

Fiscal Year 2023 President's Budget



MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING COMMISSIONER



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

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

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

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

As we emerge from the pandemic, we must ensure that our programs and services are reaching underserved communities, including individuals facing homelessness, with low incomes, with limited English proficiency, or with mental and intellectual disabilities. We are working to ensure our programs are accessible to everyone who may be eligible. This Budget supports improving equity in our Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program through improved benefit delivery and outreach work, including collaborating closely with diverse stakeholders and third-

party organizations in local communities to help members of the public understand possible benefit eligibility. We will develop enhancements to make it easier and more convenient to access our services.

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

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

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

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

Making the right payment to the right person at the right time remains our priority. We will safeguard taxpayer dollars by reducing improper payments and combating waste, fraud, and abuse. We must continue our quality reviews, cost-effective program integrity work, and payment accuracy efforts, while ensuring eligible individuals receive the benefits they are entitled to receive. In addition, persistent and increasingly sophisticated malicious cyber

campaigns threaten our security and privacy; therefore, we will continue to enhance our cybersecurity to protect the sensitive information entrusted to us.

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

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kilolo Kijakazi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct flourish at the end.

Kilolo Kijakazi
Acting Commissioner

March 28, 2022

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Social Security Administration's (SSA) fiscal year (FY) 2023 budget request is \$14.8 billion, a \$1.8 billion or 14 percent increase from the FY 2022 continuing resolution (CR) level. This increase will enable us to improve services at our field offices, State disability determination services (DDS), and teleservice centers for retirees, individuals with disabilities, and their families who rely on our services. The Budget also invests in improving service delivery by assisting people facing barriers in accessing our services through expanded online tools and improved National 800 Number service, and by adding staff to reduce the wait for a disability decision. Major investments include¹:

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

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

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

SSA's Research Budget

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

Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

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

PROGRAMS AND BUDGETS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benefits (Outlays in Millions)	FY 2021 Actual²	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Trust Fund Programs			
OASI	\$982,657	\$1,067,494	\$1,158,897
DI	\$140,591	\$140,034	\$147,330
Subtotal, OASDI	\$1,123,248	\$1,207,528	\$1,306,227
General Fund Programs			
SSI – Federal ³	\$55,528	\$61,206	\$59,225
SSI State Supplementary Benefits	\$2,441	\$3,155	\$3,145
Total⁴	\$1,181,218	\$1,271,889	\$1,368,597
Beneficiaries (in Thousands)	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Trust Fund Programs			
OASI	55,344	56,461	57,713
DI	9,562	9,177	8,931
Subtotal, OASDI	64,906	65,638	66,644
General Fund Programs			
SSI Federal Recipients	7,742	7,573	7,469
SSI State Supplementary Recipients (with no Federal SSI payment)	137	137	144
Total^{4, 5}	72,785	73,349	74,257

² Benefit payment totals include \$1 million for the Special Benefits for Certain World War II Veterans program, which is not broken out separately.

³ There will be 13 monthly benefit payments in FY 2022.

⁴ Totals may not add due to rounding.

⁵ Beneficiary totals include approximately 2.6 million concurrent recipients who receive SSI as well as OASI or DI.

