of the Goals and Objectives within this Agency Strategic Plan are cross-cutting – supporting all of the programs we have outlined in the [Federal Program Inventory](#).

OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Our Programs

We manage one of the Nation’s largest entitlement programs, the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program. We also administer the SSI program, which provides financial support to aged, blind, or disabled adults and children with limited income and resources. In FY 2013, we paid approximately \$850 billion in OASDI and Federal SSI benefits to more than 65 million people on average each month.

For more information on all of our programs and benefits, please view our publication Social Security [Understanding The Benefits](#).

How We Served America in FY 2013

- Issued 16 million new and replacement Social Security cards
- Performed over 1.6 billion automated Social Security number verifications
- Posted 251 million earnings reports to workers’ records
- Completed more than 53 million actions (e.g., changes of address or direct deposit) on our National 800 Number
- Assisted more than 43 million visitors in our field offices
- Registered 6.2 million users for **Social Security**, a personalized online account
- Received approximately 5 million retirement, survivor, and Medicare applications
- Completed about 3 million initial disability claims
- Completed approximately 2.6 million SSI non-disability redeterminations
- Completed 428,568 full medical continuing disability reviews (CDR)
- Completed over 3 million overpayment actions
- Reconsidered 803,194 denied disability applications
- Completed 793,580 hearing decisions on appealed claims
- Completed 176,521 Appeals Council reviews of hearing decision appeals
- Completed about 17,900 new Federal court cases
- Oversaw approximately 5.9 million representative payees
- Provided employment support to 321,218 disability beneficiaries

At Every Stage of Life
my Social Security
 is here for you.



Strategic Goal: Deliver Innovative, Quality Services

Goal Background and Description

We have a long history of exemplary customer service with high customer satisfaction. In surveys and anecdotally through social media and other forums, many of our customers have praised the service we provide in all available service options – in person, telephone, and online. We achieve these high marks even as we serve extremely high numbers of customers.

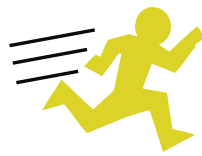
Our goal is to achieve even greater success in customer service and satisfaction through innovative online self-service options. Each year, we see greater acceptance of technology across all demographic segments and a stronger preference for doing business online. In particular, Internet use by seniors continues to rise. To capitalize on this trend, we will increase the number of services we offer online and will communicate more with our customers online.

DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICES



Secure

PUBLIC BENEFITS



Quick



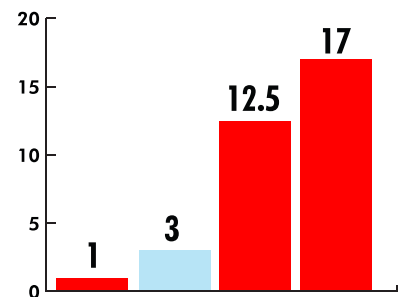
Convenient

ONLINE SERVICES WE OFFER

Fiscal Year 13

Social Security

Usage counted in millions



- Online Social Security Statement
- Check Your Benefits
- Benefit Verification Letter (BEVE)
- Other (Direct Deposit, Change of Address)

ONLINE SERVICES GROWTH

my Social Security

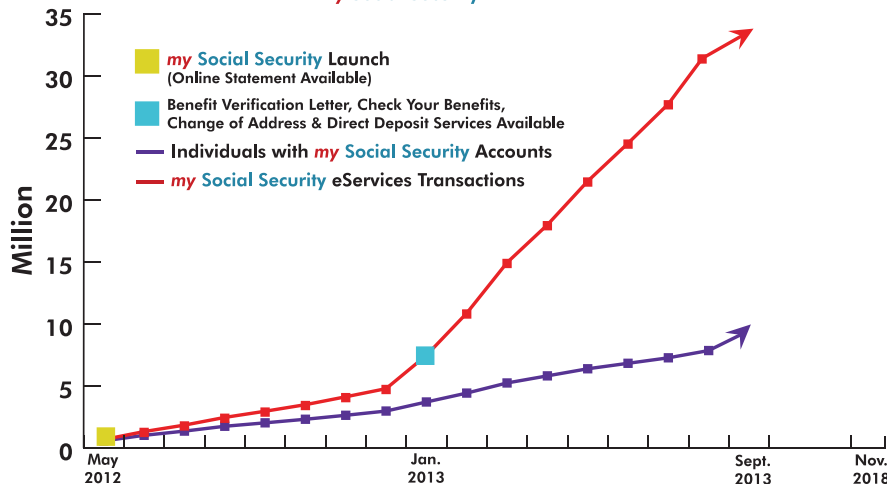


Figure 2: Growth and benefit of Social Security's online services.

Because of the complexities of the programs we administer, we will provide customer support for our online services for times when customers need advice or assistance. In keeping with the Administration’s one-government approach, we will partner with other agencies and community organizations to offer access to more government services online through increasing use of video services and the implementation of Social Security Express to provide self-service kiosks.

We will continue to adjust our physical office structure to reflect our online service emphasis. However, we will remain mindful of the importance of continuing to provide in-person service for those customers whose business with us requires it. Technology will not replace employees. Instead, it will free them to handle the more complex workloads and the individuals who require in-person help. It will also give our employees tools to help them handle increasingly varied and complex work.

Objective I: Develop and Increase the Use of Self-Service Options

Objective Background and Description

We know that the public is accustomed to self-service options, including those offered through automated phone services and the Internet. We also know that our customers increasingly use, and even prefer, our online services. In addition, based on the American Customer Satisfaction Index, our online applications have ranked in the top five in government for many years. Three of our websites – iClaims, Retirement Estimator, and Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs – either matched or outperformed commercial sites, including perennial leader Amazon. In FY 2007, approximately 10 percent of our customers filing for retirement filed online. In FY 2013, more than 49 percent of retirement applicants and 45 percent of disability applicants filed online. In response to the rising demand and usage, we will increase the number and types of self-service choices we offer.

The foundation for increasing our online services is the **Social Security** portal we established in 2012 and enhanced in early 2013. Through this portal, people who register can view their *Social Security Statement*, get a benefit verification letter, start or change their direct deposit, and change their address – all online.

SSA sets the standard in electronic customer satisfaction!

ForeSee: “Three websites from the Social Security Administration (SSA) – Retirement Estimator, iClaim and Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan costs – each scored a 90 to lead the top overall scores in the E-Government Satisfaction Index. These three SSA sites also match or outperform some of the top measured private sites to date in 2013, such as Mercedes-Benz (88), Apple (87), FedEx (85), and Amazon (85 in 2012)”

We are enhancing **Social Security** to allow customers to file a claim for retirement or disability benefits, request a replacement Social Security card, and access many other services. We will also expand the portal to include online notice delivery and offer the choice to opt out of paper notices. The enhanced capability will allow us to communicate with customers on the status of their claims or appeals and advise them of any documents we may need from them.

SSA is bringing real-world solutions to the American public.

“Great site, simple to use. Something in government IS working, and it’s the SS site.”

