

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER



I am pleased to present the Social Security Administration's Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009. This report describes how we managed our resources and administered our programs, highlights our FY 2009 accomplishments, and discusses key issues that will affect our future operations. The FY 2009 PAR is the first to cover a full fiscal year of operations under our FY 2008-2013 Strategic Plan (<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/asp>) and discusses our progress towards meeting our four ambitious strategic goals. Achievement of these goals is essential if the agency is to continue meeting the growing and changing needs of the public. I encourage you to review our FY 2009 PAR to gain an understanding of our programs and challenges, as well as gain an appreciation of the impact Social Security programs have on the people we serve.

Social Security is indispensable to the disabled, retirees, and survivors and is one of the most important Federal programs established by our country. People depend on our programs – both Social Security and Supplemental Security Income – for support at critical stages of their lives: retirement, the loss of a loved one, or the onset of disability. To meet the needs of the American public, we continuously strive to provide our numerous services as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Over the past few years, limited resources, increased workloads, and the fraying of our physical and technological infrastructure hindered our ability to address rising workloads and backlogs. Due to our country's current economic challenges and the first baby boomer retirees, our retirement and disability claims are increasing significantly as individuals need our services now more than ever. In addition, we have committed substantial resources to non-traditional Social Security workloads, including parts of the Medicare program and immigration enforcement activities. To help us address these challenges, Congress increased our budget in FY 2009 and provided us with additional funding under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (Recovery Act). The Recovery Act funding will help us process our rapidly growing disability and retirement workloads and replace our aging National Computer Center. The Recovery Act also authorized us to issue almost 53 million one-time \$250 economic recovery payments totaling over \$13 billion to eligible Social Security beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients to help these individuals deal with financially difficult times.

Despite a significant increase in retirement and disability workloads, the agency did reduce the hearings backlog and we are on track to eliminate this backlog by FY 2013. We employed innovations and new strategies to demonstrate our commitment to meeting the needs of the people we serve. In addition, we made critical information technology investments and further expanded our health information technology initiatives, which have already resulted in shorter-than-average claim processing times. We are focused on closing the gap between limited resources and increasing workloads by working more efficiently, increasing productivity, and streamlining workload processes.

In FY 2009, we also received, for the 16th consecutive year, an unqualified opinion on our financial statements, and our auditors reported no material instances of noncompliance with laws and regulations. I am proud to report that we have no material internal control weaknesses and that our financial and performance data in this report are reliable and complete under the Office of Management and Budget's guidance.

We look forward to working with the President, Members of Congress, and all of our stakeholders to achieve our goals. With their support, I am confident that Social Security will be able to provide world-class service for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Astrue".

Michael J. Astrue
Commissioner
November 9, 2009

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SSA’s FY 2009 Performance and Accountability Report is available on the Internet at:
www.socialsecurity.gov/finance

Introduction

The Social Security Administration's Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) for FY 2009 provides financial and performance information that enables the President, Congress, and citizens to assess how we performed in terms of carrying out our mission and achieving our goals. This report is organized into the following major sections:

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS: Management's Discussion and Analysis gives an overview of our mission, organization, and strategic goals and provides a summary of the financial and performance information contained in subsequent sections of the PAR. A synopsis of our systems, controls, and legal compliance is also included as well as a discussion of our key priorities and their possible effect on the future.

PERFORMANCE SECTION: The Performance Section discusses the results we achieved during the year by presenting the status of our FY 2009 performance measures by goal and objective. Here we provide a comparison between the target goals we set for each performance measure and our actual performance during the year, including trend data where applicable.

FINANCIAL SECTION: The Financial Section contains the message from our Chief Financial Officer, our audited financial statements, the accompanying notes to those statements, and required supplementary information including the Schedule of Budgetary Resources and information on Social Insurance. This section concludes with the auditor's reports.

OTHER ACCOMPANYING INFORMATION: The Other Accompanying Information section includes the Inspector General Statement on SSA's Major Management and Performance Challenges as well as our Summary of Financial Statement Audit and Management Assurances table and a discussion on our Anti-Fraud Activities and Debt Management. The Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 Detailed Report concludes this section.

APPENDIX: The appendix includes a glossary of acronyms, a list of the agency's top management officials, the members of the Board of Trustees, and the members of the Social Security Advisory Board.

For the 11th year in a row, SSA received the AGA Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) award for our FY 2008 Performance and Accountability Report. Being awarded the CEAR is a significant accomplishment for a Federal agency and it is the highest form of recognition in Federal financial reporting.