Figure 2: Benefits and Administrative Budget by Program

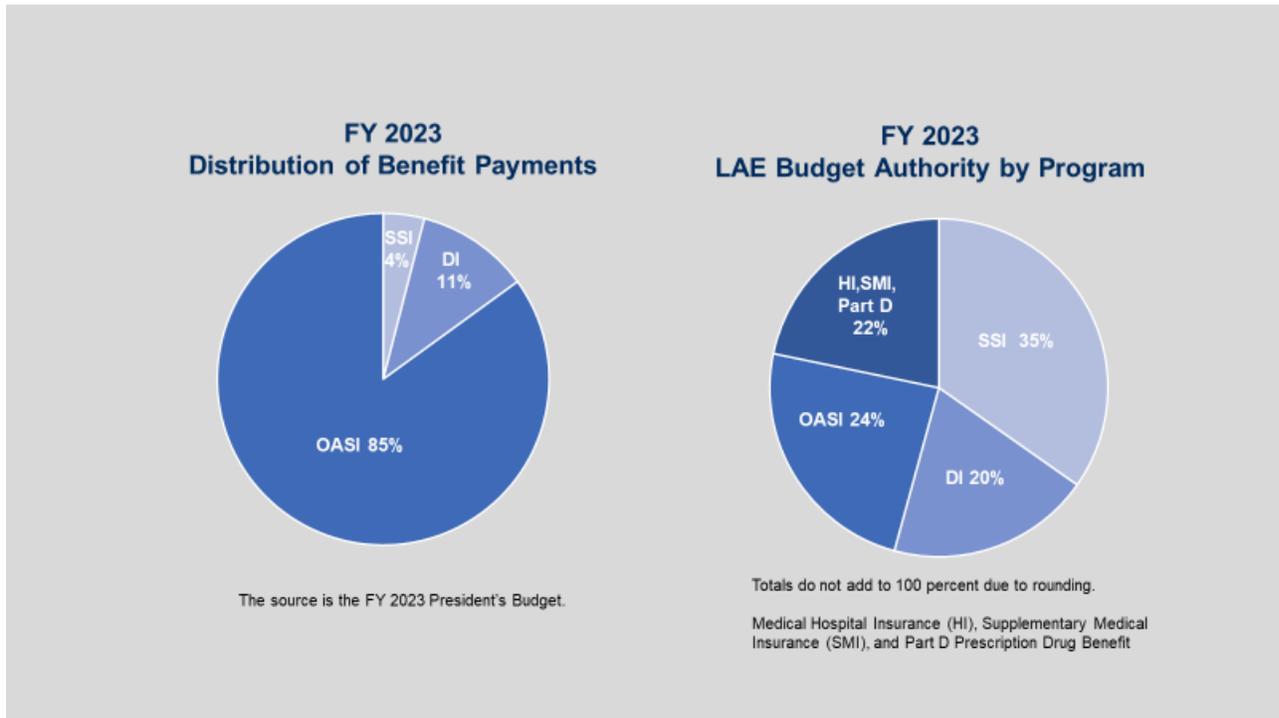
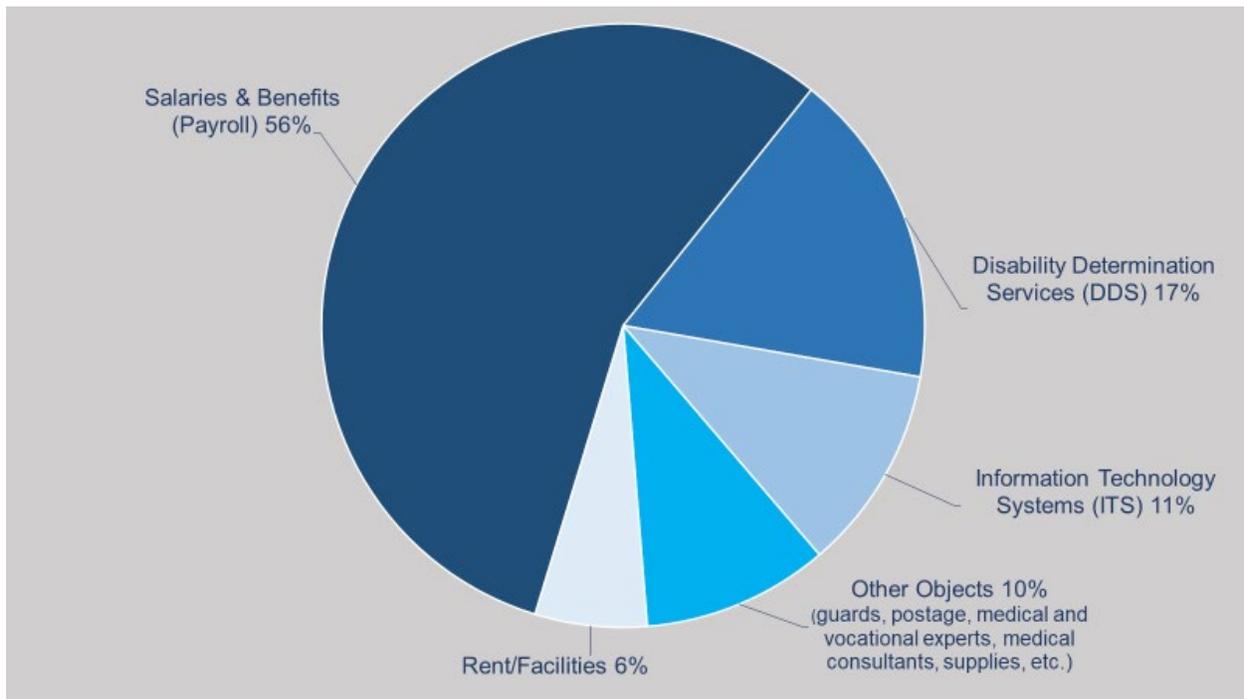