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey response



Percent Total Internet Claims for November 2013

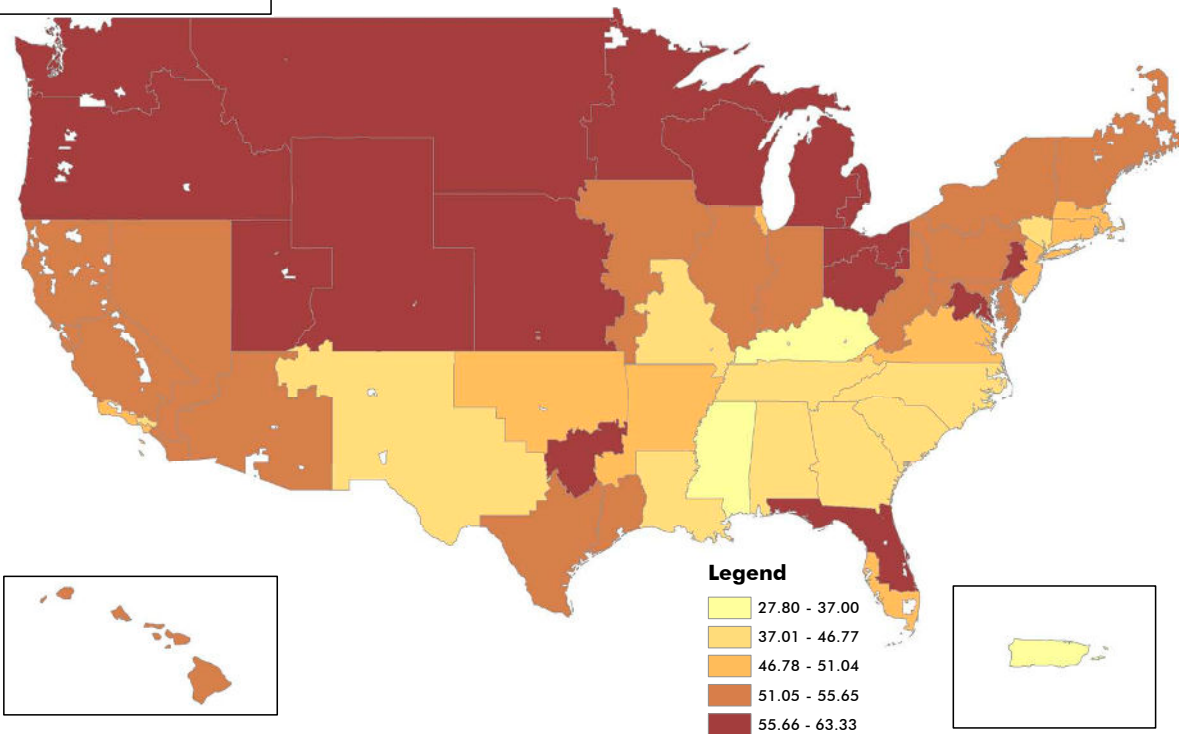


Figure 3: Represents the percentage of total Internet Claims for November 2013.

To accommodate increases in mobile technology use, we will accelerate our development of applications using responsive design (i.e., applications will automatically adjust to work on any electronic device). We will be able to deliver service seamlessly and conveniently to smartphones, tablets, and laptops alike.

As of September 2013, 6.2 million people had created accounts under **Social Security**. Our goal is to significantly increase the number of registrants each year. We are developing an aggressive, multi-faceted marketing and promotional strategy to attract customers to our online service offerings. This effort will support yet another of our major initiatives – to significantly increase use of our online services.

Strategies:

- Expand personal services available under **Social Security** to include high-volume workloads, such as Social Security number replacement cards;
- Move our online applications under a single customer account registration;
- Accelerate development of additional online products;
- Expand the availability of online applications using responsive design and the use of self-service computer stations available in our offices or community locations;
- Provide direct access to information and notices for individuals and designated third parties;
- Offer electronic delivery of notices and an option to opt out of paper notices; and
- Increase the public’s use of self-service options by aggressively promoting and marketing our online applications and services.

HOW WE MARKET ELECTRONIC SERVICES

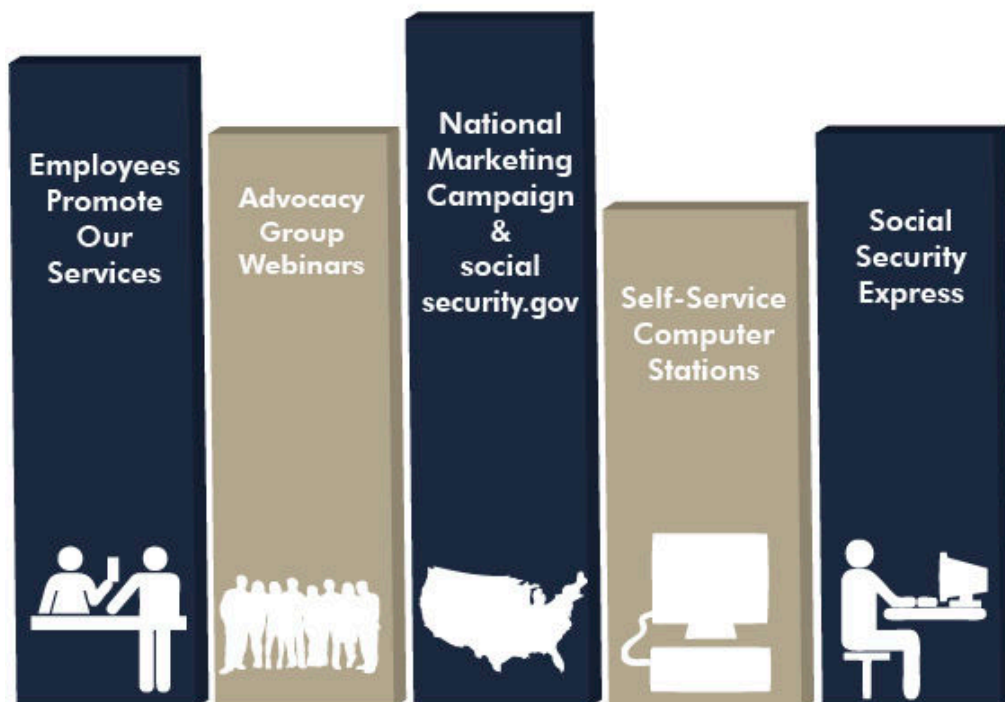


Figure 4: Marketing Social Security’s online services.

Objective II: Enhance the Customer Experience by Completing Customers’ Business at the First Point of Contact

Objective Background and Description

No matter how customers contact us, we must strive to provide them with the correct information in the most professional manner at the first point of contact. We serve customers best and improve our own efficiency by avoiding the need to transfer customers to another contact. We will assist our staff in applying some of the more complex policies in our programs by further improving our decision support systems. In addition, by offering customers the option of speaking to a Social Security representative in real time during their online encounter with us (i.e., “click-to-talk”), we will enhance the customer experience for those who prefer to apply for benefits online. We also will implement screen sharing and instant messaging as additional customer support options.

To further educate and engage the public, and support completion of their business at the first point of contact, we will streamline our online disability application. We also will increase our inventory of informational videos for our website and YouTube, and produce more webinars. These initiatives will help to increase customers’ understanding of our programs, as well as inform them of our policies and requirements up front and enhance their experience with us.

Strategies:

- Implement online support options, including click to-talk, screen sharing, and instant messaging;
- Integrate our online applications, such as the streamlined online disability application; and
- Increase the use of video service.

Objective III: Partner with Other Agencies and Organizations to Improve Customers’ Experience and Align with the Administration’s One-Government Approach

Objective Background and Description

Many of our customers seek services from and interact with other government agencies and community organizations. We are committed to reducing the burden people face when dealing with multiple organizations to get the services they need. To improve our ability to serve the American public, we must continue our strong relationships with other government agencies and community organizations. We can learn from other agencies and organizations with similar programs, share data as permitted, and develop processes and procedures that are less cumbersome and more focused on the customer. Partnering with other agencies and organizations improves the customer experience and supports the Administration’s one-government approach.

SSA provides intuitive and easy-to-use applications.

“First Time Using this app and I loved how quick it took me through the process instead of calling SSI and the automated system wont understand me. I LOVE this easy app, very simple and easy!”

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey response

As part of a broader initiative to support one-stop online access to multiple government services, we will collaborate with other government agencies and community organizations to install Social Security Express kiosks (i.e., self-service computer stations offering access to our online services) at their respective facilities. This collaboration will benefit both the customer and our agency as we anticipate cost savings from expanding our online self-service options.

We will work to increase our collaboration with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs on the Wounded Warriors Initiative. In this effort, we focus on improving the transfer of medical information, expediting the disability claims process, and facilitating payments to wounded service members, veterans, and their families. Electronic sharing of medical information is a key feature of this initiative.

Strategies:

- Pending results of the pilot, implement Social Security Express to provide self-service kiosks in community locations;
- Provide Social Security services through other government agencies, community-based organizations, tribal governments, and private organizations that serve our customers;
- Increase collaboration with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to improve processes for veterans and service members; and
- Improve information sharing among other government agencies for records, data, and other information.

Objective IV: Evaluate Our Physical Footprint to Incorporate Improved Service Options

Objective Background and Description

As more people are able to take advantage of our online options, fewer people will need to visit an office. As a result, we will not need to maintain the current number of Social Security offices. We will streamline our field office structure, as well as our administrative office structure, to reduce costs and make the best use of our employees’ time and skills. As we realign our offices, we will remain mindful of the need to ensure we can offer personal assistance when customers require face-to-face assistance. Strategic use of our physical space ensures that we will be able to continue to uphold our mission of providing a world-class customer service experience.

Strategies:

- Design space, maintain offices, and reassess the structure of internal facilities to optimize resources and maximize opportunities for improved service delivery; and
- Explore solutions that optimize the operational efficiencies of offices, including co-locations.