Figure 3: LAE Budget by Major Funding Category, FY 2023 Estimates



FY 2023 FUNDING TABLE

Budget Authority and Workyears (WY)	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate ⁶	FY 2023 President's Budget
Budget Authority, One-Year (in millions)			
Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) ^{7,8,9}	\$12,931	\$12,931	\$14,773
<i>(Dedicated Program Integrity Level, Base and Adjustment, included in LAE)¹⁰</i>	(\$1,575)	(\$1,575)	(\$1,799)
Research and Demonstrations ^{11,12}	\$86	\$86	\$86
Office of the Inspector General (OIG) ¹³	\$106	\$106	\$118
Total, Budget Authority¹⁴	\$13,122	\$13,122	\$14,977
SSA WYs			
Full-Time Equivalents ¹⁵	59,402	58,501	59,518
Overtime	1,697	718	3,000
Lump Sum Leave	226	250	250
Total SSA WY¹⁶	61,325	59,469	62,768
Disability Determination Services (DDS)	13,758	13,581	14,272
Total SSA/DDS WY	75,083	73,050	77,040
OIG	505	493	538
Total SSA/DDS/ OIG WY	75,588	73,543	77,578

6 Our overall LAE funding level in FY 2022 assumes a full-year continuing resolution (CR).
7 LAE funding includes \$135 million in FY 2021, \$135 million in FY 2022 under a full-year CR, and \$140
million in FY 2023 for SSI user fees. While our funding request includes \$135 million for FY 2022, the same
as the FY 2021 enacted, we requested \$138 million in the FY 2022 President’s Budget. The LAE funding also
includes \$1 million in Social Security Protection Act (SSPA) user fees.
8 The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136) provided \$300 million in
funding, available through September 30, 2021, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus
pandemic, including paying the salaries and benefits of all employees affected as a result of office closures,
telework, phone and communication services for employees, overtime costs, supplies, and for resources
necessary for processing disability and retirement workloads and backlogs. It also provided \$38 million for
administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service in coordinating a
public awareness campaign and administering economic impact payments (EIP) to most individuals. The
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided an additional \$38 million in funding, available through
September 30, 2021, for administrative costs related to assisting the Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue
Service in coordinating a public awareness campaign and administering a second round of EIPs first authorized
under the CARES Act. This funding is not reflected in the LAE.
9 P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provided \$50 million in dedicated funding to address
the hearings backlog and \$45 million in dedicated funding for IT Modernization.
10 P.L. 116-260 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided FY 2021 PI funding availability for 18 months
(through March 31, 2022). The FY 2023 budget assumes appropriations language for FYs 2022 and 2023 will
provide for similar 18-month authority to obligate PI funds.
11 These amounts include \$7 million in base research funding classified as mandatory.
12 Congress appropriated \$86 million in FY 2021 (available through September 30, 2023) for research and
demonstration projects. The FY 2023 President’s Budget assumes \$86 million in FY 2022 (available through