Strategic Goal: Strengthen the Integrity of Our Programs

Goal Background and Description

We pay more than \$65 billion in Federal benefits each month across all of our programs. We recognize our obligation to administer our large and critically important programs with the utmost care, accuracy, and efficiency. As good stewards of our resources and taxpayer funds, we will remain focused on the integrity of our programs, including minimizing improper payments. Among the measures we take to improve the integrity of our programs are CDRs, which are periodic reevaluations to determine whether beneficiaries are still disabled. On average, we estimate about \$9 to \$10 in lifetime program savings per dollar we have spent on medical CDRs, including Medicare and Medicaid program savings.



In the next five years, we will work to maintain the public's trust by strengthening the integrity of our programs through three strategic objectives:

FIRST, we will continue our emphasis on accurately recording workers' earnings. Accurate records are critical because we calculate Social Security benefit amounts based on a worker's lifetime earnings. Modernizing and improving our system for recording earnings, increasing employers' use of automated wage reports, and encouraging workers to verify their earnings are critical to our success in this area.

SECOND, we will intensify our focus on protecting customers' information and ensuring maximum security for all of our online services. We take great pride in securing the sensitive data and personal information we maintain to administer our programs. We will implement stronger authentication measures and increase our collaboration with other Federal agencies to identify common solutions to protecting and securing customers' information.

THIRD, we will move aggressively to increase the accuracy of payments to our beneficiaries. We have always strived to pay the right person the right amount at the right time, and we take this responsibility seriously. We will approach this objective on several fronts with special attention to

our disability and SSI programs. Our strategies include efforts to prevent and reduce improper payments, increase overpayment recovery, analyze information and data to identify and address error-prone actions, and streamline our representative payee program.

Objective I: Transform the Way We Record Earnings to Enhance Data Accuracy

Objective Background and Description

We devote significant resources to making certain our earnings records are accurate and we credit the correct amount to the right person.

In FY 2013, we posted more than 251 million earnings reports to workers' records. Although in calendar year 2013, employers electronically filed about 87 percent of Forms W-2, we still receive approximately 30 million items on paper Forms W-2. To improve earning records accuracy, we will work with the employer community to significantly reduce paper wage reports, moving toward an all-electronic earnings record process. We also will increase efforts to encourage the public to verify their earnings information on their *Social Security Statement*.

A multi-year earnings redesign initiative is underway to modernize our earnings reporting system to increase efficiency and accuracy. In addition, we are collaborating with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to enhance the earnings data exchanges and improve the wage reporting process.

Strategies:

- Modernize our earnings system;
- Encourage electronic wage reporting; and
- Encourage the public to review their *Social Security Statement* for earnings accuracy.

Objective II: Protect the Public's Data and Provide Secure Online Services

Objective Background and Description

Safeguarding the confidentiality and integrity of our customers' personal information has always been and will continue to be a top priority for us. With the growing threat of identity theft in an increasingly electronic world, we are taking steps to enhance protection of our beneficiaries' records.

If we are to achieve our goal to move more customers to our online services, it is critical they have confidence their personal information is well-protected – we must ensure that our online services remain secure. To that end, we are boosting authentication requirements for our online services, including enhanced security measures in the **Social Security** portal. These enhancements require users to authenticate their identity with specific information not readily available to others. We will continue to seek additional ways to make our online services more secure.

Strategies:

- Ensure strong authentication technologies and appropriate access to information and services;
- Ensure online services have appropriate security features; and
- Partner with other Federal agencies, such as the IRS, to aggressively combat identity theft to prevent unauthorized transactions.

Objective III: Increase Payment Accuracy

Objective Background and Description

We must protect the programs we manage from waste, fraud, and abuse. Ensuring proper payment to eligible beneficiaries is critical to that objective. Ensuring proper payments means not only preventing overpayments, but also, just as importantly, preventing *underpayments*.

We work hard to ensure that all beneficiaries receive the correct amount. Our payment accuracy rate for retirement and survivors benefits is greater than 99 percent. However, our DI and SSI programs are more error-prone due to the complexity of the laws for both programs and the variability of SSI payments from month to month based on a recipient’s changes in income, resources, and living arrangements. We rely on recipients to self-report this information, and their failure to report timely is a significant reason for the difficulty in increasing our SSI payment accuracy rate.

PAYMENT ACCURACY

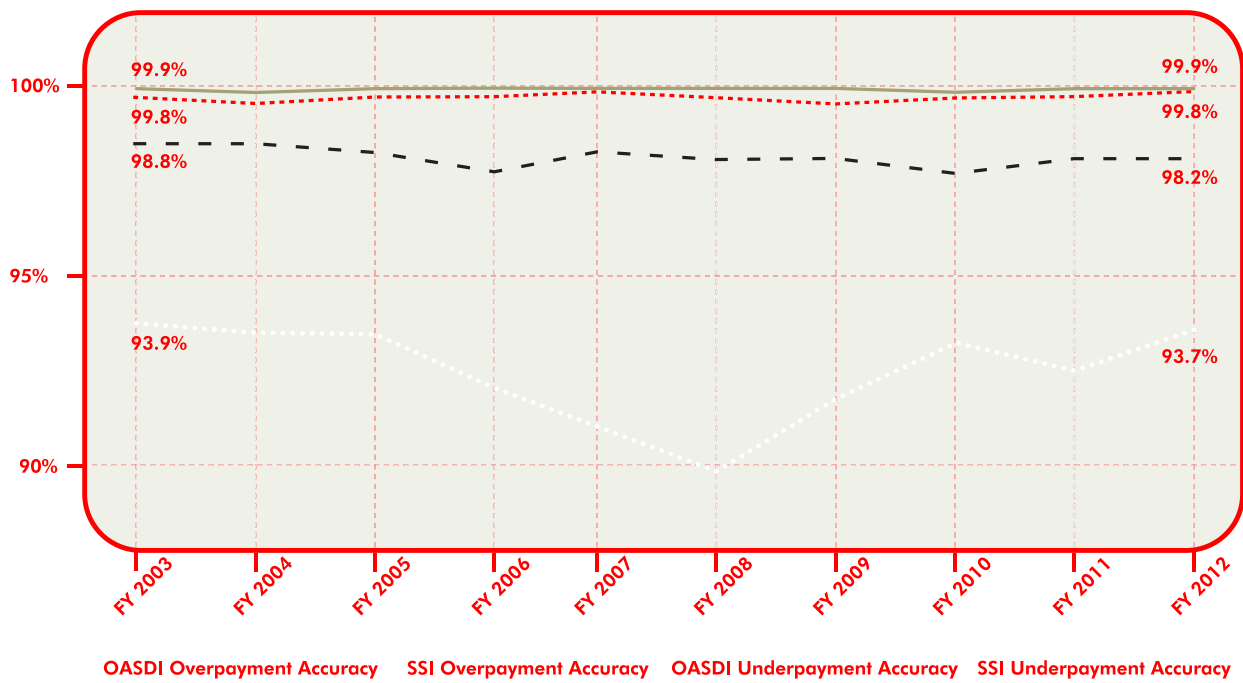


Figure 5: OASDI and SSI Payment Accuracy Rates.

We have identified several strategies to increase payment accuracy in our DI and SSI programs and will work diligently to realize improvements in these areas:



- We will collaborate with other Federal and State agencies that serve similar populations, so we can benefit from shared ideas and best practices in ensuring proper payment. Among the potential solutions is better use of data exchanges to produce a more efficient and accurate process for receiving payment-affecting information. For example, we exchange data with the Department of Defense to verify entitlement to Special Veterans’ Benefits. In addition, the IRS shares Form 1099 information to help us verify SSI eligibility and payment amounts.

- We also will increase our partnerships with financial institutions to build on the success of our Access to Financial Institutions (AFI) initiative to identify financial resources that can affect SSI eligibility and often go unreported. AFI allows us to check SSI

recipient bank records to ensure that recipients remain eligible for benefits. Over the next decade, this initiative will save American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

- Even after we approve a person for benefits, we periodically review many of their cases to ensure that they continue to meet the eligibility requirements under each program. For example, we complete SSI redeterminations, which are periodic reviews of non-medical factors of SSI eligibility, such as income and resources. On average, SSI non-medical redeterminations produce about \$5 of net program savings per dollar spent, with savings from overpayments partly offset from the cost for underpayments.
- For many years, we have used predictive models (i.e., computer-based screening tools) and data analytics tools to improve the integrity of our programs. With data from other agencies and other sources in the private sector, we will explore additional uses of predictive models, data analytics, and automation tools to provide cost-effective means to increase payment accuracy.

Simplify your life with mobile wage reporting.

“How amazing this idea that SSA launched for reporting wages less paperwork no stamps to pay accessibility is real great”

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey response

- Our representative payee program historically has been vulnerable to fraud. Based on recommendations from oversight organizations, we have strengthened our policy, selection criteria, and review process. We are developing a long-term strategic approach to improving the program. Current efforts include using a predictive model that identifies cases with a higher probability of potential misuse and piloting a process for conducting criminal background checks on representative payee applicants during our selection process. We are also working with other agencies with similar programs to determine the potential for collaboration on representative payee activities.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with other Federal agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services within the Department of Health and Human Services, to find innovative ways to prevent and reduce improper payments;
- Increase efforts to recover overpayments;
- Enhance predictive models and automation tools to help identify error-prone aspects of benefit eligibility;
- Expand use of data analytics to reduce fraud and payment errors; and
- Streamline the Representative Payee Program to better identify potential misuse of benefits.



Strategic Goal: Serve the Public through a Stronger, More Responsive Disability Program

Goal Background and Description

Our disability programs, both DI and SSI, are a crucial part of our Nation’s safety net, providing vital financial support to millions of Americans. During FY 2013, we paid Federal benefits to almost 14 million adults and children with disabilities on average each month. Another 1.9 million children of disabled workers received monthly benefits on average each month.

From FY 2007 to FY 2013, the number of disability claims we received each year increased from 2.5 million to nearly 3 million. This increase equates to a growth of about 20 percent in initial disability claims. Appeals for hearings before administrative law judges (ALJ) have also increased by 40 percent over the same period.

Going forward, we will work to deliver a stronger, more responsive program to our disability claimants and beneficiaries. Specifically, we will focus on improving the consistency and quality of our claims process. We will expand our use of management information (MI) to help target services needing improvement, strengthen policy development, and expedite decisions. Based on our improved understanding of this MI, we will be able to give better feedback to our adjudicators and enable them to improve the accuracy of their decision-making.

We will maximize efficiencies throughout the disability program by leveraging technology. Our efforts will include expanding our use of health IT. We plan to increase the volume of medical evidence received through health IT by increasing our partnerships with medical networks and providers. Our health IT initiatives will reduce the wait time for receiving medical evidence and reduce the time to adjudicate claims. One of our key initiatives is to increase the use of video hearings to help expedite disability decisions. This service provides convenience to the applicant as well as savings to the American taxpayer.

We also are pursuing a national initiative to bring greater consistency to the many disparate systems that support our State disability determination services (DDS). Our Disability Case Processing System (DCPS) will allow us to systematically support policy changes faster and make it easier to modify our case processing system nationally. DCPS also will allow us to share work across disability components more easily.

Because part of our goal is to encourage individuals receiving disability benefits to return to work if they are able to do so, we are developing strategies to increase opportunities for beneficiaries to work and be self-sufficient. We are taking steps to create clear and consistent employment incentives, and review our disability data to identify new strategies to increase the number of disability beneficiaries who return to work.



Objective I: Improve the Quality, Consistency, and Timeliness of Our Disability Decisions

Objective Background and Description

Our employees and State partners in the DDSs are committed to balancing the need to make high-quality, accurate, and consistent decisions with the objective of decreasing the time claimants must wait for decisions at all levels.

We are using a new analytical tool that provides many of our ALJs and support staff with MI on their work relative to the rest of their office, their region, and the Nation. The information we gain from this analysis will help us to improve the way we review and decide disability cases, making our process simpler and more efficient.

We will continue our partnerships with other agencies to further modernize key aspects of our disability process. These include our partnership with the National Academy of Science’s Institute of Medicine to revise our disability guidelines to reflect the most up-to-date medical knowledge; our collaboration with the Department of Labor to update our occupational information; and our partnership with the research community, for example the Disability Research Consortium, to refine our policy development.

We will also expand the use of technology to improve quality and consistency. A few years ago, we implemented the electronic Claims Analysis Tool (eCAT) which assists disability examiners in documenting initial decisions to ensure compliance with agency policy. We plan to expand eCAT to process CDRs. Based on the success of eCAT, we used a similar approach to build a tool we can use at the appeals level. We will eventually extend eCAT to our field offices, resulting in our agency having one tool to assist in ensuring proper documentation and compliance with agency policy throughout the entire disability process.

Expanding the use of video hearings – one of our key initiatives – will help increase efficiency and improve customer service. Specifically, it will enable us to balance workloads across the country, reduce the need for (and the costs for) our ALJs and other hearing office staff to travel between offices and to remote sites to hold hearings, and reduce the need for claimants to travel long distances to hearing offices. We also are working to expand video hearing participation more broadly to allow more attorneys and non-attorney representatives to install and use their own video equipment to attend hearings from their own offices.

Strategies:

- Expand use of MI to identify training needs and areas for improvement;
- Broaden use of case analysis tools;

- Expand use of predictive modeling;
- Simplify policies;
- Collaborate with the Bureau of Labor Statistics to collect updated occupational information; and
- Formalize our pre-decisional quality review processes to increase national uniformity.

Objective II: Maximize Efficiencies throughout the Disability Program

Objective Background and Description


We remain committed to providing the best service to the public by exploring new technologies and using modern tools to improve efficiencies throughout our disability program. We are improving the claims process, making it easier for the public to file disability applications and enabling us to process applications more efficiently.

When fully implemented, our State DDS and Federal disability case processing sites will use a common system (i.e., DCPS). DCPS will replace all the disparate applications currently in use at the State DDSs and Federal sites, many of which are rigid, outdated, and resource-intensive. The new system will incorporate additional functionality, such as decision support tools, improved quality checks, improved MI, and compatibility with industry standards for electronic medical records.

Expanded use of health IT offers yet another opportunity to realize efficiencies in the disability process. Among other positive effects, health IT will enable us to quickly recognize if a treating healthcare provider is also one of our health IT partners. If a provider is a health IT partner, our systems communicate directly with the provider's systems to request medical records, confirm the claimant or beneficiary has provided an authorization for release of information form, and return the provider's records to us. Health IT has the potential to increase our efficiency and lower the claimant's wait time for a decision by giving us medical evidence within minutes rather than days or weeks.

Strategies:

- Enhance our ability to share workloads among our offices to maximize resources;
- Increase process automation; and
- Expand the use of health IT.




Social Security works aggressively to prevent, detect, and prosecute fraud.

We are proud of the integrity and high quality with which we manage the disability program. Social Security has a robust program to prevent disability fraud and we work aggressively with the Office of the Inspector General and local law enforcement to identify and prosecute those who commit fraud.

To report fraud, waste and abuse, call our toll-free number, 1-800-269-0271 (TTY 1-866-501-2101).

For more information, please visit: www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityfacts

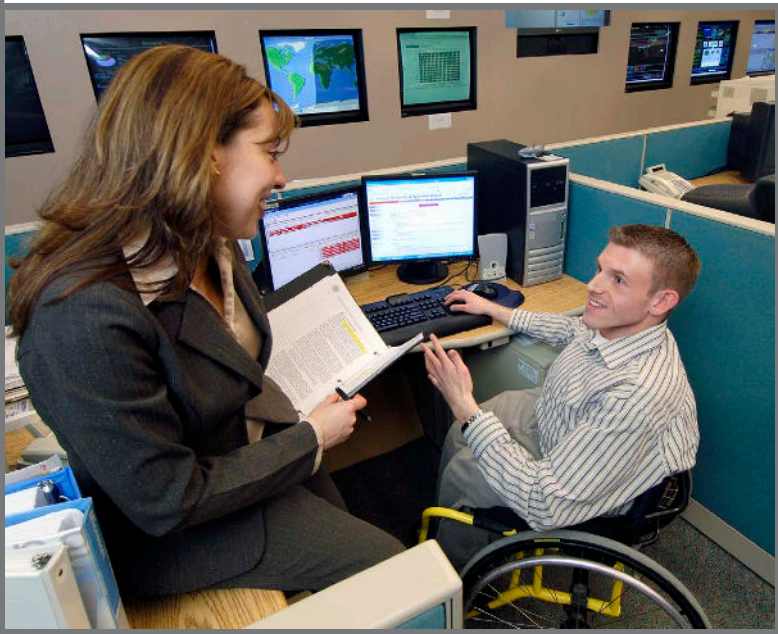


March 2014

Objective III: Enhance Employment Support Programs and Create New Opportunities for Returning Beneficiaries to Work

Objective Background and Description

We are exploring ways to improve our employment support programs to help people with disabilities remain in the workforce or return to work as quickly as possible. Currently, the complexity of our rules and beneficiaries' fears of incurring an overpayment because of earnings can discourage their attempts to work. Working with Congress, we will seek to simplify work incentive policies and look for ways to minimize improper payments because of earnings. We will strengthen our employment support programs, including the Ticket to Work program, by applying the results of prior research and using information we capture in our systems to more effectively focus our efforts. We also will provide help for beneficiaries who want to work through the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance program. We are committed to the idea that we must focus our employment support efforts on ensuring that people who use those supports work at their maximum capacity, reaching a level of self-sufficient earnings whenever possible.