September 30, 2024) and proposes \$86 million in FY 2023 (available through September 30, 2025) for research
and demonstration projects.
13 P.L. 116-260 allows SSA to transfer \$11.2 million in FY 2021 from the LAE account to the OIG for the costs
associated with jointly operated CDI units. The FY 2022 CR continues this transfer in FY 2022 of up to \$11.2
million. The FY 2022 Budget requests a \$12.1 million transfer in FY 2022, and the FY 2023 Budget requests a
\$15.1 million transfer.
14 Numbers may not add due to rounding.
15 Full-time equivalents include those funded by the CDI unit PI transfer from the LAE account to the OIG.
16 A workyear (WY) is a measure of time spent doing work or being paid for some element of time (e.g., leave). It
is the equivalent of one person working for one year (2,080 hours) and may consist of regular hours, overtime,
or lump sum leave, which is payment for unused annual leave upon leaving the agency. WYs include time
spent in full-time or part-time employment. Full-time equivalents and overtime WYs include those funded from
dedicated funding to reduce the hearings backlog, dedicated funding for IT modernization, and dedicated
funding for PI. In addition, the WYs include those funded for the Medicare Low-Income Subsidy Program and
the State CHIP.

FY 2023 PERFORMANCE TABLE

Workload and Outcome Measures	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 President's Budget
Retirement and Survivor Claims¹⁷			
Retirement and Survivor Claims Completed (thousands)	6,082	6,615	6,534
Disability Claims¹⁸			
Initial Disability Claims Receipts (thousands)	2,009	2,231	2,570
Initial Disability Claims Completed (thousands)	2,011	1,986	2,350
Initial Disability Claims Pending (thousands)	740	939	1,159
Average Processing Time for Initial Disability Claims (days) ¹⁹	165	185	164
Disability Reconsiderations			
Disability Reconsiderations Receipts (thousands)	571	576	682
Disability Reconsiderations Completed (thousands)	516	526	617
Disability Reconsiderations Pending (thousands)	193	228	293
Average Processing Time for Disability Reconsiderations (days) ¹⁹	147	187	168
Hearings			
Hearings Receipts (thousands)	383	376	472
Hearings Completed (thousands)	451	406	472
Hearings Pending (thousands)	350	320	320
Annual Average Processing Time for Hearings Decisions (days) ²⁰	326	375	335
National 800 Number			
National 800 Number Calls Handled (millions) ²¹	31	33	36
Average Speed of Answer (ASA) (minutes) ²²	14	19	12
Agent Busy Rate (percent)	0%	7%	1%
Program Integrity			
Periodic Continuing Disability Reviews (CDR) Completed (thousands)	1,616	1,721	1,800
Full Medical CDRs Completed (included above, thousands)	511	621	700
SSI Non-Medical Redeterminations Completed (thousands)	2,367	1,928	2,166
Selected Other Agency Workload Measures			
Social Security Numbers Completed (millions)	12	15	18
Annual Earnings Items Completed (millions)	277	284	288
Social Security Statements Issued (millions) ²³	12	15	15
Selected Production Workload Measures			
Disability Determination Services Production per Workyear	239	247	275
Office of Hearings Operations Production per Workyear	78	74	86
Other Work/Service in Support of the Public-Annual Growth of Backlog (workyears)	N/A	(1,000)	(300)

- ¹⁷ Includes Medicare.
- ¹⁸ The estimates for disability claims receipts and claims pending are highly variable due to COVID-19 and our evolving operational status since 2020.
- ¹⁹ Average processing times for our initial disability claims and appeals workloads will depend upon the ability to obtain timely medical evidence and effectively schedule consultative exams.
- ²⁰ Average processing time for hearings is an annual figure. In FY 2022, we plan to resume in-person hearings and prioritize individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing. As we work through those oldest cases, we anticipate a temporary increase in the average processing time. Projections for the end of year monthly (September) processing time for hearings are 570 days and 270 days for FYs 2022 and 2023, respectively.
- ²¹ National 800 Number Calls Handled data for FY 2021 does not include automated calls handled. There were approximately 2.7 million automated calls handled through May 21, 2021; data on automated calls handled from May 22 to date is still pending due to technical issues that occurred while transitioning to a new telephone system.
- ²² The Agency Priority Goal target to improve the National 800 Number service achieves an Average Speed of Answer of less than 12 minutes, including implementation of estimated wait time and call back options, by September 30, 2023.
- ²³ The Social Security Statements Issued measure includes paper statements only. It does not include electronic statements issued. In FY 2021, *my Social Security* users accessed their Social Security Statements 64 million times. In FY 2021, we spent approximately \$6.7 million to send statements to people aged 60 and over who were not receiving Social Security benefits. Consistent with FY 2021, in FY 2022 and FY 2023, we will send paper statements to people aged 60 and older who are not receiving Social Security benefits and who are not registered for a *my Social Security* account, at a cost of approximately \$8.7 million in FY 2022 and \$9.1 million in FY 2023.

BUDGET SUMMARY: *OPTIMIZE THE EXPERIENCE OF SSA CUSTOMERS*

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

Advancing Equity in Our Programs

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

Managing the Projected Increase in Initial Disability Claims

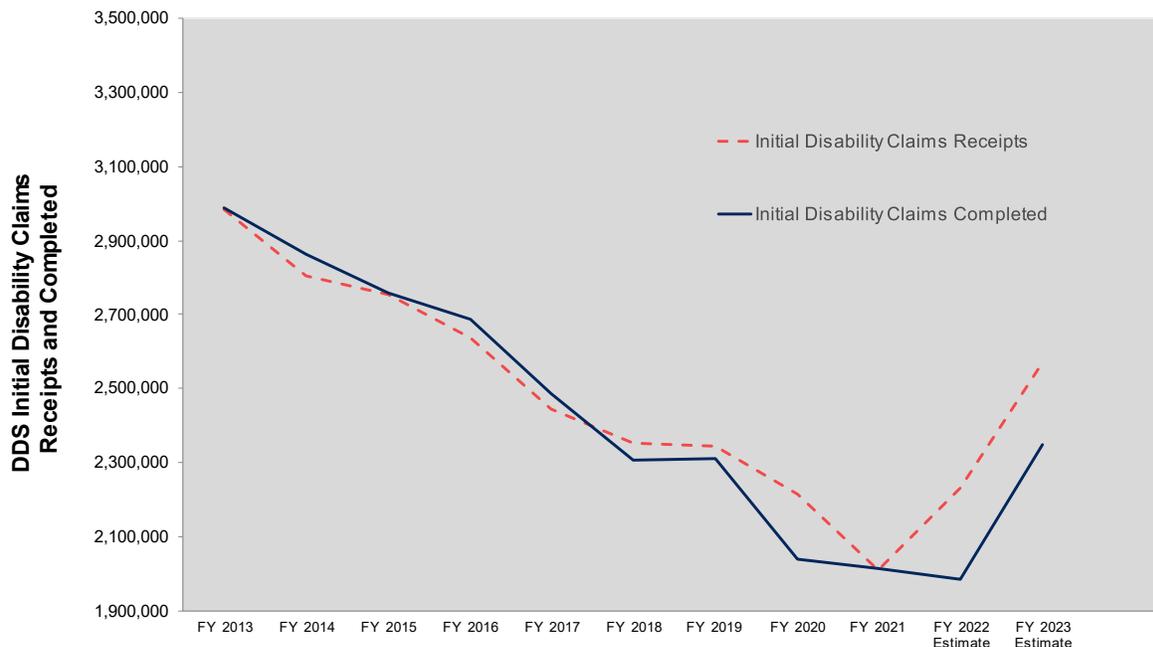
Addressing the initial disability claims backlog is a critical part of improving the service we provide. We must work down the backlog of cases while also handling a projected increase in disability applications, and we are prioritizing actions to reduce the time it takes for individuals to receive initial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

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

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

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

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



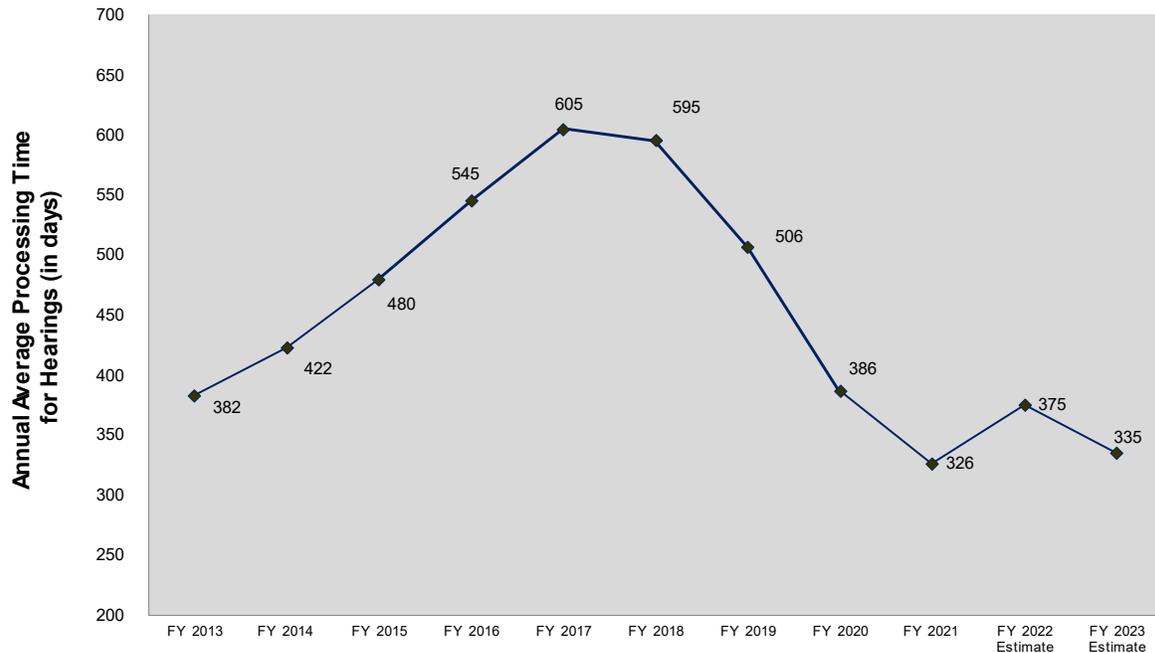
Eliminating the Disability Hearings Backlog

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

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

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

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



Enhancing Online Services

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

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

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

The Budget supports continued investments in 2023 including:

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

Improving National 800 Number Service

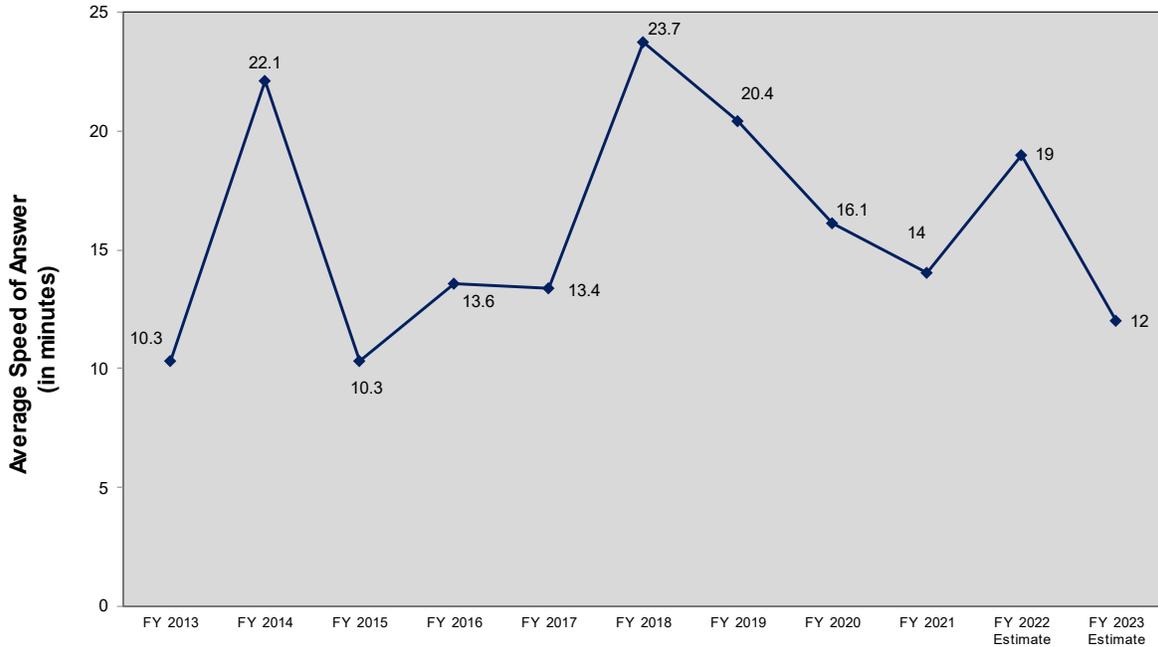
Our National 800 Number offers a wide variety of services including:

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

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

will reduce average wait times to less than 12 minutes (see Figure 6). We also plan to reduce the average busy rate from 7 percent to 1 percent.

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



Strengthening Service in Our Field Offices

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

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

Improving service in our field offices remains a priority. The Budget invests in our frontline staff so that we provide timely help to people who need our assistance. The Budget also invests in IT modernization to provide our employees user-friendly systems and tools to better serve the public, as well as convenient digital and automated services so that many of our customers do not need to visit a field office. We are improving the customer experience in our field offices by implementing business process improvements and providing options that will make visits to our

field offices easier, such as enhancing mobile check-in application and an online appointment scheduler. The mobile check-in enhancements, scheduled for Quarter 3 of FY 2022, will make it easier for visitors with appointments to check in by reducing the customer's check-in process from 13 screens to 6, while also improving visitor management by linking the appointment to our intake system allowing technicians to identify the visitor and reason for visit without having to collect certain customer data.

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

Reducing Processing Center Backlogs

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

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

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

BUDGET SUMMARY: *MODERNIZING OUR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY*

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

Key initiatives for FYs 2022 and 2023 include:

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

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

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

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

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

BUDGET SUMMARY: *STREAMLINING AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

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

Disability Determination Policies

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

SSI Simplification Administratively

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

BUDGET SUMMARY: *ENSURING STEWARDSHIP OF SSA PROGRAMS*

Looking Toward the Future

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

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

Supporting Our Cost-Effective Program Integrity Work

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

These actions resulted in a decrease in completed CDRs and prevented us from maintaining currency in FYs 2020 and 2021. We are restoring our PI workloads to pre-pandemic levels and anticipate eliminating the CDR backlog in FY 2023 by increasing processing capacity to handle

more reviews. We plan to process approximately 700,000 CDRs and about 2.2 million SSI redeterminations in FY 2023.

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

Enhancing Our Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities

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

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

Enhancing Our Payment Accuracy Efforts

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

Addressing the Climate Crisis

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

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

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

Investing in Cybersecurity to Safeguard our Data

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