We will encourage young people who receive SSI to reduce their dependency on disability benefits as they turn 18. Recent research we funded, the Youth Transition Demonstration, has found that policy changes and improved employment services to young adults who receive SSI can sharply improve their employment outcomes. We will build on the early results of our Youth Transition Demonstration as we work with the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services to coordinate additional efforts to promote self-sufficiency among child SSI recipients and their families.

Strategies:

- Partner with the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services to implement Promoting Readiness of Minors on SSI;
- Simplify work incentive policies and improve programs such as Ticket to Work and the Vocational Rehabilitation Cost Reimbursement program; and
- Develop return-to-work demonstration proposals.

Strategic Goal: Build a Model Workforce to Deliver Quality Service

Goal Background and Description

Our employees are our most valuable asset. Committed employees and our State partners in the DDSs allow us to provide dedicated and compassionate service to the public. However, the landscape of the Federal workplace and its workforce continues to change, as do the needs of the public we serve. We must be prepared to meet changing business demands by attracting, acquiring, and retaining a diverse, highly skilled, and agile workforce capable of delivering quality service using a variety of methods.

One of our greatest challenges now and in the future is the loss of our most experienced employees. The size of our workforce has declined by about 11,000 employees since the beginning of FY 2011 and we expect this trend to continue. Based on our FY 2013 Retirement Wave Report, we estimate that more than 21,000 of our employees will retire by FY 2022. A shrinking workforce affects our ability to meet the needs and expectations of our customers and stakeholders.

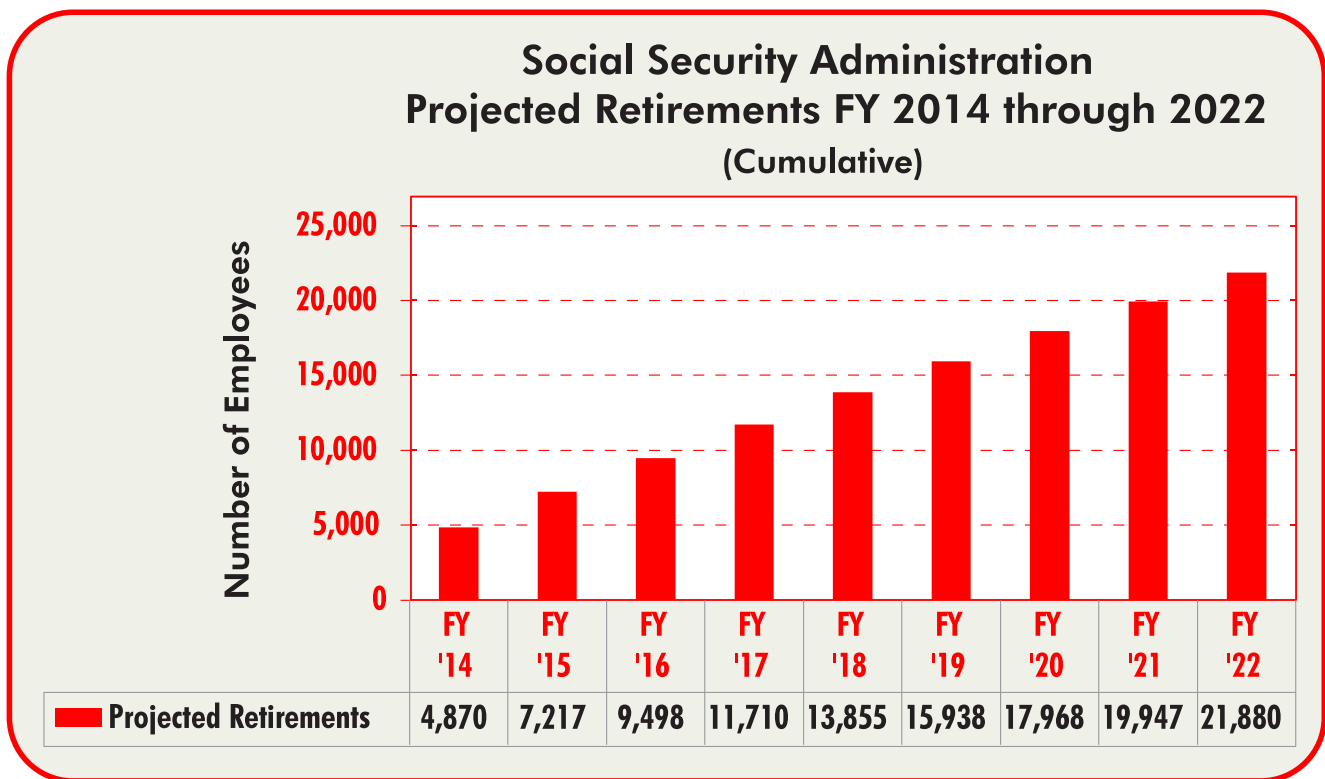


Figure 6: We project that by FY 2022, 21,000 employees will retire.

Changing population demographics, coupled with future staffing shortages, threaten our ability to maintain a future workforce that mirrors the public we serve. As our Nation becomes more diverse, limits on hiring will challenge our ability to acquire talent including under-represented minorities and bilingual candidates, which may affect our service delivery to non-English speaking customers. We will pursue strategies to meet these challenges, to ensure we align our workforce with the needs and expectations of the American public.

Additionally, as we explore ways to automate, streamline, and change our business processes in fundamental ways, we will need to ensure we have expertise in the programmatic, data, and IT areas. To ensure we maintain this expertise, we will implement employee-centered programs that foster development and facilitate knowledge transfer, succession, and retention. We also will conduct skill-gap analyses; leverage employee skills and competencies to meet our workload demands; and ensure an environment that supports inclusion, engagement, collaboration, performance, and accountability. Telework and other workplace flexibilities will be part of this modernized environment.

Objective I: Attract and Acquire a Talented and Diverse Workforce that Reflects the Public We Serve

Objective Background and Description

Over the past few years, we have consistently ranked among the top **10 Best Places to Work** among large agencies in the Federal Government. Our employees believe strongly in our mission and in the work that we do for the American people. However, for continued success, we must be able to continue to attract top talent. We must also ensure that we continue to employ a diverse workforce that will be able to engage effectively with people of all ages, education levels, cultural backgrounds, and language preferences. To remain an employer of choice for current and future generations, we will use modernized recruitment strategies, such as social networking tools, virtual job fairs, and human resources programs and flexibilities. In this way, we can compete for a diverse pool of top talent.

**Consistently ranked among the
among large agencies in the Federal Government**



Strategies:

- Compete for top talent through modernized recruitment strategies given changing generational expectations;
- Build a strong, diverse applicant pool through the use of various hiring flexibilities and programs, including Office of Personnel Management’s Pathways programs and volunteer internships;
- Market and expand use of hiring authorities for veterans and individuals with disabilities; and
- Ensure recruitment and selection processes focus on talent needs and core competencies for mission critical positions.

Objective II: Strengthen the Competency, Agility, and Performance of Our Workforce to Align with the Needs of the Public

Objective Background and Description

Changing business processes require our employees to increasingly demonstrate flexibility and resilience. We must assist our employees by providing timely training and development opportunities, as well as appropriate tools and resources. We must find ways for employees to develop more flexible career paths. To enhance performance, we must ensure that we hold employees accountable for their actions and provide them timely and effective supervisory feedback.

We must also ensure we have programs in place to strengthen our management and leadership ranks. Supporting our managers through training, as well as with tools and resources (e.g., guidelines, procedures, best practices, desk guides, automated systems) is important in ensuring effective leadership in the face of ever-increasing change and complexity.

Training and employee development will be critical to improving the competency and agility of our workforce and are key initiatives for the agency. We cannot afford during difficult budget times to sacrifice training and development – if we cut back in these areas, our service delivery will decline in the future. Increasing online services will also draw less complex work away from the field offices, so we must commit to offering highly trained staff to address the more difficult questions that will come into our field offices.

Strategies:

- Ensure effective use of the agency’s performance management systems to manage employee performance;
- Improve supervisory competencies and develop talent for future leadership opportunities;

- Create knowledge management tools and processes to ensure the capture of institutional knowledge (e.g., effective use of reemployed retirees);
- Reduce skill gaps in targeted mission critical occupations to support talent development of employees; and
- Offer ongoing access to training and development resources to support continual learning.

Objective III: Foster an Inclusive Culture that Promotes Employee Well-Being, Innovation, and Engagement

Objective Background and Description

We will provide an environment where our employees feel empowered, safe, included, and engaged in the shared direction of the agency. We are flattening the organization (i.e., decreasing the middle layers of management) to allow front-line employees more opportunities to provide input into leadership decisions. We will also improve agency-wide communications and foster better collaboration between management and labor representatives.

As we make changes over the next few years, we must ensure that we continue to promote and support employees’ well-being and motivation. We will find ways to keep morale high by offering workplace flexibilities such as expanded use of telework. We will also encourage changes that support employee creativity, work-life balance, and family-friendly policies to foster employee engagement at all levels of the organization.

Strategies:

- Promote work-life balance and employee well-being through workplace flexibilities;
- Ensure access to employee services (e.g., financial literacy, career development, work-life resources) regardless of geographic location;
- Provide employees and managers with support to navigate complex personnel matters (e.g., employee conduct, performance, reasonable accommodations);
- Promote safety of employees through ongoing safety training and emergency preparedness activities;
- Engage labor organizations to promote collaboration and transparency; and
- Develop practices that facilitate open communication and understanding in order to enhance employee engagement and appreciation of our diversity.



Objective IV: Enhance Planning and Alignment of Human Resources to Address Current and Future Public Service Needs

Objective Background and Description

To support ongoing workforce planning and data-driven decisions on workforce management, we must develop the internal capability to analyze trends and identify workforce-related actions and programs that correlate with and improve agency performance. We will use available MI to conduct comprehensive workforce analyses and forecast future workforce composition. We will assess current and future skill gaps. We will use this information to explore ways to re-shape our workforce to meet the service delivery needs of the American public now and into the future.

Strategies:

- Use workforce restructuring and reshaping programs (e.g., Voluntary Early Retirement Authority) to adjust and align the workforce with agency needs;
- Use human resources MI and data analytics to conduct effective workforce planning and forecasting that assists leaders in making data-driven decisions;
- Conduct data-driven performance reviews to assess, monitor, and track alignment of human capital programs with service delivery needs; and
- Utilize effective management principles to optimize organizational structures and workforce composition as we automate processes and expand self-service.

Strategic Goal: Ensure Reliable, Secure, and Efficient IT Services

Goal Background and Description

We have a long history of designing, deploying, and maintaining robust and cost-effective technology that supports our critical service delivery needs. We rely upon a large and complex technology infrastructure, as well as a highly motivated and skilled workforce, to support our service delivery.

Today's fast-paced, technology-driven environment requires sophisticated, modern service options to serve the public and our employees. We must employ modern technology platforms and systems design to support more flexible, efficient processes. Our strategies focus on evolving our infrastructure to incorporate stable, modern technologies that align with our business needs. As our workloads increase, our systems must keep pace with the demand. Expanding online and mobile-friendly access improves service for those who want the convenience of interacting with us remotely while preserving field office services for situations that need in-person support.

The security of our information and systems is an essential responsibility, and we will enhance our cybersecurity protections.

Objective I: Maintain System Performance and the Continuity of IT Services

Objective Background and Description

Technology is essential to managing Social Security programs. If our systems are not functioning optimally, the productivity of our workforce immediately declines, resulting in diminished service. We must maintain strong IT performance despite rising IT demands, increasing cybersecurity risks, and constant changes in technology.

To meet our service delivery challenges, we rely upon a large and complex technology infrastructure that includes two data centers, extensive national databases, hundreds of software applications, large supporting computing platforms, and thousands of networked computers, printers, telephones, and other devices (e.g., smart phones). Change to our IT infrastructure is constant. We strive to ensure responsive, reliable performance to our customers and employees in the presence of this constant change.

Our two data centers, the National Computer Center (NCC) and the Second Support Center, maintain the demographic, wage, and benefit information that enables prompt and accurate benefit payments. The NCC has been in continuous operation as a data center since it opened in 1980. Congress approved our requested funding to build a new data center, the National Support Center (NSC), and extensive planning is underway for the move to this new facility. We will transition all operations from the existing NCC to the new NSC in FY 2015 and FY 2016. The NSC will provide increased capacity and improved operational reliability and efficiency.



Figure 7: Artist rendering of the NSC.

Strategies:

- Successfully transition to the NSC; and
- Maintain responsive, reliable system performance.

Objective II: Enhance and Execute Plans to Modernize Our Systems

Objective Background and Description

Our IT is evolving to incorporate stable, modern technologies that align with our business needs. We support and employ technologies championed by the Federal Chief Information Officer (CIO) Council and other Federal directives. Examples of these technologies include the Administration’s Digital Government Strategy, shared services, modular development, and cloud computing architecture.

As we carry out our investment management processes to determine how to use our limited IT resources, we strive for a balanced strategy of investing in new and improving existing business applications and infrastructure as funding permits. We incrementally modernize our applications based on business needs, technical advancement, and risk management. We will pursue the use of newer, more adaptable technologies, while maintaining the systems that support our mission.

We will improve and expand our telephone services by offering to transfer customers calling field offices to our National 800 Number. This network’s sophisticated software allows us to optimize the routing of our National 800 Number calls to reduce our customer wait time. We made this enhancement possible by the FY 2013 conversion of our National 800 Number to the Citizen Access Routing Enterprise

through 2020 (CARE 2020) solution. The Care 2020 software will provide us with information to better optimize service and identify our customers’ needs in order to provide a world-class customer experience.

Strategies:

- Refresh IT planning activities to effectively prioritize and manage IT investments;
- Employ technology to extend service, mitigate risk, and reduce cost; and
- Assess application portfolios, focusing on cost, business value, and technology sustainability.

Objective III: Incorporate Innovative Advances in Service Delivery

Objective Background and Description

Technology transforms how we conduct business. As the Federal Digital Government Strategy notes, advances in computer technology, the increase of high-speed networks, and mobile innovation have introduced new products and reshaped existing service options. Growing customer expectations drive us to consider an expanding number of service delivery options.

We will actively participate in the Federal CIO Council, leverage the expertise of industry IT experts and technical consultants, remain attentive to emerging technologies, and benchmark with other public and private organizations that innovate through technology. We will harness appropriate innovations to create effective and efficient service delivery options, maximizing the return on our IT investments.

Our business and technical staffs will work together to develop new, more flexible and efficient ways to perform our work, focusing on areas where reengineering is most needed. We will develop and maintain effective IT solutions for our customers and our employees.

Strategies

- Deliver accurate, convenient, and flexible agency systems and services in a cost-conscious manner;
- Explore the use of emerging technologies to improve service and increase efficiency; and
- Engage and benchmark private and public IT communities to ensure the timely identification of important new technologies and best practices.

Mobile app paves the way for innovative advances in service delivery.

“Awesome. ..thanks for making it so easy and making our lives that much simpler. Good to see government uses a modern IT application”

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey response

Objective IV: Continuously Strengthen Our Cybersecurity Program

Objective Background and Description

We maintain a comprehensive, agency-wide information security program of controls that protect our information and communications assets. We review policies and processes regularly, taking appropriate corrective action to prevent misuse and unauthorized access to assets and sensitive data, including personally identifiable information. Given the highly sensitive nature of the personal information within our systems, data integrity and security, as well as the protection of individual privacy, must be our main IT service focus. New services and delivery options expose us to new threats. We must be vigilant and strengthen our cybersecurity intelligence and protections.

Strategies:

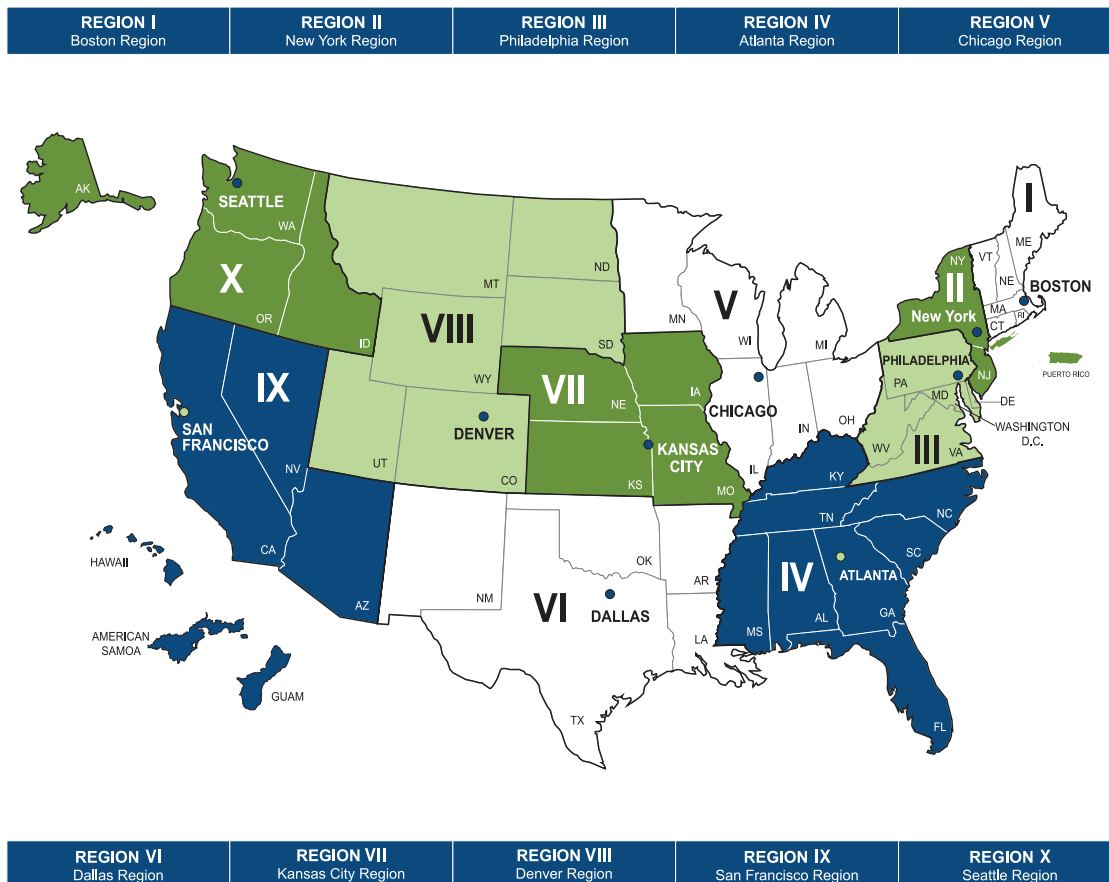
- Maintain information security preparedness;
- Continually adjust security processes and procedures to reflect changes in technology, the sensitivity of our data and systems, and awareness of actual and potential internal and external threats;
- Perform risk-based systems reviews to enhance continuous-monitoring and data-loss-prevention strategies; and
- Enhance our audit trail, integrity review, and fraud-prevention processes.

APPENDIX 1 – OUR ORGANIZATION

Our organization is composed of over 75,000 Federal and State employees. Our decentralized field organization provides services locally through a nationwide network of close to 1,500 offices made up of 10 regional offices, over 1,250 field offices (including Social Security Card Centers), 8 processing centers, 30 Teleservice Centers (TSC), 169 hearing offices (including 7 satellite hearing offices), 5 National Hearing Centers, National Case Assistance Center, the Appeals Council, and our headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. We also have a presence in several U.S. embassies around the globe.

Our field offices and Social Security Card Centers are the primary points of contact for in-person service to the public. Our TSCs primarily handle telephone calls to our National 800 Number. Employees in our processing centers mainly handle Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability payments but also perform a wide range of other functions, which include answering telephone calls to our National 800 Number.

We depend on State employees in 54 State and territorial disability determination services to make disability determinations. The administrative law judges in our hearing offices and the administrative appeals judges in our Appeals Council make decisions on appeals of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income claims and issues. Most of our employees directly serve the public or provide support to employees who do. A chart illustrating our organizational structure and the function of each component is available on our website at socialsecurity.gov/org.



APPENDIX 2 – ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS WE MUST CONSIDER

1. Fiscal Environment

Adequate and timely funding is critical to our ability to provide the level of service the public expects and deserves. Budget uncertainty resulting from the fiscal environment reduces our flexibility to maintain a strong level of performance in our core workloads. As States make difficult decisions regarding their budgets, their decisions can affect the State disability determination service employees, who we fully fund to make our disability determinations. We will continue to encourage State government officials to exempt these employees from State cost-cutting measures.

2. Changing Demographics

The U.S. population is growing older and more culturally diverse. We are already dealing with workload increases as about 80 million members of the Baby Boom generation pass through their most disability-prone years and begin to retire. In just the 5-year period from 2015 to 2020, the number of Americans age 55 and older will increase by more than 10 million, which will further increase demand for our services.

As we enhance our service delivery strategies, we also must continue to consider the increased diversity of the population we serve.

3. Technology

Advances in computer technology, the increase of high-speed networks, and mobile innovation have introduced new products and provided new opportunities for service delivery. As a result, Internet services, the use of mobile devices, and social media networking continues to increase. The wide variety of device choices creates the expectation that applications will take advantage of device capabilities. Rapid advances continue to challenge the balance of security and fraud detection against access and usability.

The amount of data we retain is so large, and changes happen so rapidly that we can no longer use traditional tools to analyze that data. We must have a complex structure and processes to examine large amounts of different data types. Using data analysis, we will be able to better uncover relationships, develop insights, and predict outcomes and behaviors, which will help us better handle our customers' needs and anticipate workload shifts.

We must continue to evaluate emerging technologies to identify solutions to improve our service, increase productivity, as well as to enhance the security, efficiency, and stability of our systems.

4. Evolving National Policy

We must continue to propose legislative changes for consideration by the Administration and to shape Social Security-related policies to support efficient and quality service to the public. For example, we have requested demonstration authority that would allow us to test program changes to encourage beneficiaries with disabilities to work. We will also continue to work with other Federal agencies, Congress, and advocacy organizations to develop policy that supports our mission. We continue to conduct research, both internally and extramurally, into retirement and disability. We will develop and use various models of the economy, our programs, and our beneficiaries to inform discussions of national policy, legislation, and reform efforts.

We are working closely with the Department of Justice to implement the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Windsor*, which removed the prohibition to recognizing same-sex marriages. We are processing claims for same-sex couples as instructions are finalized. We will continue to develop and implement additional policy and processing instructions.

5. Health Care

Trends in health care affect our disability programs. The increasing number of people with chronic conditions challenges our capacity to process disability claims. Continuous advances in diagnostic techniques, medical treatments, assistive devices, and rehabilitation require continuous modification and refinement of our disability policy and programs.

Active and committed advocacy groups demand our attention to their specialized client bases. The rapid adoption of health information technology, especially standards for electronic medical records and interoperability, provides us with both challenges and opportunities to improve significant aspects of our business processes.

Finally, we are tracking changes to the Medicare and Medicaid programs. We have a direct role in the Medicare enrollment and prescription drug subsidy processes, and we are required to communicate increased Medicare premiums for higher income beneficiaries and Medicaid eligibility factors for the aged and disabled. In addition, we are required to share data with the Department of Health and Human Services on implementing the Affordable Care Act.

6. Workforce Trends

Anticipated workforce trends will call for a change in how we use our workforce to deliver service to the public. We project that more than 21,000 of our employees will retire by the end of FY 2022, based on the FY 2013 Retirement Wave Report. This ongoing attrition, coupled with budget and hiring limits, will cause a loss of institutional knowledge and impair succession management and knowledge transfer. The inability to mitigate workforce losses through recruitment and hiring will also affect our ability to maintain and increase the diversity of our workforce. Further, as the Baby Boomers retire, the workforce will continue to include a higher concentration of Generation X and Millennials, requiring a shift toward employment strategies that enhance our ability to retain talent within those generations. Together, these workforce trends could negatively affect employee engagement, productivity, and, ultimately, our ability to meet the ever-changing needs of the public. We must conduct sound human capital planning and embrace robust workforce initiatives, including a thorough skill-gap analysis, that address the differing generational expectations of the future workforce to retain talent and remain an employer of choice.

APPENDIX 3 – HOW WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS

We identified four Agency Priority Goals we expect to achieve in the next two years. These goals are aggressive and directly support our strategic goals. To ensure our success in these areas, we conduct quarterly internal progress reviews and take necessary action to improve our results and reduce costs.

Goal 1: *Improve access to our services by increasing the number of citizens who complete their business with us online.*

Strategy:

- Migrate existing online services to the **Social Security** portal;
- Work with external partners to promote direct access to online services; and
- Conduct a national marketing campaign targeted toward people approaching retirement age

Goal 3: *Provide the public with access to personalized information by increasing the number of established **Social Security** accounts.*

Strategy:

- Enhance services provided online through the **Social Security** portal;
- Marketing and educational activities to promote **Social Security**;
- Pilot quick service kiosks in field offices; and
- Increase number of kiosks in external partner sites that provide the full suite of Social Security online services

Other Measurement

The Commissioner and other executives review a monthly Tracking Report, which assesses agency progress in achieving the performance targets in our Annual Performance Plan. We develop monthly performance expectations at the beginning of the fiscal year and use them to assess monthly progress. The lead executive responsible for each measure 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 **Performance.gov** for information on Federal Cross Agency Priority Goals and the agency's contributions to those goals where applicable.

Goal 2: *Deliver world-class customer experience using video technology to hold hearings.*

Strategy:

- Update systems and infrastructure to improve the quality of video hearings;
- Increase marketing and educational information; and
- Pursue policy and business process changes to maximize efficiency

Goal 4: *Reduce the percentage of improper payments made under the Supplemental Security Income program.*

Strategy:

- Increase the volume of our program integrity workloads;
- Enhance and expand use of technology to reduce improper payments; and
- Pursue new initiatives and program improvements, to the extent funding is available

APPENDIX 4 – HOW WE EVALUATE OUR PROGRAMS

We routinely evaluate our programs by conducting a variety of studies and surveys to determine whether our programs are effective. We evaluate our collection of program data, research, and analyses to identify our program strengths and weaknesses, develop strategies to address our major challenges, and improve the day-to-day administration of our programs. We complete many of our evaluations annually, while others may be one-time efforts. The following chart lists some of our significant evaluations, a description of these evaluations, and the timeframe for completion.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1 DELIVER INNOVATIVE, QUALITY SERVICES		
EVALUATION	DESCRIPTION	COMPLETED
Field Office Telephone Service Evaluation	Evaluates our accuracy in handling the public’s calls to field offices.	Annually
National 800 Number Telephone Service Evaluation	Evaluates our accuracy in handling the public’s calls to the National 800 Number.	Annually
Overall Service Satisfaction Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone Service Satisfaction Surveys evaluate callers’ satisfaction with our National 800 Number and field office telephone services; • Office Visitor Surveys evaluate visitors’ satisfaction with our field offices (including Social Security Card Centers) and hearing offices; and • Internet Transaction Surveys evaluate users’ satisfaction with online services. 	Annually
Prospective Client Survey	Surveys people between ages 50 and 64 to identify service expectations and preferences of the upcoming wave of retirees.	Biennially
Retirement Application Survey	Measures customer satisfaction with the retirement application process and identifies service expectations and preferences among recent retirees.	Biennially

<p style="text-align: center;">STRATEGIC GOAL 2 STRENGTHEN THE INTEGRITY OF OUR PROGRAMS</p>		
EVALUATION	DESCRIPTION	COMPLETED
Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds	Reports annually to Congress on the financial and actuarial status of the two Social Security trust funds.	Annually
Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program	Reports annually to the President and Congress on the status of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program and provides 25-year projections of program participation and costs.	Annually
Annual Report to Congress on Continuing Disability Reviews	A legislatively mandated report that provides summary information on continuing disability reviews (CDR) conducted for a completed fiscal year, including actuarial estimates of the lifetime savings in Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance; SSI; Medicare; and Medicaid benefits resulting from the reviews conducted during that fiscal year.	Annually
Enumeration Quality Review	Assesses the accuracy of original Social Security numbers assigned during the fiscal year.	Annually
Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Stewardship Review	Measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits.	Annually
Supplemental Security Income Stewardship Review	Measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving SSI benefits by reviewing all non-medical factors of eligibility and payment.	Annually
Safeguard Activity Report	Advises the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of minor changes to procedures or safeguards described in the Safeguard Procedure Report.	Annually
Safeguard Review	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.	Every Three Years
Safeguard Procedure Report	Details the security measures we are taking to ensure the confidentiality of the Federal tax information provided to us by the IRS.	Every Six Years
Pre-effectuation Review of Disability Determinations	Assesses the accuracy of initial and reconsideration disability allowances made by State disability determination services (DDS) as required in the <i>Social Security Act</i> .	Annually

STRATEGIC GOAL 3 SERVE THE PUBLIC THROUGH A STRONGER, MORE RESPONSIVE DISABILITY PROGRAM		
EVALUATION	DESCRIPTION	COMPLETED
Disability Scorecard Survey	Measures customer satisfaction with the disability application process at the initial and hearing levels in alternate years.	Annually
Evaluation of the Ticket to Work and other employment support programs	Examines employment patterns and outcomes of disabled beneficiaries, including those who use employment services such as the Ticket to Work, Partnership Plus, and Work Incentives Planning and Assistance programs.	Continuously
Evaluation of the Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation Predictive Model	Evaluates the results of predictive model used to score work issue CDR cases to ensure that cases most likely to result in overpayments are prioritized and worked first.	Annually
Office of Quality Performance Denial Review	Assesses the accuracy of initial and reconsideration disability denials made by State DDSs.	Annually
Quality Review Assessment of Administrative Law Judge Disability Decisions	Assesses the accuracy of favorable and unfavorable administrative law judge (ALJ) hearing decisions.	Annually
Quality Review Assessment of Senior Attorney Advisor Disability Decisions	Assesses the accuracy of fully favorable non-ALJ (i.e., attorney adjudicators) hearing decisions.	Annually

STRATEGIC GOAL 4 BUILD A MODEL WORKFORCE TO DELIVER HIGH QUALITY SERVICE		
EVALUATION	DESCRIPTION	COMPLETED
Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (Formerly the Annual Employee Survey/Federal Human Capital Survey)	Assesses employee perspectives of organizational performance across several major human capital areas: recruitment, development, performance culture, leadership, job satisfaction, and personal work experiences.	Annually
Human Capital Accountability System	Monitors and evaluates the results of our human capital strategies, policies, and equal employment opportunity programs, as well as our adherence to merit system principles, including cyclical Human Resources Management and Delegated Examining Unit Assessments of components across the agency	Annually
Management Directive 715 Report	Describes the status of our efforts to establish and maintain effective equal employment opportunity programs under Section 717 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and effective affirmative action programs under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.	Annually

STRATEGIC GOAL 5 ENSURE RELIABLE, SECURE, AND EFFICIENT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES		
EVALUATION	DESCRIPTION	COMPLETED
Online Authentication Survey	Surveys people who visited a field office to authenticate for Social Security services.	Annually
Federal Information Security Management Act Report	Reports to Congress whether our overall information technology security programs and practices comply with the <i>Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002</i> .	Annually

APPENDIX 5 – COMMUNICATIONS/OUTREACH

We engaged internal and external stakeholders in our efforts to meet and exceed our stated Agency Strategic Plan goals through participation and collaboration. In developing this strategic plan we consulted with employees, advisory groups, Congress, and other stakeholders. We solicited feedback from the various groups, including Congress, on our high-level outline. As we implement this plan, we will continue outreach and engagement with appropriate external and internal audiences. Specifically, we will:

- Provide periodic reports on our progress to all interested parties;
- Educate and inform internal and external audiences about our activities to innovate and improve service;
- Collect ideas and feedback from internal and external partners about ways to improve our programs and services;
- Consult with our stakeholders on technological developments aimed at improving efficiencies and customer on-demand service access; and
- Hold advocate meetings, roundtable discussions, listening sessions, and attend conferences to engage in two-way dialogue with our customers.

Last spring, many of our stakeholders participated in an online discussion forum during which they shared ideas for our Agency Strategic Plan. In this 3-week engagement, participants collectively submitted 771 ideas, 2,627 comments, and 35,000 votes, expressing interest in a variety of topics, such as allowing employees to apply for jobs outside their service area, improving our notices, improving training, expanding telework, and modifying Supplemental Security Income couples computations.

We also performed an environmental scan to identify current and emerging trends that directly or indirectly will affect our mission, workloads, and business processes. Socioeconomic and demographic changes, along with advancements in technology, have implications for the future of our programs, workforce, and service delivery.

We continue to use our online site, social media, and mobile presence as a platform for engaging the public. We share information and provide opportunities for collaboration and participation using Internet-based forums such as Facebook and Twitter, Social Security's website, and mobile devices.

Communications Efforts

Methods of External Communications

- Surveys;
- IdeaScale;
- Focus groups;
- Mobile presence;
- Email campaign;
- Webinars/webcasts;
- Electronic newsletters;
- Video and slide presentations;
- Advocate and stakeholder meetings;
- National conferences and other speaking engagements; and
- Social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, podcasts).

Methods of Internal Communications

- Surveys;
- Training;
- Focus groups;
- Town hall meetings with employees;
- Employee newsletter and magazine articles;
- Conference telephone calls and video teleconferences;
- Commissioner's messages (e.g., email, video, audio);
- Presentations and workshops for upper management; and
- Presentations for the regional offices and public affairs specialists.



SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION