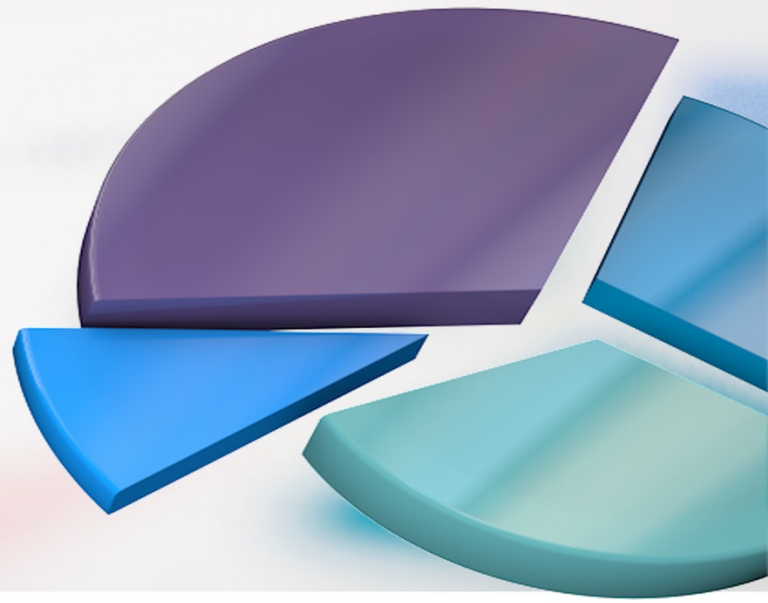


Social Security Administration
**Annual
Performance
Report**
2015-2017



Annual Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2017
Revised Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2016
Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2015

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Acting Commissioner's Message



Transformation and reflection marked this year as we released [Vision 2025](#) and celebrated our 80th anniversary. We asked ourselves, “How do we take the best of our past and weave it into an agile, innovative organization capable of meeting our customers’ needs now and into the future?”

Throughout this *Annual Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2017, Revised Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2016, and Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2015*, we detail the specific actions underway to transform our agency to meet our future demands. These actions support the goals and objectives defined in our [Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014 – 2018](#) and align with our three vision priorities: providing a superior customer experience, developing and retaining exceptional employees, and building an innovative organization.

As we move into the future, our customers remain our number one priority. Our customers often seek our help when they are most vulnerable. It is our responsibility to provide them with compassionate, accurate service as quickly as we can. We rely on our outstanding employees to provide that service. Every day, I see evidence of their commitment, and I thank these amazing, dedicated public servants for all that they do to serve the public.

Looking toward the future, technology offers us extraordinary opportunities to improve our decision-making processes. To help ensure we are gathering and interpreting the vast array of data available to us, I have established a new Analytics Center of Excellence. We will staff the new center with highly skilled business and data analytics staff that will provide critical analysis as we accelerate data driven-decision making throughout our agency.

As our employees work to meet our customers’ needs, we also face the reality that some individuals seek to commit fraud or breach our computer systems for personal gain. We will not tolerate these actions and will prosecute those responsible. We aggressively combat fraud, and this year, we centralized our efforts by establishing the Office of Anti-Fraud Programs. This office uses various approaches, including data analytics, to help us detect and prevent fraud. We also continue to invest heavily in our cyber security programs, further demonstrating our commitment to protecting our customers’ personal data by meeting or exceeding federal cyber security standards.

Over the past year, we made great strides to move our agency forward. I am proud to report that we met or made significant progress toward all 40 of our fiscal year (FY) 2015 performance measures. Last year, I challenged our leadership to be aggressive in their goal setting. While not all targets were met, I am pleased with our progress and with the hard work employees at all levels demonstrated in doing their best to meet those goals.

We established new agency priority goals for FY 2016-2017, which focus on agency issues:

- Improving customer service and convenience by increasing online services;
- Increasing customer satisfaction with our services;
- Improving the integrity of our programs; and
- Improving customer service by reducing the wait time for a hearing decision.

We have also faced challenges, which we explain in our [Major Management Challenges](#) section. This report also details our progress, notes any changes made to our FY 2016 plans, provides our new measures and initiatives for FY 2017, and notes our risks and mitigation efforts.

In closing, based on internal evaluations, I assure you the performance data in this report is complete, reliable, and accurate.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn W. Colvin".

Carolyn W. Colvin
Acting Commissioner

Chief Strategic Officer's Message



What will a customer's experience be with Social Security in 2025? Imagining the possibilities excited our customers, employees, and other stakeholders over the past year as we sought their input in developing our vision. Released in April 2015, [Vision 2025](#) describes the agency we aspire to be, and now we are developing a roadmap to guide our transformation into the bold, innovative agency we aspire to be.

Our current performance goals, defined in our [Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014 – 2018](#), guide us through 2018. To achieve our vision, we are fine-tuning the initiatives supporting our objectives by focusing our resources on several actions we are referring to as major management priorities. These priorities are enhancing online customer service, reducing the hearings pending, educating the public about Social Security programs, improving succession management, promoting employee development and engagement, transforming the information technology investment process, establishing a program management office, and accelerating the use of data-driven decision-making. Progress in these areas builds a strong foundation for achieving our vision.

Throughout this *Annual Performance Report*, we detail the progress we have achieved toward meeting our goals and objectives, which also supports our major management priorities. Last year, Acting Commissioner Colvin challenged us to set aggressive targets for FY 2015, and we did. I am pleased to say that we met the target for 23 of our 40 performance measures. Results for three of our performance measures were unavailable at the time we published this report. We came very, very close to meeting the targets for the remaining 14 performance measures. Our targets reflect the level of progress we strive to make, not the progress we know we can easily make.

Highlights of our FY 2015 performance include:

- Improved and expanded service delivery options for customers to conduct business in person, by phone, through video interviews and hearings, or online, as evidenced by increased usage of all delivery channels;
- Developed additional aggressive program integrity and fraud prevention efforts, including setting up a new office overseeing our anti-fraud programs;
- Increased the quality of our disability decisions and received our second prestigious Deming Award – again, for specialized training we developed for our hearings staff;
- Exceeded our FY 2015 systems availability target of 99.5 percent;
- Helped our veterans and wounded warriors by delivering medical evidence to the Department of Veterans Affairs faster;
- Continued to dominate the top five positions in the Federal Government's customer satisfaction rankings with our online tools: Retirement Estimator and Extra Help with Medicare, which tied for first place ranking; and
- Continued to exceed our targets for hiring veterans and disabled veterans.

As we look to our future, *Vision 2025* paints a picture of a responsive, highly efficient, and streamlined organization. Becoming that organization requires an aggressive approach to gathering and analyzing agency data, then acting on those findings. By leveraging the power of data analytics, we can assess our progress, identify performance gaps, and allocate our resources effectively to make our vision a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruby Burrell".

Ruby Burrell
Chief Strategic Officer

Making our Vision a Reality

As the Nation's largest safety net, providing benefits to millions of Americans – and the sole income for many – we are entrusted with an enormous responsibility. We face many challenges as we look to the future – increasing numbers of retirees and disabled workers, an aging employee base, increased employee turnover, technological advances, budget uncertainty, and increased customer expectations. We must change the way we operate to meet and exceed our customers' needs in the future.

Over the past several months, we have actively sought out our customers and stakeholders, asking them to help shape the Social Security Administration of the future. The result is [Vision 2025](#), the framework guiding our strategic decisions over the next ten years. Since *Vision 2025*'s release in April 2015, we have been developing the action plans needed to make our vision a reality.

We will address our challenges by focusing on our three vision priorities:



Superior Customer Experience: Our customer relationships span a lifetime and are supported by accurate, real-time, and secure online services;



Exceptional Employees: Empowered, knowledgeable, compassionate, and engaged employees are proud to contribute in a flexible and rewarding environment; and



Innovative Organization: The Social Security Administration is a national model of organizational transformation, agility, and service excellence, built on continuous improvement and forward-thinking strategy.

In fiscal year (FY) 2015, we took the following steps to achieve *Vision 2025*:

- Aligned our current [Agency Strategic Plan](#) with *Vision 2025*;
- Drafted our critical path roadmap defining the activities and initiatives we will undertake over the coming years to lay the foundation for achieving *Vision 2025*; and
- Began implementing initiatives supporting our major management priorities:
 - Enhance Online Customer Services;
 - Reduce the Wait for a Hearing Decision;
 - Educate the Public about Social Security Programs;
 - Improve Succession Management;
 - Promote Employee Development and Engagement;
 - Transform the IT Investment Process;
 - Establish Program Management Office; and
 - Accelerate the Use of Data-Driven Decision-Making.

In FY 2016, we expect to:

- Update our critical path roadmap, as needed;
- Begin developing our change management plan; and
- Continue implementing our initiatives.

In FY 2017, we expect to:

- Begin drafting our new agency strategic plan, based on our strategic roadmap.

Through careful strategic planning and continued dialog with our stakeholders, we will create a more agile, responsive organization, ready to meet the changing needs of our customers throughout their lifetimes.

Our Mission

Our Vision

Proudly serving Social Security customers through their lifetime, when and where they need us.

Vision Priorities

- Superior Customer Experience
- Exceptional Employees
- Innovative Organization

Our Mission

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

Our Motto

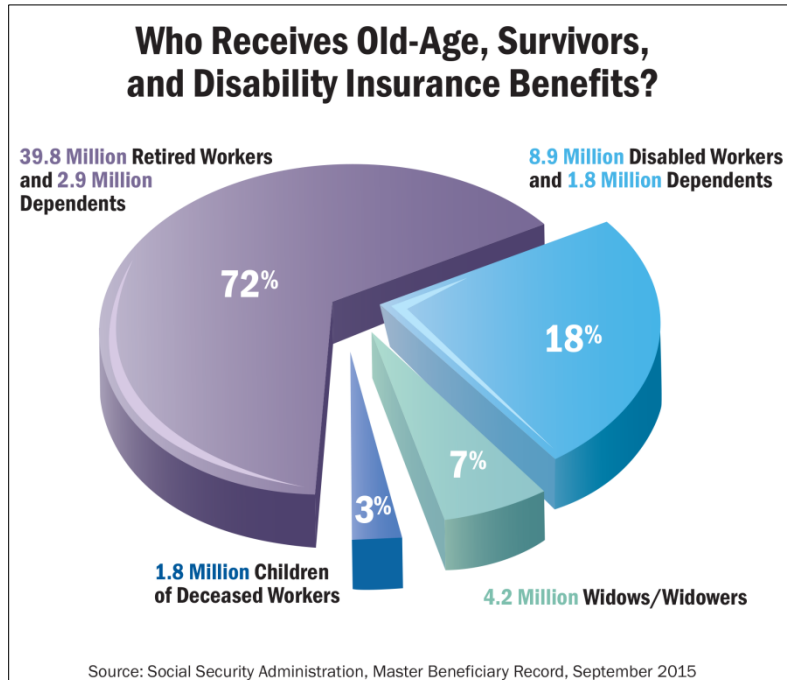
Social Security Benefits America

Our Programs

Americans Rely on Social Security

Considered by many to be one of the most successful large-scale federal programs in our Nation's history, the programs we administer provide a financial safety net for millions of Americans. In fact, 9 out of 10 individuals age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits. During fiscal year 2015, we paid more than \$932 billion to approximately 65 million beneficiaries.

Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Programs



Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Program

Today, most retirees plan their retirement dates based on when they can receive their Social Security benefits. Created in 1935, the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program (which provides what most people think of as their Social Security benefit) provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their families. Workers earn credit toward Social Security benefits by working and paying Social Security taxes. Most people need 40 credits, or 10 years of covered work, to qualify for retirement benefits.

A worker qualifies for full retirement benefits between the ages of 65 and 67, depending on the year he or she was born. Reduced retirement benefits are payable as early as age 62. Certain members of retired workers' families may also receive benefits. Spouses (including divorced spouses), minor children, and children who became disabled before age 22 may also be eligible for benefits.

Social Security also provides income for families of workers who die. Survivors benefits were added in 1939, and benefits for disabled widows and widowers were added in 1968. Widows, widowers (and divorced widows and widowers), dependent parents, and children may be eligible for survivors benefits. In fact, 98 of every 100 children could get benefits if a working parent dies. Social Security pays more benefits to children than any other federal program.

Disability Insurance Program

Becoming disabled before reaching full retirement age is not something most people consider. However, studies show that a 20-year-old worker has more than a 1-in-4 chance of becoming disabled before reaching full retirement age.

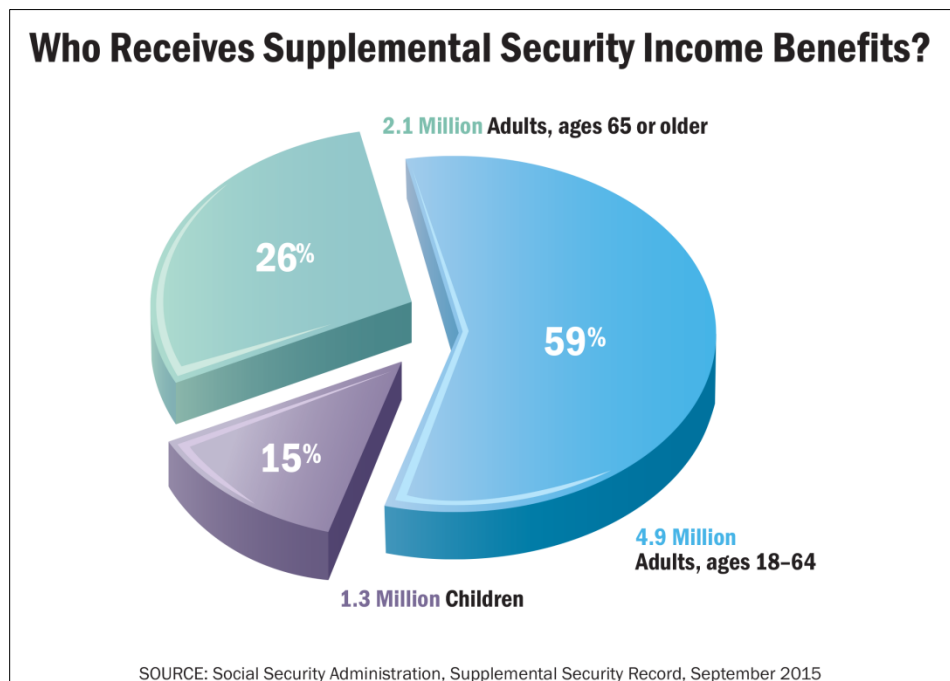
People who have worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes and certain members of their families can qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits.

The disability program began in 1956 to provide benefits for workers with disabilities between the ages of 50 and full retirement. The program expanded in 1960 to include workers with disabilities of all ages. Social Security Disability Insurance provides benefits to people who cannot work because they have a medical condition expected to last at least one year or result in death.

Supplemental Security Income Program

The Supplemental Security Income program, established in 1972, is a federal program providing monthly payments to people with limited incomes and resources who are aged, blind, or disabled. Adults and children under the age of 18 can receive payments based on disability or blindness.

General tax revenue, not workers' Social Security taxes, funds the Supplemental Security Income program.



Our Organization

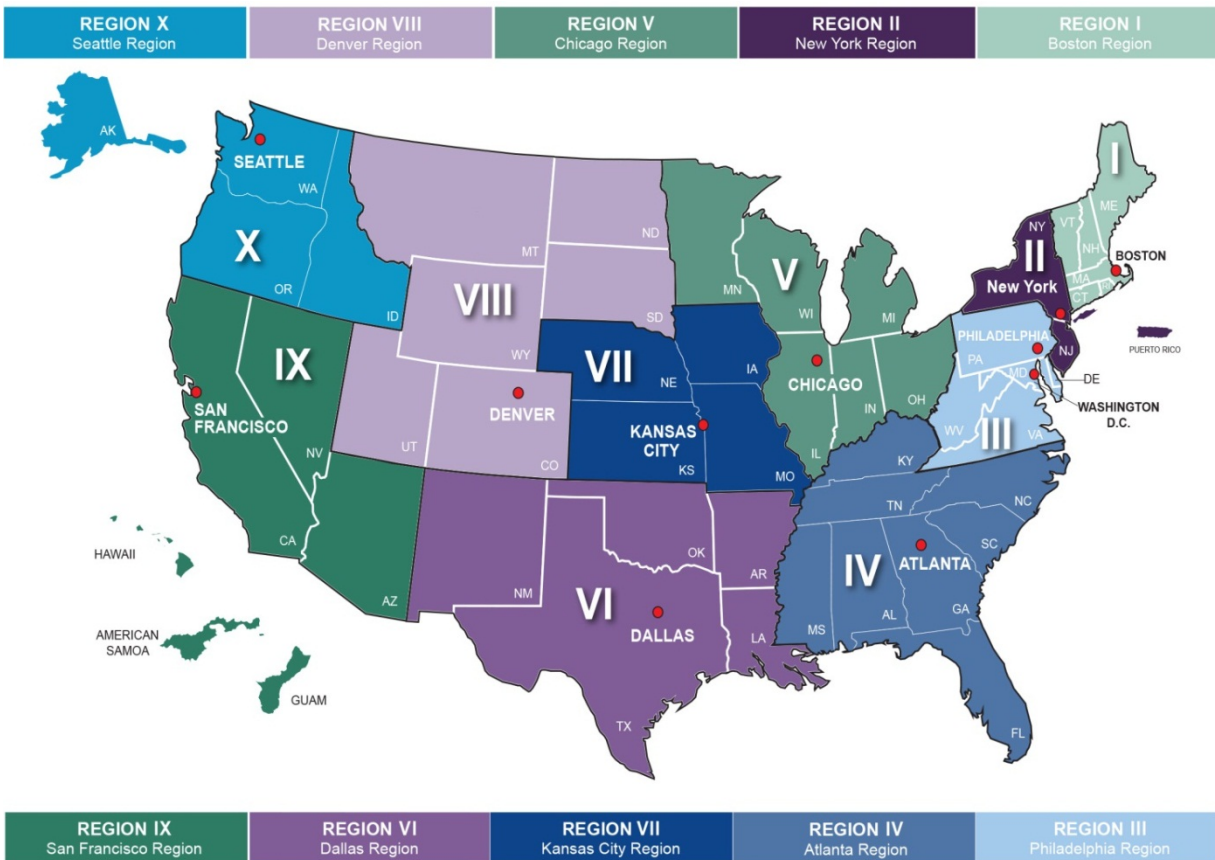
Serving the American public requires a vast network of facilities, technology, and skilled staff. Every day more than 65,000 employees provide a full range of services to our customers. Nationwide, we have a network of more than 1,500 offices, which includes regional offices, field offices, Social Security card centers, teleservice centers, processing centers, National Hearing Centers, the Appeals Council, and our headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland.

Additionally, more than 16,000 state employees at disability determination services (DDS) offices work in 54 jurisdictions and provide services in about 100 offices across the country and U.S. territories. Internationally, we deliver services in the U.S. embassies in more than a hundred countries.

Customers receive in-person service primarily at our field offices and Social Security card centers. Our teleservice centers primarily handle calls to our National 800 Number. Employees in our processing centers typically handle Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability payments. These employees also provide a wide range of other services, including handling telephone calls to our National 800 Number.

We have created strong partnerships with state agencies, and we depend on state employees in DDS offices to make disability determinations. Administrative law judges in our hearing offices and the administrative appeals judges at our Appeals Council decide appeals involving Social Security and Supplemental Security Income issues.

We generally organize our operations into the 10 regions shown on the map below. For more information about our components and their functions, visit our [organizational structure webpage](#).



Summary of Our Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Deliver Innovative, Quality Services

- Strategic Objective 1.1: Develop and Increase the Use of Self-Service Options
- Strategic Objective 1.2: Enhance the Customer Experience by Completing Customers' Business at the First Point of Contact
- Strategic Objective 1.3: Partner with Other Agencies and Organizations to Improve Customers' Experience and Align with the Administration's One-Government Approach
- Strategic Objective 1.4: Evaluate Our Physical Footprint to Incorporate Improved Service Options

Goal 2: Strengthen the Integrity of Our Programs

- Strategic Objective 2.1: Transform the Way We Record Earnings to Enhance Data Accuracy
- Strategic Objective 2.2: Protect the Public's Data and Provide Secure Online Services
- Strategic Objective 2.3: Increase Payment Accuracy

Goal 3: Serve the Public through a Stronger, More Responsive Disability Program

- Strategic Objective 3.1: Improve the Quality, Consistency, and Timeliness of Our Disability Decisions
- Strategic Objective 3.2: Maximize Efficiencies throughout the Disability Program
- Strategic Objective 3.3: Enhance Employment Support Programs and Create New Opportunities for Returning Beneficiaries to Work

Goal 4: Build a Model Workforce to Deliver Quality Service

- Strategic Objective 4.1: Attract and Acquire a Talented and Diverse Workforce that Reflects the Public We Serve
- Strategic Objective 4.2: Strengthen the Competency, Agility, and Performance of Our Workforce to Align with the Needs of the Public
- Strategic Objective 4.3: Foster an Inclusive Culture that Promotes Employee Well-Being, Innovation, and Engagement
- Strategic Objective 4.4: Enhance Planning and Alignment of Human Resources to Address Current and Future Public Service Needs

Goal 5: Ensure Reliable, Secure, and Efficient Information Technology Services

- Strategic Objective 5.1: Maintain System Performance and the Continuity of Information Technology Services
- Strategic Objective 5.2: Enhance and Execute Plans to Modernize Our Systems
- Strategic Objective 5.3: Incorporate Innovative Advances in Service Delivery
- Strategic Objective 5.4: Continuously Strengthen Our Cyber Security Program

Cross-Agency Priority Goals

Established by the Government Performance and Results (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010, Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) goals accelerate progress on presidential priority areas. Multiple agencies actively collaborate to achieve results in these areas.

The Office of Management and Budget established CAP goals based on input from federal agencies and congressional committees. These goals reflect the President’s second-term priorities. The goals were announced in the FY 2015 budget and have a four-year timeframe. There are 15 CAP goals: 7 mission-oriented and 8 management-focused goals. Each CAP goal has two senior leaders – one within the Executive Office of the President and one within key delivery agencies. The Social Security Administration and Office of Management and Budget co-lead the Customer Service CAP goal.

GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requires us to address CAP goals in the agency strategic plan, the annual performance plan, and the annual performance report. Below, we note examples showing our efforts supporting specific CAP goals. A listing of all CAP goals, plus additional information about the progress all agencies are making toward achieving the CAP goals is available at performance.gov.

Mission-Oriented Goals	
Cybersecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to meet or exceed all target goals related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trusted Internet Connection consolidation and capabilities; ○ Information security continuous monitoring; ○ Strong authentication; and ○ Phishing and malware defense. • Expanded use of automation to identify security vulnerabilities, deviations, and inappropriate use.
Climate Change (Federal Actions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and implemented a comprehensive plan to meet renewable energy and federal efficiency targets; and • Took appropriate actions to ensure we mitigate our agency’s effect on climate change.
Insider Threat and Security Clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and implemented our insider threat plan; and • Created additional oversight mechanisms to ensure data access is limited to authorized personnel.

Management-Oriented Goals	
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-led federal efforts on customer service improvements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating a Federal Government-wide customer service award program; ○ Piloting a tool to gather customer feedback in select federal offices, including Social Security card centers; and ○ Developing a Washington, DC-based Community of Practice to drive progress on key milestones. • Supported agency-level efforts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Piloting a regional Customer Service Community of Practice in Denver, CO; ○ Developing and Implementing an online request for a Social Security number replacement card; ○ Launching a viewable/printable replacement Form 1099; and ○ Leveraging leadership from across government to bring best practices, collaboration, and shared problem solving to our agency.
Smarter IT Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched efforts to expand hiring authority for digital service experts; • Held events targeting small businesses to facilitate communications and information exchange with industry partners; • Began transition to an Agile-based systems development approach; • Expanded project management processes to integrate additional best practices; and • Conducted additional Stat reviews and implemented lessons learned.

Management-Oriented Goals

Strategic Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Used the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiatives to decrease costs for a variety of items, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office supplies; ○ Domestic delivery services; ○ Laptops; ○ Workstations; and ○ Cell phone services.
Benchmark and Improve Mission-Support Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established cost or efficiency benchmarks for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acquisition; ○ Financial management; ○ Human capital; ○ Information technology management; and ○ Real property. ● Worked with Chief Executive Officer Councils to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define and refine individual efficiency benchmarking metrics and collect agency-level data; and ○ Collect and validate efficiency and effectiveness metrics.
Open Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed and maintained an enterprise data inventory; ● Made data easily available to the public; ● Prioritized and released valuable data to the public; ● Prevented inappropriate disclosure of sensitive information; ● Added specific roles and responsibilities for certain types of open data deliverables; and ● Regularly reached out to stakeholders to identify their data needs.
People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focused efforts on improving employee engagement including requiring all our components to develop and maintain action plans; ● Implemented an Employee Engagement Community of Practice to share best practices and address challenges; and ● Participated in several Office of Personnel Management projects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Senior Executive Service reforms; ○ Hiring reform forums; ○ GovConnect (piloting our “SkillsConnect” under GovProject); and ○ Interagency Rotation Program.

Agency Priority Goals

In support of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010, we established four Agency Priority goals (APG). The APGs are 24-month goals and reflect performance improvement priorities of our executive leadership, as well as those of the Administration.

Our APGs support our overarching strategic goals set forth in our [Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014 – 2018](#). Below, and on the following pages, are the APGs for fiscal years (FY) 2014 - FY 2015 and our new APGs for FY 2016 – FY 2017.

Agency Priority Goals for FY 2014-FY 2015

FY 2014-FY 2015 Agency Priority Goals	Strategies to Achieve Priority Goals	External Factors	Goal Leader
<p>Improve access to our services by increasing the number of citizens who complete their business with us online.</p>	<p>Migrate existing online services to the my Social Security portal.</p> <p>Work with external partners to promote direct access to online services.</p> <p>Conduct a national marketing campaign targeted toward people approaching retirement age and current beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Availability of information technology resources to add additional services to the my Social Security portal and expand direct access through external partners.</p> <p>Stakeholder and advocacy groups acceptance of the my Social Security portal.</p>	<p>Robin Sabatino Associate Commissioner, Office of Electronic Services and Technology, Office of Operations</p>
<p>Deliver a world-class customer experience by expanding the use of video technology to hold hearings.</p>	<p>Update systems and infrastructure to improve the quality of video hearings.</p> <p>Increase marketing and educational information.</p> <p>Pursue policy and business process changes to maximize efficiency.</p>	<p>Availability of information technology resources.</p> <p>Stakeholder acceptance of video hearings.</p> <p>Public reaction to regulatory changes regarding video hearings.</p>	<p>Donna Calvert Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Office of Disability Adjudication and Review</p>
<p>Provide the public with access to personalized information by increasing the number of established my Social Security accounts.</p>	<p>Enhance services provided online through the my Social Security portal.</p> <p>Increase marketing and educational activities to promote my Social Security.</p> <p>Pilot quick-service customer service stations in field offices.</p> <p>Increase number of customer service stations in external partner sites that provide the full suite of Social Security online services.</p>	<p>Budget constraints could affect our ability to migrate additional services to the my Social Security portal and impede our ability to implement new features.</p>	<p>Robin Sabatino Associate Commissioner, Office of Electronic Services and Technology, Office of Operations</p>

FY 2014-FY 2015 Agency Priority Goals	Strategies to Achieve Priority Goals	External Factors	Goal Leader
<p>Reduce the percentage of improper payments made under the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.</p>	<p>Increase the volume of our program integrity workloads.</p> <p>Enhance and expand use of technology to reduce improper payments.</p> <p>Pursue new initiatives and program improvements to the extent funding is available.</p> <p>Ensure that we design new initiatives to produce measurable outcomes through well-developed evaluation plans.</p>	<p>Dependence upon SSI recipients and deemors (i.e., those whose income and assets are considered for SSI eligibility and payment amount) timely reporting changes in income and resources.</p> <p>Increase in job growth may result in more SSI recipients working and not reporting their wages timely.</p> <p>Budgetary constraints determine the number of redeterminations we may conduct.</p>	<p>Shirleeta Stanton Associate Commissioner, Office of Income Security Programs, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy</p>

Agency Priority Goals for FY 2016-FY 2017

FY 2016-FY 2017 Agency Priority Goals	Strategies to Achieve Priority Goals	External Factors	Goal Leader/Deputy Goal Leader
<p>Improve customer service and convenience by increasing online services.</p>	<p>Release new electronic services within the <i>my Social Security</i> portal, including enhanced customer engagement tools to assist users while they are in the online service channel.</p> <p>Work with external partner sites like VA hospitals and state agencies to promote direct access to online services.</p> <p>Develop and implement a strategic marketing plan to increase online services.</p> <p>Continue to pilot a quick self-service kiosk model in our field offices, expanding upon the initial effort (subject to budgetary approval).</p>	<p>Additional authentication steps required by Executive Order 13681 may reduce use due to increased complexity of registration and log in.</p>	<p>Nancy Berryhill Deputy Commissioner, Office of Operations</p> <p>Rob Klopp Deputy Commissioner, Office of Systems</p>
<p>Increase customer satisfaction with our services.</p>	<p>Regularly evaluate our Internet Customer Satisfaction survey results to identify improvements opportunities and take appropriate actions.</p> <p>Regularly evaluate our Field Office, Hearing Office, Social Security Card Center, and telephone customer satisfaction survey results to identify improvement opportunities and take appropriate actions.</p> <p>Conduct Post-Call Surveys for customers of our National 800 Number, collect and analyze customer feedback, and take appropriate actions.</p> <p>Implement the Federal Feedback Button Pilot in Card Centers.</p>	<p>Additional authentication steps required by Executive Order 13681 may affect satisfaction both positively and negatively.</p> <p>Customers may be more satisfied knowing that we have enhanced security features, but the additional complexity in registering and logging in may lower satisfaction.</p>	<p>Nancy Berryhill Deputy Commissioner, Office of Operations</p> <p>Michelle King <i>Acting</i> Deputy Commissioner, Office of Budget, Finance, Quality, and Management</p>

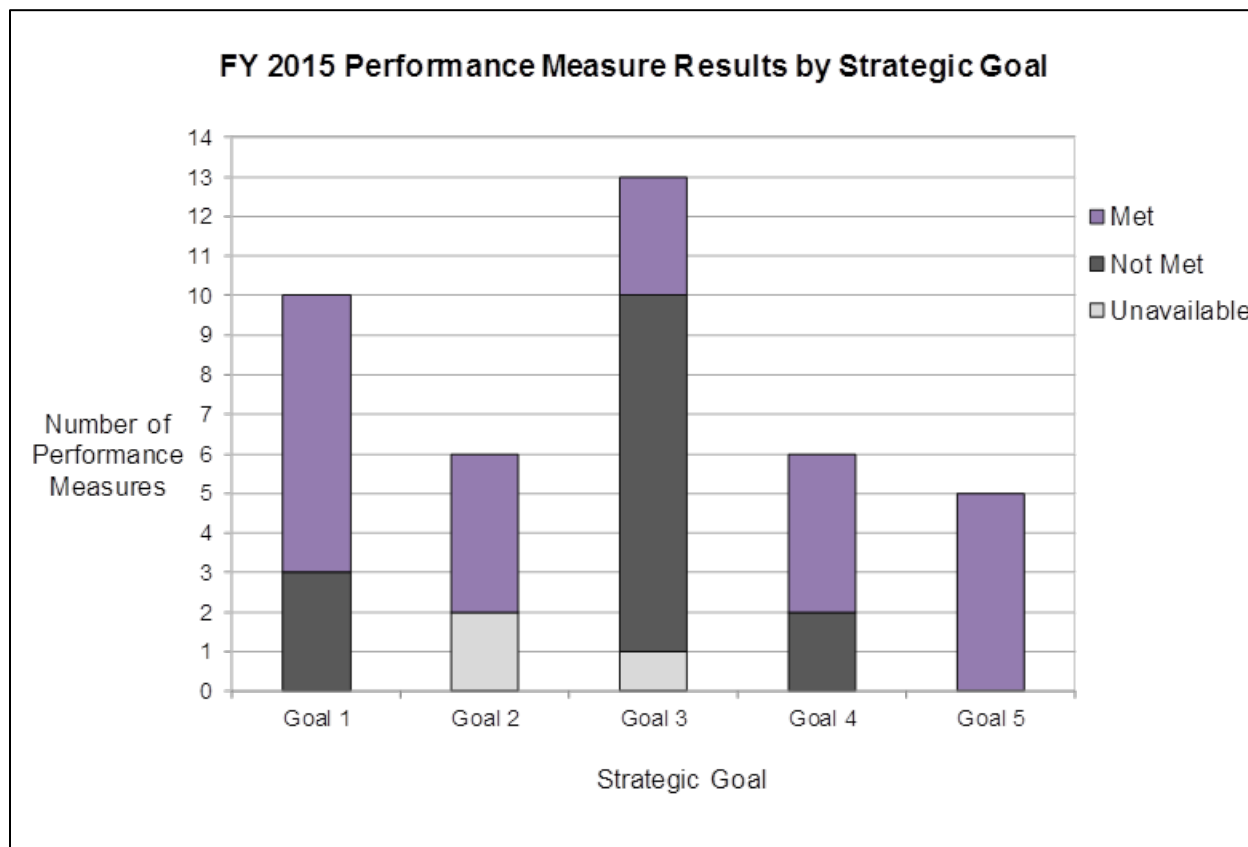
FY 2016-FY 2017 Agency Priority Goals	Strategies to Achieve Priority Goals	External Factors	Goal Leader/Deputy Goal Leader
<p>Improve the integrity of our programs by increasing our Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment accuracy rate to 95%.</p>	<p>Conduct periodic reviews (redeterminations).</p> <p>Maximize the use of data to detect assets like undisclosed bank accounts and non-home real property.</p> <p>Offer a variety of SSI wage reporting tools.</p> <p>Use behavior science insights to improve recipient reporting.</p> <p>Explore additional data exchanges to verify eligibility and payment amount.</p>	<p>Self-reporting by beneficiaries is not always accurate.</p> <p>Increased fraud detection activities may find more overpayments.</p>	<p>Marianna LaCanfora Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy</p> <p>Erik Jones Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Office of Operations</p>
<p>Improve customer service by reducing the wait time for a hearing decision.</p>	<p>Increase decision-making capacity.</p> <p>Process and decisional quality Improvements.</p> <p>Increase employee engagement.</p> <p>Leverage technology innovations.</p>	<p>Inability to hire sufficient judges and other staff.</p> <p>Declination of video hearings.</p>	<p>Donna Calvert Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Office of Disability Adjudication and Review</p> <p>Mary Horne Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Office of Operations</p>

Performance Measures at a Glance

Our FY 2015 Performance Results

We set aggressive targets for our fiscal year (FY) 2015 measures. We met 23 of the 36 measures with available data. While we made significant progress in many areas, we also faced a number of challenges. We did not meet 14 of the 36 measures with available data.

Below is an assessment of our performance results by strategic goal in FY 2015.



Our Performance Measures

These tables are a summary of our FY 2016 and FY 2017 performance measures and FY 2015 performance results. We organized the measures based on the strategic goals and objectives they support in the [Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014 – 2018](#) and indicated which measures are Agency Priority Goals (APG). While budgeted workload measures support our strategic goals and objectives, their targets and outcomes are budget dependent. We identify our budgeted workload measures as BWM. We identify newly established measures for FY 2016 and FY 2017 as NEW. We identify the measures we discontinued this year by the purple shading in the FY 2016 target and FY 2017 target. A listing of acronyms for the responsible officials is in [Appendix E, Summary of Key Management Officials' Responsibilities](#).

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver Innovative, Quality Services

Strategic Objective 1.1: Develop and Increase the Use of Self-Service Options

Strategic Objective 1.1 Lead: DCO

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
1.1a APG	Improve access to our services by increasing the number of citizens who complete their business with us online	87 million transactions	Increase the number of citizens completing business online by 10% over FY 2014 (77.8 million transactions)			DCO	40
		Met					
1.1b APG NEW	Improve customer service and convenience by increasing online transactions by 25 million each year	87 million online transactions		112 million online transactions	137 million online transactions	DCO DCS	40

Strategic Objective 1.2: Enhance the Customer Experience by Completing Customers' Business at the First Point of Contact

Strategic Objective 1.2 Lead: DCO

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
1.2a APG	Deliver a world-class customer experience by expanding the use of video technology to hold hearings	27%	30% of hearings conducted by video			DCDAR	43
		Not Met					

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
1.2b	Expand the services available under <i>my Social Security</i> by implementing an online Social Security Number Replacement Card application	The online Social Security Number Replacement Card application was released in November 2015 Met	Complete development and begin testing of the online Social Security Number Replacement Card application			DCO	43
1.2c	Maintain high customer satisfaction with our online services	84 Met	Maintain an average customer satisfaction score of at least 80			DCO	44
1.2d APG	Provide the public with access to personalized information by increasing the number of established <i>my Social Security</i> accounts	6.64 million new accounts Not Met	Increase the number of customers who sign up for <i>my Social Security</i> by 15% over FY 2014 (7.06 million new accounts)			DCO	45
1.2e APG NEW	Increase customer satisfaction with our services	84 satisfaction rating with online services 79% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services		84.5 satisfaction rating with online services 80% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services	85 satisfaction rating with online services 82% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services	DCO DCBFQM	46
1.2f BWM	Complete the budgeted number of retirement, survivors, and Medicare claims	5,327,221 Met	5,247,000	5,586,000	5,732,000	DCO	46

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
1.2g BWM	Achieve the target speed in answering National 800 Number calls	617 seconds (10 minutes, 17 seconds)	700 seconds (11 minutes, 40 seconds)	945 seconds (15 minutes, 45 seconds)	675 seconds (11 minutes, 15 seconds)	DCO	47
		Met					
1.2h BWM	Achieve the target busy rate for National 800 Number calls	7.5%	8%	9.5%	7.0%	DCO	48
		Met					

Strategic Objective 1.3: Partner with Other Agencies and Organizations to Improve Customers' Experience and Align with the Administration's One-Government Approach

Strategic Objective 1.3 Lead: DCO

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
1.3a	Minimize the average response time to deliver medical evidence to the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) for wounded warriors and veterans	Delivered medical evidence in 4.2 business days	Deliver medical evidence to the VA within an average of 5 business days	Continue to deliver medical evidence to the VA within an average of 5 business days	Continue to deliver medical evidence to the VA within an average of 5 business days	DCO	53
		Met					

Strategic Objective 1.4: Evaluate Our Physical Footprint to Incorporate Improved Service Options

Strategic Objective 1.4 Lead: DCBFQM

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
1.4a	Evaluate our physical footprint as described in our OMB-approved Real Property Cost Savings and Innovation Plan	Reduced our physical footprint by 1.34 million usable square feet Not Met	Reduce our physical footprint from our FY 2012 level by 1.86 million usable square feet			DCBFQM DCO DCDAR	56
1.4b NEW	Assess field and hearing office lease expirations and increase colocation of our field and hearing offices to reduce our physical footprint			Colocate at least 4 permanent remote site hearing offices with field offices	Colocate at least 7 permanent remote site hearing offices with field offices	DCO DCDAR	56

Strategic Goal 2: Strengthen the Integrity of Our Programs

Strategic Objective 2.1: Transform the Way We Record Earnings to Enhance Data Accuracy

Strategic Objective 2.1 Lead: DCS

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
2.1a	Improve the accuracy and timeliness of the earnings data used to calculate benefits	Implemented the redesigned software to process Forms W-2 within the Annual Wage Reporting system Met	Implement the redesigned functionality to process Forms W-2 within the Annual Wage Reporting system by 09/30/2015	Implement the redesigned functionality to process Forms W-2c (Corrections) within the Annual Wage Reporting system	Implement Annual Wage Reporting software to provide earnings data to the IRS earlier in the tax season	DCS	60

Strategic Objective 2.2: Protect the Public’s Data and Provide Secure Online Services

Strategic Objective 2.2 Lead: DCBFQM

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
2.2a	Enhance our security features and business processes to prevent and detect fraud	The fraud referral process was transferred to the newly established Office of Anti-Fraud Programs. We use Public Facing Integrity Review data to create and implement the routing transit number blocking process ¹	Increase <i>my Social Security</i> potential fraud referrals through the Public Facing Integrity Review system to the Office of Operations by 10% (10,295) (10,295 referrals)	Identify and investigate at least 500 claims presenting characteristics indicative of fraud	Identify and investigate at least 750 claims presenting characteristics indicative of fraud	DCBFQM	63
		Met					

Strategic Objective 2.3: Increase Payment Accuracy

Strategic Objective 2.3 Lead: DCRDP

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
2.3a APG	Reduce the percentage of improper payments made under the SSI program	Data available April 2016	No more than 6.2% of all payments made under the SSI program are improper payments (i.e., overpayments and underpayments)			DCRDP	69

¹ Due to the sensitivity of this information, we cannot include exact numbers.

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
2.3b	Maintain a high accuracy rate of payments made through the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program to minimize improper payments	Data available April 2016	99.8% (O/P)	99.8% (O/P)	99.8% (O/P)	DCRDP	70
		Data available April 2016	99.8% (U/P)	99.8% (U/P)	99.8% (U/P)		
2.3c APG NEW	Improve the integrity of the SSI program by ensuring that 95% of our payments are free of overpayment	Data available April 2016		95% accuracy rate	95% accuracy rate	DCRDP DCO	70
2.3d BWM	Complete the budgeted number of full medical continuing disability reviews (CDR)	799,013	790,000	850,000	1,100,000	DCO	70
		Met					
2.3e BWM	Complete the budgeted number of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) non-medical redeterminations	2,266,993	2,255,000	2,522,000	2,822,000	DCO	71
		Met					

Strategic Goal 3: Serve the Public through a Stronger, More Responsive Disability Program

Strategic Objective 3.1: Improve the Quality, Consistency, and Timeliness of Our Disability Decisions

Strategic Objective 3.1 Lead: DCRDP

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
3.1a	Ensure the quality of our decisions by achieving the disability determination services (DDS) net accuracy rate for initial disability decisions	98% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	DCO	76
		Met					
3.1b	Increase our ability to provide timely decisions by reducing the percentage of pending Appeals Council requests for review 365 days old or older	82%	80% of cases pending less than 365 days	81% of cases pending less than 365 days	82% of cases pending less than 365 days	DCDAR	76
		Met					
3.1c APG NEW	Improve customer service by reducing the wait time for a hearing decision			Decide 99% of the cases that begin the fiscal year at 430 days old or older	Decide 99% of the cases that begin the fiscal year at 365 days old or older	DCDAR DCO	77
3.1d BWM	Complete the budgeted number of initial disability claims	2,759,432	2,767,000	2,695,000	2,810,000	DCO	77
		Not Met					
3.1e BWM	Complete the budgeted number of disability reconsideration claims	723,485	739,000	702,000	715,000	DCO	78
		Not Met					

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
3.1f BWM	Complete the budgeted number of hearing requests	663,129	727,000	703,000	784,000	DCDAR	78
		Not Met					
3.1g BWM	Achieve the target number of initial disability claims pending	621,315	621,000			DCO	78
		Not Met					
3.1h BWM	Achieve the target number of disability reconsiderations pending	143,540	143,000			DCO	79
		Not Met					
3.1i BWM	Average processing time for initial disability claims	114 days	109 days	113 days	113 days	DCO	79
		Not Met					
3.1j BWM	Average processing time for reconsiderations ²	113 days			109 days	DCO	80
3.1k BWM	Average processing time for hearings decisions	480 days	470 days	540 days	555 days	DCDAR	80
		Not Met					
3.1l BWM	Achieve the budgeted goal for disability determination services (DDS) case production per workyear	307	313			DCO	81
		Not Met					

²We developed management information for Average Processing Time for Disability Reconsiderations in FY 2013. FY 2014 was the first full fiscal year for which data was available for this measure. Now that we have had the opportunity to analyze at least two years of actual data, this year we developed a performance target for FY 2017.

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
3.1m BWM	Achieve the budgeted goal for hearing case production per workyear	95	104			DCDAR	81
		Not Met					

Strategic Objective 3.2: Maximize Efficiencies throughout the Disability Program

Strategic Objective 3.2 Lead: DCS

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
3.2a	Improve the disability determination process by increasing the percentage of initial disability claims using electronically transmitted health records and medical evidence (Health IT)	6.1% (167,626 initial claims)	6% of processed initial disability claims with health IT medical evidence (164,820 initial claims)	8% of processed initial disability claims with electronically transmitted health records and medical evidence (Health IT) (222,000 initial claims)	11% of processed initial disability claims with electronically transmitted health records and medical evidence (Health IT) (308,000 initial claims)	DCS	84
		Met					

Strategic Objective 3.3: Enhance Employment Support Programs and Create New Opportunities for Returning Beneficiaries to Work

Strategic Objective 3.3 Lead: DCRDP

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
3.3a	Increase the number of beneficiaries returning to work by achieving the target number of Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income disability beneficiaries with Tickets assigned and in use, who work above a certain level	Data available April 2016	50,000 beneficiaries	55,000 beneficiaries	60,000 beneficiaries	DCRDP	88

Strategic Goal 4: Build a Model Workforce to Deliver Quality Service

Strategic Objective 4.1: Attract and Acquire a Talented and Diverse Workforce that Reflects the Public We Serve

Strategic Objective 4.1 Lead: DCHR

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
4.1a	Maintain the target veteran and disabled veteran new hire percentage to improve their representation in our workforce	39.32%	25.0% Veterans			DCHR	92
		Met					
		18.57%	17.5% Disabled Veterans				
		Met					

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
4.1b	Strengthen workforce diversity by maintaining the representation of employees with targeted disabilities	2%	2%	2%	2%	DCHR	93
		Met					

Strategic Objective 4.2: Strengthen the Competency, Agility, and Performance of Our Workforce to Align with the Needs of the Public

Strategic Objective 4.2 Lead: DCHR

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
4.2a	Strengthen workforce competence by improving our talent management index score	59%	Increase the talent management index score to 60%	Increase the talent management index score to 61%	Increase the talent management index score to 63%	DCHR	98
		Not Met					

Strategic Objective 4.3 Foster an Inclusive Culture that Promotes Employee Well-Being, Innovation, and Engagement

Strategic Objective 4.3 Lead: DCHR

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
4.3a	Become one of the Top 5 Best Places to Work among large agencies in the Federal Government	Top 10 Ranking	Achieve a Top 10 Ranking	Achieve a Top 5 Ranking	Achieve a Top 5 Ranking	DCHR	103
		Met					

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
4.3b	Increase workplace flexibilities by expanding telework opportunities for employees	13,514 employees participating in telework	Increase the number of employees participating in telework to 16,400 by the end of the fiscal year			DCHR	104
		Not Met					
4.3c NEW	Increase employee engagement as measured by the employee engagement index score	68%		69%	70%	DCHR	105

Strategic Objective 4.4: Enhance Planning and Alignment of Human Resources to Address Current and Future Public Service Needs

Strategic Objective 4.4 Lead: DCHR

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
4.4a	Lay the foundation for building a 21st century workforce by meeting or exceeding targeted Human Resources measures	83%	Achieve 75% of the human capital metrics	Achieve 78% of the human capital metrics	Achieve 80% of the human capital metrics	DCHR	109
		Met					

Strategic Goal 5: Ensure Reliable, Secure, and Efficient Information Technology Services

Strategic Objective 5.1: Maintain System Performance and the Continuity of Information Technology Services

Strategic Objective 5.1 Lead: DCS

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
5.1a	Provide uninterrupted access to our systems during scheduled times of operation	99.96% availability Met	99.5% availability	99.5% availability	99.5% availability	DCS	112

Strategic Objective 5.2: Enhance and Execute Plans to Modernize Our Systems

Strategic Objective 5.2 Lead: DCS

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
5.2a	Enhance systems performance and reliability by upgrading the telecommunications infrastructure in our offices	Refreshed 100% of our network connection devices Met	Refresh 50% of our network connection devices by September 30, 2015			DCS	115
5.2b NEW	Improve customer service by using information technology to provide new online services to users of <i>my Social Security</i>			Implement new fraud and authentication capabilities to enable customers to obtain replacement Social Security Cards securely through the <i>my Social Security</i> portal	Modernize the <i>my Social Security</i> portal framework to speed the integration of service offerings and to better group available functions together to focus on targeted user groups	DCS	116

Strategic Objective 5.3: Incorporate Innovative Advances in Service Delivery

Strategic Objective 5.3 Lead: DCS

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
5.3a	Enhance our IT infrastructure by implementing innovative systems accessibility and performance capabilities	Reduced our open systems infrastructure size to 1,000 servers	Reduce open systems infrastructure size from 1,500 servers to 1,000 servers by September 2015	Deploy new applications with a modern look and feel, accessible from the web or over mobile devices	Develop and implement our plan (strategy, policy, business model, and security requirements) for the establishment of an agency cloud service	DCS	119
		Met					
5.3b	Explore the use of emerging technologies by establishing a testing lab to promote research and development of innovative technology solutions that provide more effective and flexible ways for the public to conduct business with us online and for our employees to complete their work	Conducted three new research projects	Conduct three new research projects in emerging technologies such as predictive analytics, cloud, shared services, self-help personal computers, real-time chat, digital analytics, and cognitive computing by September 30, 2015			DCS	120
		Met					

Strategic Objective 5.4: Continuously Strengthen Our Cyber Security Program

Strategic Objective 5.4 Lead: DCS

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Performance Measure		FY 2015 Performance	FY 2015 Target	FY 2016 Target	FY 2017 Target	Responsible Official	Page
5.4a	Provide secure and effective services to the public by improving cyber security performance	<p>Hardware Asset Management – result 100%</p> <p>Software Asset Management – result 100%</p> <p>Vulnerability and Weakness Management – result 100%</p> <p>Unprivileged Network Users – result 86%</p> <p>Privileged Network Users – result 99%</p> <p>Anti-Phishing Defense – result 100%</p> <p>Malware Defense – result 100%</p> <p>Blended Defense – result 100%</p>	<p>Meet the performance requirements of the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Network Security Compliance and Assurance Program and the Cybersecurity Cross-Agency Priority Goals</p>	<p>Achieve an average of 97% for the following Cyber Security Cross-Agency Priority Goals:</p> <p>Anti-phishing defense; Malware defense; Blended defense (anti-phishing and malware defense measures); Hardware asset management; Software asset management; and Vulnerability and weakness management</p>	<p>Achieve an average of 99% for the following Cyber Security Cross-Agency Priority Goals:</p> <p>Anti-phishing defense; Malware defense; Blended defense (anti-phishing and malware defense measures); Hardware asset management; Software asset management; and Vulnerability and weakness management</p>	DCS	123
		Met					

Agency Plans and Performance

Setting goals and measuring our achievements are vital to our success. This annual performance report reflects the goals, objectives, and strategies defined in our [Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014 – 2018](#).

We organized this section by our five strategic goals, and the strategic objectives and strategies supporting each goal. The key initiatives under each strategic objective support our strategic goals, objectives, and strategies. We evaluate our performance results by the performance measures and targets following each strategic objective.

We based our FY 2017 plans on full funding of the FY 2017 President’s Budget.

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver Innovative, Quality Services

We have a long history of exemplary customer service marked by high customer satisfaction. Our high level of customer satisfaction is, in part, the result of our success using technology to improve and expand the services we offer the American public.

We serve the public through multiple channels: in person, telephone, online, and by mail. In FY 2015, we assisted about 41 million field office visitors, handled nearly 37 million calls through our National 800 Number and 60 million calls in our field offices, registered over 6.64 million users for [my Social Security](#), processed over 87 million online transactions, and mailed nearly 350 million notices.

Technology will not replace our employees or in-person service for customers who require or prefer more personalized service. Our goal is to provide high quality and timely services while offering customers the convenience of interacting with us from anywhere. At the same time, we will continue providing telephone and field office options for situations requiring personalized service.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Develop and Increase the Use of Self-Service Options

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Over the past few decades, advances in technology have revolutionized the business world, changing the pace of our business processes and increasing our ability to offer innovative service options. In 2007, less than 10 percent of claims were filed online – in FY 2015, more than 54 percent of claims were filed online.

The public expects to complete more business online, and we continue meeting those expectations with new and improved technologies. As we increase the number and types of self-service solutions, paperless processes, and electronic workflows, we will improve our overall efficiency. As we expand our online options, we will ensure our customers’ information remains secure.

We are working to increase customer satisfaction by expanding personalized self-service delivery options, which enable customers to access our services at their convenience. We will continue meeting our customers’ needs by providing them with choices, offering service online, in person, or by telephone.

Strategies

- Expand personal services available under [my 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-help personal computers 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.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to develop and increase our self-service options (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Launched Social Security Benefit Statement (i1099) online, reducing mail requests by more than 60 percent;
- Streamlined the online disability application, eliminating 25 duplicate data fields;
- Replaced self-help personal computers with virtual desktop infrastructure and expanded service to 300 new offices, bringing the total 1,684 computers in 790 offices;
- Released the online Social Security Number Replacement Card application in November 2015;
- Continued [my Social Security](#) marketing campaign; and
- Made the following progress on our Social Security Express initiatives:
 - Installed 7 customer service stations and answered 2,102 video calls to assist customer service station users in real time;
 - About 135,000 iClaims were filed using self-help personal computers;
 - Partnered with 93 additional sites to add desktop icons, bringing our total to 261 partner sites with desktop icons; and
 - Designed a website so that third-party sites can download the desktop icon directly, minimizing user error and streamlining the process.

Next Steps

- Enhance [our website](#) with responsive web design to support access by personal computer, mobile devices, and tablets;
- Expand i1099 application to include an option for beneficiaries to opt out of mailed Social Security Benefit Statements and add downloadable functionality; and
- Continue planning, analysis, and development of new applications to put behind the [my Social Security](#) portal, including:
 - Message center functionality, which will enable secure communications online; and
 - SMART Claim application, which will enable customers to file for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits at the same time.

Risks and External Factors

In addition to general privacy, legal, and budget concerns, the following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to develop and increase the use of self-service options:

- Demand for new technologies and online services is greater than our ability to provide them;
- Implementing stronger fraud prevention protocols for [my Social Security](#) account authentication, as called for in Executive Order 13681, could result in increased in-person visits to field offices;
- Adequate training to ensure employees are comfortable with new technologies; and
- Implementation problems with new technologies.

Key Initiatives

Expanding Online Access through Social Security Express

Customers without access to a computer might think they cannot use our online services, but our new service options expand access to our online services. Our Social Security Express initiative provides access to our online services, including [my Social Security](#), in our field offices and in external locations. Using these services helps minimize wait times for visitors who must complete their business with us in person.

Currently, we have three major Social Security Express projects underway:

- **Self-help personal computers** are available in 790 offices nationwide. These computers allow our customers to access our online services using computers inside our offices, enabling customers to complete some transactions without waiting to see a representative.

In FY 2014, we purchased a new virtual desktop infrastructure technology, which enables us to troubleshoot these computers remotely. The new technology reduces the amount of staff time required to maintain our current self-help personal computers.

In FY 2015, we added 150 locations. We will continue expanding the program in FY 2016 and FY 2017, adding new locations and additional equipment as needs are defined.

- **Social Security Express Desktop Icons** provide a direct link from a public computer or website to most of the agency's online services. These icons are available to external partner sites, such as libraries and senior centers. Users can access the same services that are available through the self-help personal computers in our field offices. If customers have questions or require assistance accessing online services through the icon links, they can call our National 800 Number or visit a field office for help completing their tasks.

In FY 2015, we designed a process allowing partner sites to download the desktop icon directly to a PC or website and launched the site nationally on May 15, 2015. The installation process is now more efficient, and we have added 134 new partners. Visits to Social Security Express through our icons more than tripled from 19,343 visits in FY 2014 to 61,470 visits in FY 2015.

- **Customer service stations** are stand-alone units, containing a computer with a touch screen monitor and video access, enabling the user to have real-time contact with a representative, if needed. The unit also contains the following features:
 - A scanner, enabling customers to scan and upload identification documents (up to passport size);
 - A printer, enabling customers to print verification letters. (If the customer does not take the document within 15 seconds, the printer retracts the document and stores it for employees to destroy);
 - A signature tablet, enabling customers to write confidential information to video agents rather than speaking it out loud; and
 - A pressure sensitive floor mat that begins the computer session when a person steps on it. If the customer steps away without personally ending the session, the system will begin a 10-second countdown and end the session automatically.



Enhancing Delivery Options for the Replacement Social Security Benefit Statement

In FY 2014, our i1099 online application only allowed beneficiaries to request a mailed copy of their SSA-1099 or SSA-1042s tax form, or Social Security Benefit Statement. Beginning in February 2015, people who receive benefits and have a **my Social Security** account can view, print, and save their Social Security Benefit Statement immediately. In FY 2015, beneficiaries accessed their statements online more than 624,000 times, reducing mail requests by more than 60 percent.

Additional planned features include a downloadable Social Security Benefit Statement and the ability for users to opt out of having their statements delivered by mail.

Leveraging **my Social Security**

To date, we have over 45,000 web pages, 20 online services, information in 18 languages, and a presence on several social media sites. We host over 12 million visits to our website each month. Our customers are demanding more online services, and we are responding as quickly as possible, while ensuring **my Social Security** remains secure and easy to use.



Current features enable Social Security disability and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries to access their benefit verification letters, payment histories, and earnings records instantly. Beneficiaries can also change their addresses and direct deposit information online. Since it launched in 2012, **my Social Security** has more than 21 million registered users and consistently ranks as one of the top 10 in customer satisfaction for all federal websites.

Work is now underway on a new feature called SMART Claim that will allow our customers to file a claim for retirement, disability, Medicare, and Supplemental Security Income benefits using a single application within **my Social Security** by the end of FY 2016.

Additional features planned for **my Social Security** and SMART Claim in FY 2015 and into FY 2016 include:

- Social Security number replacement card requests;
- New secure customer engagement tools, including enhancements to click-to-callback, dynamic help assistance, a secure message center, and alerts and notifications;
- An alternate path allowing customers to complete their applications online, if they are unable to register for or do not have a **my Social Security** account;
- Online continuing disability review notification and response options for beneficiaries; and
- A claims appeal path.

We are planning additional enhancements that will allow users to view certain notices online in FY 2017.

Educating the Public about Our Programs

Ensuring the public understands our programs is part of our social responsibility. Our national marketing campaign uses a wide variety of media channels to tell the public how to access and use our programs. As more of our customers move toward a preference and expectation for online services, we are focusing significant resources on promoting our online options.

We promote our online services through public service announcements on television, radio, billboards, bus posters, and displays in airport terminals, as well as through social media. We engage with the public on our Facebook page, responding to questions, and promoting our services. Over the next several years, we will continue expanding our social media efforts using search engine marketing, paid Facebook advertising, and blogs promoting our online service options.

We encourage people to create **my Social Security** accounts through a variety of communications channels, including our mailed *Social Security Statements*. Additionally, our local offices find creative and cost-effective ways to inform the community about the advantages of using our secure online services.

We also work with a broad network of national organizations, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders to promote our online services. Additionally, we produce webinars and webcasts to increase our customers' awareness of our online services and the benefits of using these services.

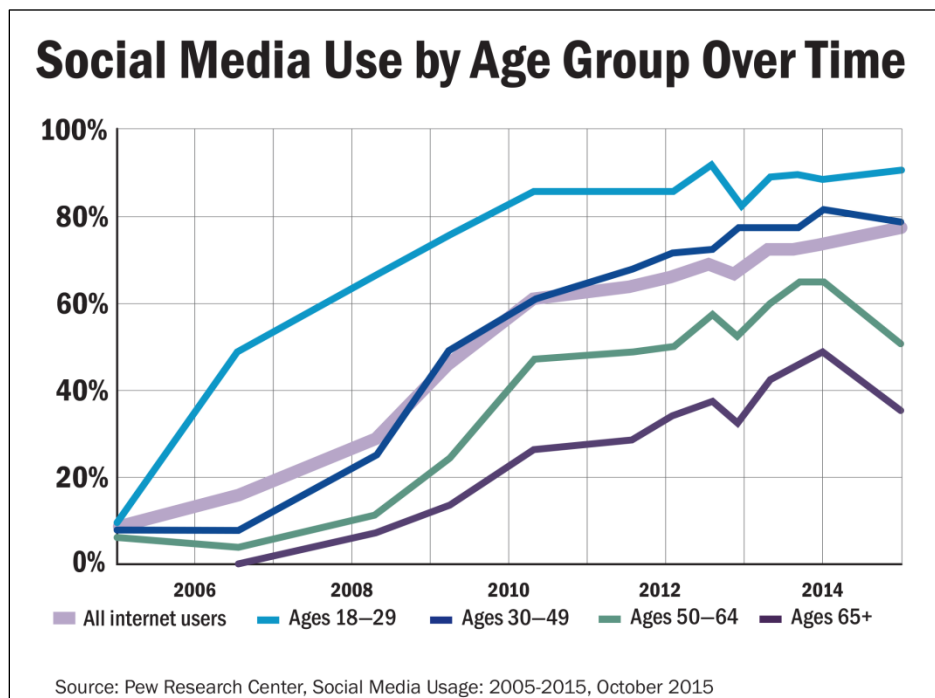
Since **my Social Security** provides quick access to documents used in tax preparation, we focused our FY 2015 promotional efforts on tax preparers. We partnered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to include **my Social Security** information in its publications and on its website. We also participated in IRS tax forums. We also worked with TaxACT, a tax preparation software company to provide information to its six million customers. TaxACT plans to place **my Social Security** banner ads and other content throughout its website this year. TaxACT is also working with us to incorporate **my Social Security** into its tax preparation software next year.

Together with the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement, the American Savings Education Council, and America Saves, we launched the Campaign for a Secure Retirement. The campaign ran from late February 2015 through the conclusion of National *my Social Security* week in July 2015. This nationwide campaign encouraged retirement planning and saving and promoted the online *Social Security Statement* as an important retirement planning tool.

We continued to build relationships with other organizations throughout FY 2015. We participated in approximately 40 national conferences, and we will continue to coordinate *my Social Security* signup events. In the first half of FY 2015, we participated in 981 signup events with over 116,072 individuals attending. These events assisted the public in creating 16,781 *my Social Security* accounts.

As we move into FY 2016 and FY 2017, we will continue marketing our online services. Other plans include:

- Launching an employee education program in FY 2016, focusing on preparing and providing employees with the information and tools they need to communicate our messages;
- Communicating key information related to the disability solvency trust fund issue;
- Simplifying the *Social Security Statement* in FY 2016; and
- Launching the simplified *Social Security Statement* in FY 2017.



Enhancing Online Appeals

Since 2007, claimants or their representatives have been able to request a reconsideration or hearing for a denied disability claim online. In FY 2015, we improved the existing application to simplify the user experience and enable users to complete the full application online. We also streamlined the application process by reducing redundant keying and providing clearer navigation.

Users can now submit additional forms and documents online. These changes allow users to submit a complete hearing request online, making the process more efficient.

We will work to expand online appeals in FY 2016 and FY 2017 to allow users to request an appeal on a nonmedical claim.

Implementing Online Social Security Number Replacement Card Application

Replacing Social Security number cards is one of our most requested services. In FY 2015, we issued 11 million replacement cards in field offices and Social Security card centers across the country.

In FY 2014, we began work to enable certain *my Social Security* users to apply online for a replacement Social Security number card. We expect to launch this new feature to select states in FY 2016, enabling users to avoid travel time, wait time, and in-person interviews. In FY 2017, we will continue to expand to additional states.

The application will provide users with a secure way to request replacement Social Security number cards online and will allow our employees more time to process other workloads.



Appeal Online

If you recently applied for Social Security or Supplemental Security Income disability benefits and were denied for medical reasons, you can file an appeal online.

www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/appeal



Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 1.1

1.1a APG: Improve access to our services by increasing the number of citizens who complete their business with us online (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	13.5 million	16.0 million	21.8 million	46.3 million	70.8 million	87 million		
Target					Increase the number of citizens completing business online by 10% over FY 2013 (50.9 million transactions)	Increase the number of citizens completing business online by 10% over FY 2014 (77.8 million transactions)		
Target Met					Met	Met		

Results: We exceeded our target in FY 2015, processing 87 million online transactions. We increased the number of citizens completing their business online by 23 percent over FY 2014.

Data Definition: Online services usage for *my Social Security* suite, *my Social Security* Help Desk-Call Back, Pre-entitlement – Informational Services (excludes visits to Social Security Online, Frequently Asked Questions, and Field Office Locator), Entitlement – Claims & Appeals, and Post Entitlement.

Data Source: [Social Security, Office of Electronic Services and Technology Intranet site: eServices Statistics](#)

1.1b APG NEW: Improve customer service and convenience by increasing online transactions by 25 million each year (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	13.5 million	16.0 million	21.8 million	46.3 million	70.8 million	87 million		
Target							112 million transactions	137 million transactions
Target Met								

Data Definition: Online services usage for *my Social Security* suite, *my Social Security* Help Desk-Call Back, Pre-entitlement – Informational Services (excludes visits to Social Security Online, Frequently Asked Questions, and Field Office Locator), Entitlement – Initial Claims and Supporting Info, and Post Entitlement.

Data Source: [Social Security, Office of Electronic Services and Technology](#)

Strategic Objective 1.2: Enhance the Customer Experience by Completing Customers' Business at the First Point of Contact

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Whether customers call, visit us in person, or use our website, they expect to get accurate information and quickly complete their business without the need to recontact us. As more customers expect to complete their business online or through other self-service channels, we are focusing on improved call routing, video service delivery, and ongoing employee training to ensure we complete transactions efficiently and accurately at the first point of contact.

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.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to help ensure our customers can complete their business during their first contact with us (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Completed the nationwide rollout of the Social Security Electronic Remittance System in December 2014;
- Installed 122 of the 133 desktop video units we purchased in FY 2014 in third-party locations;
- Implemented dynamic help and click-to-call back customer service features within the *my Social Security* portal; and
- Implemented a proof of concept to determine if we can use less expensive hardware to provide video service.

Next Steps

- Continue planning and analysis for customer engagement tools for click-to-chat, click-to-video chat, screen sharing, secure messaging, and online notices within the *my Social Security* portal;
- Continue the planning and analysis phase of SMART claim, allowing customers to apply for all benefits with a single application, including Supplemental Security Income; and
- Expand video service delivery to new locations.

Risks and External Factors

In addition to general privacy, legal, and budget concerns, the following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to enhance the customer experience by completing customers' business at the first point of contact:

- Upgrading bandwidth for video connections is expensive and time consuming; and
- Hardware for video service delivery is expensive.

Key Initiatives

Establishing the Social Security Electronic Remittance System

In early FY 2015, we launched the Social Security Electronic Remittance System nationwide. Previously, customers could only pay for preapproved standard service fees, such as those for copying electronic or paper folders, by check or money order. Our new electronic remittance system also enables payment by credit and debit card. The credit card machines used by the system are equipped with the latest chip-and-PIN technology. Because we must receive payment before we can complete the customer's request, the new system allows us to process transactions immediately. Customers can request service, make payment, and receive service promptly in cases where the files are readily accessible.

In a later phase of this project, we plan to handle other types of collections through this system.

Expanding Video Service Delivery

Some of our customers live in areas with limited public transportation and have difficulty getting to our field offices. Video service delivery allows us to provide services to our customers at convenient third-party sites, such as hospitals, libraries, community centers, American Indian tribal centers, and homeless shelters. Video services reduce time and costs for traveling to remote locations.

To support a projected increase in disability determination services (DDS) disability hearing workloads (i.e., appeals of continuing disability review decisions), we are relocating 35 existing video units to offices where there is a greater need. In FY 2015, we installed 122 of the 133 desktop units that we purchased in FY 2014. The units will increase our capacity for conducting video hearings, expand video remote interpreting services, and provide video support for other work efforts. In FY 2016, we will explore more cost-efficient technology.

Providing Real-Time Assistance to Online Users

Delivering world-class customer service to all of our customers, including our online users, is one of our highest priorities. In May 2014, we celebrated 20 years of providing online services.

Our newest service addition to *my Social Security* is a suite of online information and help tools. In FY 2015, we launched a new dynamic help tool and an enhanced click-to-call back option.



- **Dynamic help** presents users with three responses, based on the task the user is performing when he or she requests help. If the user still has questions, he or she can type the question into a specialized search feature that will return related information.
- If the user selects the **call back option**, our enhanced feature displays the user's phone number and allows the user to submit that number or provide an alternate. The user also receives an approximate call back time.

In FY 2016, we plan to release our new secure Message Center, enabling *my Social Security* users to receive alerts, messages, and agency announcements. Later enhancements will enable users to contact us directly through the Message Center.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 1.2

1.2a APG: Deliver a world-class customer experience by expanding the use of video technology to hold hearings (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	20.3%	20.1%	22.8%	26.1%	28%	27%		
Target					28% of hearings conducted by video	30% of hearings conducted by video		
Target Met					Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our target for FY 2015. Out of 563,893 hearings, we held 152,880 of those hearings by video.

Data Definition: The percentage of total hearings held during the fiscal year that were video hearings. We derived the percentage by dividing the total number of video hearings held during the fiscal year by the total number of hearings held during the fiscal year.

Data Source: Case Processing Management System

1.2b: Expand the services available under **my Social Security** by implementing an online Social Security Number Replacement Card application

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	Project timeline was adjusted to accommodate pending changes to regulations and contract	The online Social Security Number Replacement Card application was released in November 2015		
Target	Complete planning and analysis for implementing an online Social Security Number Replacement Card application	Complete development and begin testing of the online Social Security Number Replacement Card application		
Target Met	Not Met	Met		

Results: We expanded services available under **my Social Security** by releasing the online Social Security Number Replacement Card application in November 2015. Additionally, we implemented an online Medicare Replacement Card application. We released this application in May 2015.

Data Definition: Completion of the planning and analysis portion of the project as defined by the System Development Lifecycle on the Project Resource Guide Intranet website.

Data Source: Completed Project Scope Agreement and System Development Plan

1.2c: Maintain high customer satisfaction with our online services

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	81	81	82	82	83	84		
Target					Maintain an average customer satisfaction score of at least 80	Maintain an average customer satisfaction score of at least 80		
Target Met					Met	Met		

Results: One of our highest priorities is delivering world-class customer service to all of our customers, including our online users. We exceeded our target for FY 2015. A score of 80 or higher is considered to be the threshold for excellence.

Data Definition: Average ForeSee Customer Satisfaction scores for the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) online services. Note that ForeSee Customer Satisfaction reports their data quarterly, based upon the calendar year. For this measure to be consistent with the fiscal year, we deviate from the ForeSee Customer Satisfaction scores time-period and use the fiscal year quarters. As a result, there may be some deviation from ForeSee Customer Satisfaction scores published documents and the measure reported here.

Data Source: Table entitled “SSA Average Satisfaction Score” found on the [Office of Electronic Services and Technology Intranet site](#)

1.2d APG: Provide the public with access to personalized information by increasing the number of established *my Social Security* accounts (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance				6.32 million new accounts	6.14 million new accounts	6.64 million new accounts		
Target					Increase the number of customers who sign up for <i>my Social Security</i> by 15% over FY 2013 (7.27 million new accounts)	Increase the number of customers who sign up for <i>my Social Security</i> by 15% over FY 2014 (7.06 million new accounts)		
Target Met					Not Met	Not Met		

Results: In FY 2015, we increased the number of customers who signed up for *my Social Security* by 8.14 percent over FY 2014. We did not meet our goal.

Data Definition: The target is calculated as a percentage increase over the previous year’s actual results. Thus, the FY 2015 target was calculated by taking the FY 2014 actual registrations (6.14 million) and increasing it by 15%, resulting in a target of 7.06 million new accounts.

Data Source: Social Security Administration, Office of Electronic Services and Technology, Division of Authentication

1.2e APG NEW: Increase customer satisfaction with our services (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	81 satisfaction rating with online services 78% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services	81 satisfaction rating with online services 81% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services	82 satisfaction rating with online services 81% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services	82 satisfaction rating with online services 80% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services	83 satisfaction rating with online services Data is not available for office and telephone services	84 satisfaction rating with online services 79% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services		
Target							84.5 satisfaction rating with online services 80% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services	85 satisfaction rating with online services 82% satisfaction rating for office and telephone services
Target Met								

Data Definition: Online services satisfaction rating comes from ForeSee’s e-Government Report Card. The satisfaction rating is calculated by averaging the scores of the following online services: SSA Main Website, iClaim, iClaim Disability, Retirement Estimator, iAppeals, Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plans, Business Services Online, and [my Social Security](#). The average is weighted based on the number of surveys completed on each of the above online services.

For office and telephone services, we define “satisfaction” as an overall service rating of excellent, very good, or good (E/VG/G) on a six-point scale: excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, or very poor. We determine the percent “satisfied” by dividing the number of responders who rate overall service as E/VG/G by the total number of responders providing a rating. We weight the overall satisfaction rate for both office and telephone services to reflect the annual population of customers served through that type of service. We then combine the weighted results for the individual surveys to compute the overall customer satisfaction rate.

Data Source: Social Security Administration, Office of Electronic Services and Technology and Office of Quality Review

1.2f: Complete the budgeted number of retirement, survivors, and Medicare claims (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	4,700,990 ¹	4,877,955	5,001,092	5,006,855 ¹	5,023,533 ¹	5,327,221		
Target	4,718,000 (4,658,124 rec'd)	4,590,000	4,918,000	5,269,000 (4,952,591 rec'd)	5,131,000 (4,990,259 rec'd)	5,247,000	5,586,000	5,732,000
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: We met our FY 2015 target, completing 5,327,221 retirement, survivors, and Medicare claims.

Data Definition: The number of retirement, survivors, and Medicare claims completed in the current fiscal year.

Data Source: Social Security Administration's Cost Analysis System

1.2g: Achieve the target speed in answering National 800 Number calls (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	203 seconds (3 minutes, 23 seconds)	180 seconds (3 minutes)	294 seconds (4 minutes, 54 seconds)	617 seconds (10 minutes, 17 seconds)	1,323 seconds (22 minutes, 3 seconds)	617 seconds (10 minutes, 17 seconds)		
Target	269 seconds (4 minutes, 29 seconds)	267 seconds (4 minutes, 27 seconds)	285 seconds (4 minutes, 45 seconds)	535 seconds (8 minutes, 55 seconds)	1,020 seconds (17 minutes)	700 seconds (11 minutes, 40 seconds)	945 seconds (15 minutes, 45 seconds)	675 seconds (11 minutes, 15 seconds)
Target Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met		

Results: We met our FY 2015 target by answering our National 800 Number calls one minute, 23 seconds quicker than our target speed.

Data Definition: We calculate the speed of answering by dividing the wait time of all National 800 Number calls answered by agents by the number of all National 800 Number calls answered by agents in the fiscal year. Wait time begins from the time we transfer the caller to the agent queue (waiting for an agent) and continues until an agent answers the call.

Data Source: Data generated by Cisco Intelligent Contact Management system

¹ Performance results are based on actual receipts because actual receipts were lower than the target.

1.2h: Achieve the target busy rate for National 800 calls (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	5.0%	3.0%	5.0%	11.9%	13.5%	7.5%		
Target	8.0%	6.0%	6.0%	16.0%	14%	8%	9.5%	7.0%
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: In FY 2015, our busy rate for National 800 calls was below that of our target of 8 percent. We exceeded our target.

Data Definition: We calculate the agent busy rate as the number of National 800 Number busy messages divided by the number of National 800 Number calls requesting agent service in the fiscal year. The caller receives a busy message when the number of calls offered exceeds the number of telephone lines available or when the agent queue has reached its maximum capacity of waiting calls.

Data Source: Data generated by Cisco Intelligent Contact Management system

Strategic Objective 1.3: Partner with Other Agencies and Organizations to Improve Customers' Experience and Align with the Administration's One-Government Approach

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Many people seeking benefits from us also interact with other agencies and private organizations. By partnering with other agencies, community-based organizations, tribal governments, and the private sector, we can improve our customers' experiences. We can learn from each other, share data, and develop processes that help our customers access services more quickly and easily.

Strategies

- Implement Social Security Express to provide service using self-service customer service stations 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 Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to improve processes for veterans and service members; and
- Improve information sharing among other government agencies for records, data, and other information.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to improve customers' experience through partnerships with other agencies (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Installed three additional customer service stations in the New York and Philadelphia regions, bringing the total to seven;
- Completed 4,274 transactions on our Customer Service Stations (CSS), including answering 2,102 video calls to assist customers in real time;
- Partnered with over 50 community locations to provide video service delivery; and
- Partnered with organizations affiliated with the VA and Health and Human Services to expand our Social Security Express Projects;
- Partnered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to promote each other's online services. The IRS added the SSA Express icon link to 100 of its kiosks in 37 locations across the country; and
- Partnered with the Alaska Online with Libraries to provide 125 video locations across remote Alaska, areas to reduce travel time for claimants and representatives attending hearings before an administrative law judge.

Next Steps

- Evaluate the customer service station project and, if successful, obtain agreements with additional third-party sites for installation;
- Issue additional desktop icons to local government and private organizations;
- Partner with additional veterans organizations to provide access to our online services;
- Expand data exchanges with the VA and DoD;
- Determine system requirements to exchange information with the VA to receive medical information quicker;
- Increase federal data exchange partnerships from 18 federal agencies to 22 federal agencies;
- Develop and publish the types of data commonly shared among federal agencies; and
- Add links to the IRS web site on our self-help personal computers in up to 16 pilot locations.

Risks and External Factors

In addition to general privacy, legal, and budget concerns, the following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to partner with other agencies and organizations to improve our customers' experience and align with the Administration's one-government approach:

- The DoD and VA have their own mission-critical work, priorities, and resource limitations;
- Lack of buy-in from potential partners; and
- Problems with new technologies.

Key Initiatives

Expanding Our Partnerships with External Organizations

Our Social Security Express initiative currently includes two self-service options that allow the public to complete their business from external partner locations (local, state, or Federal Government agencies such as the VA or the Department of Housing and Urban Development). Those self-service options are:

- A Social Security Express icon installed on the partner sites' desktop computers, enabling access to our online services; and
- A customer service station, containing a desktop computer and a printer, offering limited online services and video assistance from one of our employees.

In FY 2013, we launched the program, and 25 partner sites downloaded the Social Security Express icon to the desktops of their public computers. In FY 2014, we expanded our partnership to 168 sites. We partnered with 93 additional sites in FY 2015. In total, 261 partner sites have installed the Social Security Express icon.

In FY 2014, we installed one customer service station in a field office as a proof of concept and implemented three additional customer service stations in three external partner sites. In FY 2015, we added three additional customer service stations, bringing the total to seven.

The customer service stations allow us to offer our services in locations other than field offices, providing an additional vehicle for service delivery to our customers and reducing foot traffic in our field offices. We will evaluate usage levels and customer satisfaction from our proof of concept. If the proof of concept is successful, we will make modifications based on customer feedback and proceed with a pilot.

We also have partnerships with over 50 community locations to provide video service delivery. We plan to identify new video service delivery sites in FY 2016 focused on serving the Native American population, Wounded Warriors, veterans, and people who are disabled.

Launching a Federal Data Exchange Community of Practice

We initiated and now lead the Federal Data Exchange Community of Practice, facilitating records, data, and other information exchanges across federal agencies. Our collaborative efforts will help build a larger knowledge base, find solutions for data exchange challenges, identify cross-organizational solutions, prioritize and resolve problems, harmonize policy and processes where possible, share best practices, and build a network of federal data exchange partners.

In FY 2015, we developed a list of the most common types of data regularly shared among federal agencies and the best sources for each type. We plan to share the list through the Federal Data Exchange Community of Practice in FY 2016. We created a site on MAX.gov, hosted by OMB, to share documents, agendas, presentations, and contact lists. Our site has a 94 percent enrollment rate. In FY 2015, we added 11 new agencies to the group, expanding the network by 69 percent. In FY 2016, we will develop a list of prioritized activities and objectives. We plan to implement at least two of those prioritized activities in FY 2017.

Establishing a State Data Exchange Community of Excellence

Since Congress passed the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the Administration has led efforts to standardize public health program eligibility policies, data use, and information technology tools. The standardization will streamline states' public health business processes, improve service delivery, and enhance data accuracy.

In FY 2015, we established a public-private partnership called the State Data Exchange Community of Excellence whose goal is to advance the Administration's one-government approach. The State Data Exchange Community of Excellence will include federal, state, and private stakeholders, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration of Children and Families, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Services, the American Public Health Services Administration, and Governor-appointed human service administrators. We are finalizing a tri-agency agreement with Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture to share our data through a hub that will help states determine a person's eligibility for certain benefits.

In FY 2016, we will work with federal agencies and the American Public Health Services Association to survey and evaluate data exchange needs in each state. We will also help to develop a prioritized list of activities for the State Data Exchange of Excellence. We plan to implement at least two of those activities in FY 2017.

Expanding the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record

In April 2009, the DoD and VA launched the [Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record](#) initiative to create a unified lifetime electronic health record for members of the Armed Services. We are working closely with both agencies to ensure we address service members' and veterans' needs as seamlessly as possible when applying for Social Security benefits by fully automating access to medical records.

In FY 2015, we worked with the DoD and VA to:

- Enhance the clinical content available for health information technology (IT) exchange;
- Implemented eAuthorization, an electronic signature on our Authorization to Disclose Information, Form SSA-827, with all health IT partners; and
- Pilot a health IT exchange.

The health IT exchange will provide our veterans, service members, and their families with a high level of customer service and will enable greater decision support for examiners, thereby improving the overall case processing time. The national rollout plan is scheduled for implementation in FY 2016 in collaboration with the DoD.

Strengthening the Social Security Number Application Process

Enumeration is our process of assigning Social Security numbers and issuing Social Security cards. Each year we receive approximately 16 million applications for original and replacement Social Security cards. Our employees use the Social Security number application process, a web-based system, to record information and evidence submitted with a Social Security number application. This system is available in all field offices (including Social Security card centers) and Foreign Service posts. It also enables employees to correct individuals' Social Security number records.

As resources permit, we will develop and implement the following enhancements to help us enforce enumeration policy:

- Continue to partner with other Federal agencies to ensure the immigration systems and forms we use are up-to-date and in line with policy;
- Increase Social Security number integrity by improving citizenship documentation when appropriate; and
- Enhance policy and procedure enforcement.

These enhancements ensure accuracy in our Social Security number records, which in turn enables us to make proper payments. Further, in line with the Administration's one-government approach, we partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State to enumerate noncitizens accurately and consistently.

In FY 2015, we will provide additional processing statistics to help track our performance and improve our enumeration workload. In FY 2016, we plan to expand the Social Security number application process to allow for processing under special circumstances or in emergencies.

In FY 2017, we will provide support and updates to the system as needed, based on discussions we have with the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State. Additionally, we will continue to request enhancements to help ensure the system aligns with policy changes. We will provide faster application processing and stronger information security by enabling Foreign Service Posts to transfer applications electronically. Additionally, we will ensure the system continues to align with policy changes.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 1.3

1.3a: Minimize the average response time to deliver medical evidence to the VA for wounded warriors and veterans

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	9.7 days	7.3 days	5.6 days	7.2 days	5.9 days	4.2 business days		
Target					Deliver medical evidence to the VA within an average of 5 days	Deliver medical evidence to the VA within an average of 5 business days	Deliver medical evidence to the VA within an average of 5 business days	Deliver medical evidence to the VA within an average of 5 business days
Target Met					Not Met	Met		

Results: We exceeded our FY 2015 target by delivering medical evidence to the VA within an average of 4.2 days.

Data Definition: We currently track requests received from the VA for medical evidence. We also track how long it takes us to respond to the request.

Data Source: Office of Operations

Strategic Objective 1.4: Evaluate Our Physical Footprint to Incorporate Improved Service Options

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Our facility maintenance costs continue to increase despite staff losses. We are concerned about the high upfront costs for facilities and associated services (e.g., rent, utilities, security guard services), especially as more cost-effective and reliable alternatives to in-person service exist. As building maintenance costs continue to increase and customer preferences move to electronic service channels, we are reassessing our facility needs, while still ensuring that we have appropriate levels of in-person service options available.

We are fully committed – now and in the future – to keeping a field office structure providing in-person service for those customers who need or prefer it. Additionally, as technology drives the realignment of our physical footprint, we see opportunities to scale back and colocate some large brick-and-mortar facilities.

Strategies

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

Progress Update

We took the following steps in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to evaluate our physical footprint to incorporate improved service options:

- Reduced our usable square feet by 1.34 million from our FY 2012 level.

Next Steps

- Assess 100 percent of all field office and hearing office new lease actions for possible colocation opportunities;
- Create shared services-claimant only video rooms in field offices to increase hearing capacity without increasing the footprint;
- Continue building judge only video rooms in existing hearing offices to increase hearing capacity without the need to build additional hearing rooms; and
- Increase the number of colocations between hearing offices and field offices.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts:

- The universe of colocation opportunities is limited to the number of lease expirations in any given year:
 - Long-term lease commitments are a barrier to short-term implementation; and
 - Significant lead-time needed to secure new leases.
- Space availability and labor relations issues:
 - Availability of space large enough to colocate in a given market;
 - Compatibility of the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review and Operations service areas; and
 - Complexity of accommodating the different Bargaining Unit agreements with the three separate labor unions representing our field office and hearing office employees.

Key Initiatives

Reduce Our Real Estate Footprint

Under guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), agencies are required to create and implement a plan to reduce their real estate footprint. We are committed to adhering to the established baselines while providing excellent customer service.

We will create a five-year plan in FY 2015 to make the most efficient use of our real estate property assets. We will update and submit our plan to OMB each fiscal year. As part of our planning, we will assess all new space actions for colocation opportunities and plan to make the following colocations:

- In FY 2016, we will colocate at least four permanent remote site hearing offices with field offices; and
- In FY 2017, we will colocate at least seven permanent remote site hearing offices with field offices.

Performance Measure – Strategic Objective 1.4

1.4a: Evaluate our physical footprint as described in our OMB-approved Real Property Cost Savings and Innovation Plan

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	We have issued colocation guidelines to the regions. In FY 2015, we will evaluate each space action for potential colocation opportunities for offices within the same local area whose leases are ending at the same time	Reduced our physical footprint by 1.34 million usable square feet		
Target	Evaluate potential opportunities for collocating and consolidating our public service facilities within and outside of SSA	Reduce our physical footprint from our FY 2012 level by 1.86 million usable square feet		
Target Met	Met	Not Met		

Results: While we did not meet our FY 2015 target, we exceeded the Office of Management and Budget requirements to freeze our footprint as of FY 2012. We reduced our physical footprint by 5 percent from our FY 2012 level.

Data Definition: Completing the targeted milestones.

Data Source: Social Security Administration, Office of Budget, Finance, Quality, and Management

1.4b NEW: Assess field and hearing office lease expirations and increase colocation of our field and hearing offices to reduce our physical footprint

Fiscal Year	2015	2016	2017
Performance			
Target		Colocate at least 4 permanent remote site hearing offices with field offices	Colocate at least 7 permanent remote site hearing offices with field offices
Target Met			

Data Definition: Completing the targeted milestones.

Data Source: Social Security Administration, Office of Disability Adjudication and Review

Strategic Goal 2: Strengthen the Integrity of Our Programs

Currently, we pay \$78 billion each month in benefits across all our programs. Paying the right person the right amount at the right time is critical, and we take this responsibility very seriously. The payment accuracy rate for our retirement and survivors programs has been over 99 percent for the past several years.

Our disability programs are much more complex to administer, potentially resulting in both overpayments and underpayments:

- **Social Security Disability Insurance** provides benefits to people who cannot work because they have medical conditions expected to last at least one year or result in death. The laws governing this program are complex, and we may not always have timely or accurate information about a beneficiary's medical or work status. Changes in either status may affect continued eligibility for benefits.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** provides cash assistance to people with limited incomes and resources who are aged, blind, or disabled. A beneficiary's eligibility for payment or the amount of payment can change when his or her living arrangements or income changes. Beneficiaries self-report changes, and reporting delays can result in improper payments.

We are taking a multifaceted approach to ensure we receive accurate information and provide proper payments:

- Using the latest technology to identify fraud and improve debt collection;
- Providing beneficiaries with easy ways to report changes;
- Investing in and enhancing partnerships with our beneficiaries;
- Actively seeking opportunities to share information with other federal and state agencies; and
- Using experts in evaluation methods to review implementation plans for each improper payment initiative.

We want our initiatives to produce clear and measurable outcomes that lead to actionable efforts reducing improper payments and reclaiming overpaid funds.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Transform the Way We Record Earnings to Enhance Data Accuracy

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

A worker's lifetime earnings determine the amount of his or her Social Security benefits, making it vital that we have accurate earnings records on file. We devote a significant amount of resources to ensure earnings records are accurate.

In fiscal year (FY) 2015, we posted over 275 million earnings items to individuals' records. When we provide workers, employers, and government agencies with the tools they need to accurately report wages, our records are more accurate.

In 2015, employers filed over 89 percent of Forms W-2 electronically. We also received nearly 26 million paper Forms W-2. As we migrate to a more fully electronic earnings record process, we anticipate increased accuracy through fewer manual entries and a more stringent electronic editing process.

We have a multiyear initiative underway that will further modernize our earnings reporting system. This initiative will increase processing capacity and post information faster. In addition, we are working with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to enhance earnings data exchanges. Both initiatives will improve wage reporting and make our earnings process more efficient and accurate.

We are also encouraging our customers to verify their earnings information when they review their *Social Security Statements* online or when they receive mailed copies.

Strategies

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

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to transform the way we record earnings to enhance data accuracy (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Redesigned software to process Forms W-2 within the Annual Wage Reporting system (AWS);
- Processed larger volumes of earnings data through redesigned AWS:
 - Over 22 million wage items per day;
 - Over 81 million wage items per week; and
 - Exceeded prior tax year volumes of 15 million per day and 72.3 million per week.
- Implemented redesign, platform changes, and business processes into earnings systems resulting in:
 - More efficiency and consistency in service;
 - Improved flow and speed of earnings processes; and
 - Improved accuracy.
- Implemented systems enhancements that are expected to decrease the number of wage reports filed on paper and reduce manual workloads.

Next Steps

- Continue to modernize and streamline other major components of the Earnings Systems; and
- Continue marketing efforts encouraging people to review their earnings for accuracy.

Risks and External Factors

The following risk or external factor may affect our efforts to enhance data accuracy:

- Legal restrictions on disclosure of wage reporting data between federal agencies.

Key Initiatives

Continue Earnings Redesign

We are redesigning our systems to make our earnings process more efficient and accurate. In addition, we are enhancing earnings data exchanges, improving wage reporting, modernizing our systems, and modifying our software to handle increasing record volumes.

Beginning in FY 2014 and throughout FY 2015, we released several enhancements to the earnings redesign program, continuing our multiyear effort to improve our detection and prevention of potential wage reporting fraud. We replaced outdated technology, streamlined automated business processes, and consolidated and streamlined our earnings reconciliation processes. We also redesigned functionality to process Forms W-2 within the Annual Wage Reporting system.

Increased system processing capacity allows the system to post more data to the Master Earnings File (the administrative file used to store earnings data and to determine an individual's eligibility and benefits payment). The increased capacity also enables posting the data earlier in the year and sharing data with the IRS sooner. In addition, earlier rejection of invalid data improves the quality of data used both internally for benefit calculations and externally by the IRS for tax reconciliation.

Increasing Electronic Wage Report Filing

Annually, we receive more than 3 million paper wage reports from employers containing nearly 26 million paper Forms W-2. Paper wage reports are more error-prone, labor intensive, and expensive to process. Electronic wage reporting is more accurate, but we must update our electronic applications frequently to reflect IRS tax code and tax form revisions.

Planned enhancements for FY 2015 include a self-registration, self-testing process for all new electronic wage reporting web service users. In FY 2016, we are planning a phased expansion of the electronic wage reporting web service, including expanding the electronic wage reporting status function and allowing submitters to find out why a submission was returned. The phased web service expansion will continue in FY 2017.

We will continue using promotional materials, trade publications, and direct contact with employers and third-party submitters (people who submit wages to us on behalf of employers) to encourage electronic wage reporting. Our market tactics for online wage reporting include promotions at conferences and meetings attended by the wage reporting community.



Performance Measure – Strategic Objective 2.1

2.1a: Improve the accuracy and timeliness of the earnings data used to calculate benefits

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	We released the Annual Wage Reporting system on 02/08/2014	Implemented the redesigned software to process Forms W-2 within the Annual Wage Reporting system		
Target	Complete construction of at least 50% of the redesigned functionality to process Forms W-2 within the Annual Wage Reporting system	Implement the redesigned functionality to process Forms W-2 within the Annual Wage Reporting system by 09/30/2015	Implement the redesigned functionality to process Forms W-2c (Corrections) within the Annual Wage Reporting system	Implement Annual Wage Reporting software to provide earnings data to the IRS earlier in the tax season
Target Met	Met	Met		

Results: In FY 2015, we applied the redesigned annual wage reporting software to process Forms W-2.

Data Definition: Construction of the redesigned Annual Wage Reporting functionality is defined as the development of the software to meet the high-level requirements for processing Forms W-2.

Data Source: The data source is the aggregate of the base-lined, high-level requirements for the redesigned Form W-2 processing within the Annual Wage Reporting system. The software release certification process will document the software implementation.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Protect the Public's Data and Provide Secure Online Services

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Our mission is to provide the public with high quality, convenient service while maintaining the confidentiality of the public's information. We are committed to safeguarding the information used in our online services as we keep up with increasing service demands. We take the public's trust seriously and take great pride in securing their personal information. We continually strengthen our record protection systems to combat emerging identity threats.

Strategies

- Ensure strong authentication technologies and appropriate access to information and services;
- Ensure online services have appropriate security features; and
- Join with other federal agencies to aggressively combat identity theft to prevent unauthorized transactions.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to protect the public's data and provide secure online services (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Expanded the use of data analytics and technology to detect and prevent online fraud;
- Applied analytical tools to our online services to determine common characteristics and patterns of anomalous behavior based on data from past allegations and known cases of fraud;
- Built a fraud business process and developed new analytical models to support the online Social Security Replacement Card application (limited release in November 2015);
- Established the Office of Anti-Fraud Programs to provide centralized oversight of and accountability for the agency's initiatives to prevent, detect, and deter fraud; and
- Partnered with other Federal agencies to detect, deter, and prevent fraud.

Next Steps

- Continue to protect the public's data as we expand and continue secure online services; and
- Continue to design a business plan and procure an enterprise-automated solution (tool), which will enable us to identify patterns of fraud, improve functionality with additional data-driven fraud triggers and real time risk analysis, and further integrate technology into our anti-fraud business processes.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to protect the public's data and provide secure online services:

- Budgetary concerns;
- Unanticipated workload increases; and
- New and emerging threats.

Key Initiatives

Deploy Management System for Personally Identifiable Information and Federal Tax Information

We developed the Enterprise Test Data Management System to manage and purge personally identifiable information and federal tax information in our test and training systems. Our test and training systems are well controlled and have low risk of exposing sensitive public data. While individuals accessing the data are authorized to view it, when fully implemented, the Enterprise Test Data Management System will provide sanitized test data (data modified to conceal a person's identity) to our test environments (development, validation, integration, and training), further minimizing our risk of unnecessary exposure.

When fully implemented, the system will sanitize the Social Security number, Employer Identification Number, telephone number, email, and bank account data consistently across all validation databases.

We released the basic infrastructure in FY 2013, and in FY 2014, we:

- Developed code to sanitize name fields;
- Developed requirements for enhancing a third-party tool we will use to help sanitize names and addresses;
- Designed, developed, and implemented enhancements to the existing Enterprise Test Data Management System to improve performance and usability; and
- Began requirements analysis and design for future enhancements.

In FY 2015, we implemented the code for sanitizing the name and address information. We expect full implementation in FY 2016.

Established the Office of Anti-Fraud Programs

We take our responsibility for detecting, deterring, and preventing fraud very seriously. We have zero tolerance for fraud, and we work tirelessly to protect the American taxpayers and their investment in Social Security.

In November 2014, we established the Office of Anti-Fraud Programs to provide centralized oversight of and accountability of initiatives to prevent, detect, and deter fraud, such as:

- Centralizing anti-fraud data analytics;
- Monitoring and supporting our anti-fraud initiatives;
- Formulating new anti-fraud initiatives;
- Developing consistent anti-fraud policies and processes;
- Aligning our anti-fraud efforts with industry standards; and
- Supporting the Office of the Inspector General's efforts to investigate fraud.

We continue to expand the use of data analytics and technology to detect and prevent fraud. Specifically, we apply analytical tools to our business processes and use models to determine common characteristics and patterns of anomalous behavior based on data we collect from past allegations and known cases of fraud.

Additionally, we developed numerous analytical models to help us identify fraud. We run our analytical models against our data in online services. These models assist in identifying attempted fraud before we make a payment. Our goal is to avoid the "pay and chase" that has plagued benefit-paying agencies for years by being proactive in preventing fraud. We are currently working with a federally funded research development center on an enterprise-based, automated solution to expand the use of anti-fraud analytics to additional agency programs.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 2.2

2.2a: Enhance our security features and business processes to prevent and detect fraud

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	Using Public Facing Integrity Review data, we were able to create and implement the routing transit number blocking process	The fraud referral process was transferred to the newly established Office of Anti-Fraud Programs. We use Public Facing Integrity Review data to create and implement the routing transit number blocking process. ²		
Target	Expand the Public Facing Integrity Review system to more rapidly detect a greater variety of fraudulent Internet transactions	Increase <i>my Social Security</i> potential fraud referrals through the Public Facing Integrity Review system to the Office of Operations by 10% (10,295 referrals)	Identify and investigate at least 500 claims presenting characteristics indicative of fraud	Identify and investigate at least 750 claims presenting characteristics indicative of fraud
Target Met	Met	Met		

Results: In November 2015, we established the Office of Anti-Fraud Programs. The Office of Anti-Fraud Programs now receives potential fraud referrals through the Public Facing Integrity Review system.

Data Definition: Expand functionality by planning, developing, and implementing new or additional reviews for fraud in existing online applications and new online services, as they are made available to the public.

Data Source: Public Facing Integrity Review system

² Due to the sensitivity of this information, we cannot include exact numbers.

Strategic Objective 2.3: Increase Payment Accuracy

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

The American public expects outstanding stewardship of general revenues and the Social Security Trust Funds – and as stewards, we are committed to protecting our programs from waste, fraud, and abuse.

Our most important program integrity tools are continuing disability reviews (CDR), which are periodic reevaluations to determine if Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries are still disabled, and SSI redeterminations, which are periodic reviews of non-medical eligibility factors such as income and resources.

We estimate that CDRs conducted in 2016 will yield net Federal program savings over the next ten years of roughly \$9 on average per \$1 budgeted for dedicated program integrity funding, including Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, SSI, Medicare, and Medicaid program effects. Similarly, we estimate that nonmedical redeterminations conducted in 2016 will yield a return on investment of about \$4 on average of net Federal program savings over ten years per \$1 budgeted for dedicated program integrity funding, including SSI and Medicaid program effects.

We will continue to perform CDRs and SSI redeterminations, and enhance our program integrity efforts in other areas to improve payment accuracy for our programs. We will:

- Simplify our work incentive policies and procedures;
- Continue to partner with financial institutions to expand on the success of our Access to Financial Institutions initiative to identify financial resources that often go unreported;
- Implement new guidance and expand existing programs to recover more debt;
- Pilot new computer technologies and data searches; and
- Use new computer technologies to analyze agency data in new ways, focusing on the most error-prone aspects of our programs.

Representative payees (people or organizations who receive payments on behalf of beneficiaries who cannot manage their own benefits) play a significant role in many beneficiaries' lives. We are always exploring ways to better identify, screen, and appoint representative payees. We will improve how we monitor representative payees to prevent benefit misuse. We will also coordinate research and initiatives with other federal agencies that serve similar populations.

Strategies

- Collaborate with other federal agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid 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 detect fraud and payment errors; and
- Streamline the representative payee program to better identify potential misuse of benefits.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to increase payment accuracy (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Expanded the use of data analytics and improved technology to:
 - Identify patterns of fraud in our programs; and
 - Prevent payment errors by identifying missed entitlements to benefits.
- Through data exchange partnerships with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, we have:
 - Identified over \$49 million in estimated incorrect payments;
 - Referred 1,334 cases to the Office of Inspector General for investigation; and
 - Uncovered 272 out-of-country cases.
- Implemented improvements to the Pre-effectuation Review (PER) model to help identify the most error-prone adult SSI DDS allowances for review;

- Identified 1,352 previously unreported deaths of U.S. beneficiaries abroad, resulting in potential overpayment savings of almost \$7 million;
- Implemented a change to our address verification business process, allowing us to notify more delinquent debtors of a potential offset; and
- Expanded the payee monitoring program to better identify potential benefit misuse – expected to net an increase of 300 additional reviews over FY 2014.

Next Steps

- Monitor PER workloads on a weekly basis to ensure models and associated business processes are working correctly and as intended;
- Research the use of quarterly reported earnings data in the CDR predictive model to prioritize CDRs that are likely to result in suspension or termination;
- Develop systems, policy, and training to support the non-home real property process;
- Expand automated reciprocal death data exchanges to as many partner countries as possible; and
- Publish agency operating instructions to improve the business process for transmitting information to and from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to increase payment accuracy:

- Relying on SSI recipients to timely report changes in their financial circumstances that may change their benefit amounts;
- The inherent complexity of our Title II and Title XVI programs; and
- Balancing high workload demands and program integrity activities with staffing resources.

Key Initiatives

Promoting Use of the Supplemental Security Income Telephone Wage Reporting System and the Supplemental Security Income Mobile Wage Reporting

Unreported and untimely reported wages continue to be a major source of payment error in the SSI program. To improve timely reporting, we implemented the SSI Telephone Wage Reporting system. SSI telephone wage reporting increases efficiency because it reduces unnecessary visits to the field office, lessens manual keying errors, and allows us to automatically process wage reports.

Beneficiaries, their spouses and parents, and their representative payees can report monthly wages directly into the SSI system via a combination of touch-tone entry and voice-recognition software.

During recruitment activities for the SSI Telephone Wage Reporting system and the SSI Mobile Wage Reporting program, we encourage people to sign up for monthly email or text reminders to report monthly wages. We also include this reminder option in our online public information materials. We continue to increase the field office recruiting efforts during claims, redetermination interviews, pre-effectuation reviews, or other wage-related post-eligibility contacts.



In FY 2014, we began allowing people to report wages at any time during the month rather than just the first six days of the month and began using GovDelivery as a means for SSI wage reporters to sign up for email or text reminders. GovDelivery is a web-based public sector communications platform that sends notices, emails, and reminders to customers. As a result, we processed 30 percent more reports using the SSI Telephone Wage Reporting system and SSI Mobile Wage Reporting system than we processed in calendar year 2013. Much of this increase was due to the nationwide implementation of the SSI Mobile Wage Reporting program.

In September 2015, we received 78,970 automated wage reports, an approximately 23% increase over September 2014.

Conducting Supplemental Security Income Redeterminations

Changes in beneficiaries' living arrangements or the amount of their income and resources can affect both their eligibility for SSI and the amount of their payments. To ensure the accuracy of SSI payments, we conduct redeterminations. In FY 2015, we plan to conduct 2.25 million redeterminations and 2.62 million redeterminations in FY 2016.

Using Predictive Modeling in the Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation

The Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation identifies Social Security disability beneficiaries whose earnings put them at risk of receiving overpayments.

We developed and piloted a predictive model to identify cases that have a high likelihood of receiving overpayments. We prioritize these cases for work-related continuing disability reviews. These reviews determine if the beneficiary's eligibility for benefits has changed.

By prioritizing the work-related continuing disability reviews, we identified and avoided potential overpayments more quickly. In FY 2015, within the first six months of processing, we completed approximately 256,000 work-related continuing disability reviews, resulting in 47,500 cessations or suspensions with overpayments.

We plan to update and re-estimate the predictive model with more recent information so the model parameters capture any recent demographic, program, and economic changes. In addition, we are considering including quarterly earnings data from the Office of Child Support and Enforcement in our model to shorten the response time.

Using Predictive Modeling in the Redetermination Process

We use a statistical scoring model to identify and prioritize redetermination cases having a high likelihood of error. The statistical model uses income, resources, and living arrangement variables to predict likely SSI overpayments.

In FY 2014, the cases we completed resulted in the prevention and recovery of an estimated \$3.9 billion in expected retroactive and five-year future recurring SSI overpayments. If we had relied on a random selection for 2014 cases, rather than using a predictive model, projections indicate that the corresponding savings would be only \$2.4 billion for this period. Results for FY 2015 will be available in February 2016.

We continue to improve our predictive statistical modeling and data mining techniques to determine the potential value of such data in our SSI redetermination modeling and selection process. We will use these advanced analytical techniques to focus on ways to enhance our current redetermination selection model and potentially the redetermination process.

Expanding the Access to Financial Institutions

Excess resources in financial accounts are a leading cause of SSI payment errors. Access to Financial Institutions (AFI) uses an electronic process to verify bank account balances with financial institutions to help determine SSI eligibility and payment amount. In addition to verifying alleged accounts, the process may detect undisclosed accounts by using a geographic search to generate requests to other financial institutions. Along with preventing overpayments, the AFI process will help us eliminate ineligible applicants at the beginning of the application process and reduce the workload in the disability determination services (DDS) offices.

We currently use the AFI system in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. In FY 2013, we lowered the AFI liquid resources (e.g., cash or bank accounts) threshold from \$750 to

\$400 and increased the number of bank searches. This program has proven very cost effective and useful in identifying undisclosed accounts.

We have not yet fully implemented the AFI process. We define full implementation as using AFI on every potential SSI application and redetermination, conducting bank searches, and fully integrating the process with our systems.

Expanding Our Cooperative Disability Investigations Program

Our Cooperative Disability Investigations units work collaboratively with the Office of Inspector General, DDS offices, and state and local law enforcement agencies to resolve allegations of fraud in our disability programs. Cooperative Disability Investigations units help prevent payments to people who are not disabled and reduce improper payments to beneficiaries who have failed to report medical improvement or work activity.

The units have proven to be vital tools in identifying fraud and preventing incorrect disability payments. Since their inception in 1998 through FY 2015, our Office of the Inspector General estimates Cooperative Disability Investigations efforts nationwide generated \$3.2 billion in projected savings to our Social Security disability and SSI programs and \$2.1 billion to non-SSA programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid.

In FY 2014, we opened Cooperative Disability Investigations units in Baltimore, Maryland and Detroit, Michigan. In FY 2015, we expanded the program by adding another nine units in Providence, RI; Little Rock, AK; Milwaukee, WI; Des Moines, IA; Miami, FL; Birmingham, AL; Charleston, WV; St. Paul, MN; and Raleigh, NC. We currently have 37 Cooperative Disability Investigations units covering 31 states, Washington, DC, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

We plan to add up to three additional units in FY 2016, including the unit that opened in Washington, DC in October 2015.

In FY 2017, we plan to expand the program as need and funding permits.

Improving the Death Reporting System Process

We are enhancing and streamlining our death reporting system to ensure we comply with applicable laws and policies, reduce improper payments, prevent improper release of personally identifiable information, and improve consistency of data in our records. Ultimately, our goal is to have one official agency source of death information available to all our systems.

In FY 2014, we provided a new user interface for death reporting and collecting new, comprehensive management information.

We are on schedule to complete the following by the end of FY 2015:

- Evaluate policies used in our current batch processing to determine priority, matching criteria for identity, error messaging and editing;
- Redesign the batch processing approach based on the evaluation;
- Begin consolidating external death data we receive into a central entry point and update the data into our NUMIDENT database before it is used by other systems; and
- Produce management information reports using production data to evaluate data quality and identify actions needed to improve quality.

Our plans for FY 2016 include:

- Streamline inputting and collecting internal death information from multiple sources into one person-centered path;
- Use the NUMIDENT database as the authoritative source of death data; and
- Provide additional management information reporting.

In FY 2017, we will evaluate the work completed and determine if further enhancements are needed.

Implementing Data Exchange and Verification Online

We have a mission-critical need to share data with partners such as federal, state, local, and foreign government agencies, as well as court systems, the medical community, and employers to help ensure we have correct information. We maintain over 2,500 electronic information exchanges. We provide and receive data essential in making eligibility and entitlement decisions for us and other federal and state agencies.

We implemented the Data Exchange and Verification Online application in FY 2013 to modernize our existing data exchange and verification systems into a new centralized application. The new system is more efficient and enables us to respond more quickly to customized requests and legislative mandates.

During FY 2015, we implemented enhancements begun in FY 2014, as well as began planning and analysis for additional enhancements to the Social Security number verification process. We also redesigned our architecture to support web services, an enhancement that improves access for partnering agencies and supports the one-government approach.

In FY 2016 and 2017, we will continue our planning and implementation of additional data exchanges and enhancements.

Implementing Direct Deposit Auto-Enrollment Fraud Prevention

In an effort to prevent redirection of beneficiaries' payments to another account without their knowledge, we created the direct deposit auto-enrollment fraud prevention service. This service allows beneficiaries who have been victims of fraud, or who think they may become victims in the future, to block changes to their payment information. People who block account changes must come into a field office to make direct deposit or address changes.

Implementing New Tools for Debt Collection

Although we strive to pay benefits accurately and on time, the complexity of our programs and dependence on beneficiaries to report changes can lead to overpayments. When overpayments occur, we use different debt collection techniques (e.g. payment withholding, Treasury Offset Program, Credit Bureau Reporting, Cross Program Recovery) to recover these overpayments.

We continue to enhance our systems to recover program debt. In FY 2015, we improved our External Collection Operation system by implementing an address verification feature. As a result, we have the capability to notify more individuals of potential collection actions. We also are developing another feature that will allow us to store notices in our Online Retrieval System, enabling staff to access the notice during calls from the beneficiary.

Implementing Automatic Earnings Reappraisal Operation Delay Pilot

Since FY 2013, we have used our predictive model to score all pending work-related continuing disability reviews to identify cases with a high risk of incurring large work-related overpayments. We implemented a pilot scoring approach, which showed that we processed the sampled cases more quickly, preventing an even larger overpayment, and properly prevented the release of an underpayment. In FY 2014, the pilot continued to be successful with nearly 15,000 sampled disability beneficiaries.

In FY 2016, the selection will include approximately 12,000 beneficiary records for a recomputation delay. We will evaluate this sample in spring 2016. We will also select a new sample based on an enhanced predictive model to prioritize work-related continuing disability reviews.

We expect an average overpayment exceeding \$20,000 for approximately 20 percent of the pilot cases. We expect to process the sampled cases more quickly, preventing an even larger overpayment. The expected outcomes include increased efficiency of operations and improved payment accuracy.

Adding Anti-Fraud Messages in Notices

Over the past two years, we have been working to add new language to our notices to report suspected fraud and to publicize Office of the Inspector General's Fraud Hotline and website. The anti-fraud language will be included in nearly 300 million notices annually: our manually prepared and automated notices, retirement and disability cost-of-living adjustment notices, disability determination services notices, and most Office of Disability Adjudication and Review notices.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 2.3

2.3a APG: Reduce the percentage of improper payments made under the SSI program (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	9.1%	9.1%	8.1%	9.3%	8.5%	Data available April 2016		
Target					No more than 6.2% of all payments made under the SSI program are improper payments (i.e., overpayment and underpayments)	No more than 6.2% of all payments made under the SSI program are improper payments (i.e., overpayment and underpayments)		
Target Met					Not Met	TBD		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2014 target. Our FY 2015 performance data is not available until April 2016. We will discuss our FY 2015 performance in next year's report.

Data Definition: We determine the SSI payments free of overpayment and underpayment error by an annual review of a statistically valid sample of all payments issued. We base the payment accuracy on a non-medical review of sampled individuals who received SSI payments during the fiscal year. We determine the overpayment accuracy rate by dividing the total overpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year and subtracting this percentage from 100 percent. We determine the underpayment accuracy rate by dividing the total underpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year and subtracting this percentage from 100 percent.

Data Source: SSI Payment Accuracy (i.e., Stewardship) Report

2.3b: Maintain a high accuracy rate of payments made through the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program to minimize improper payments

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	99.6% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)	99.7% (O/P) 99.9% (U/P)	99.8% (O/P) 99.9% (U/P)	99.8% (O/P) 99.9% (U/P)	99.5% (O/P) 99.9% (U/P)	Data available April 2016		
Target	99.8% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)	99.8% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)	99.8% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)	99.8% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)		99.8% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)	99.8% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)	99.8% (O/P) 99.8% (U/P)
Target Met	Not Met Met	Not Met Met	Met Met	Met Met		TBD		

Results: Our FY 2015 performance data is not available until April 2016. We will discuss our FY 2015 performance in next year's report.

Data Definition: We determine Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance payment free of overpayment and underpayment error by an annual review of a statistically valid sample of the beneficiary rolls. We determine the overpayment accuracy rate by dividing the total overpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year and subtracting this percentage from 100 percent. We determine the underpayment accuracy rate by dividing the total underpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year and subtracting this percentage from 100 percent.

Data Source: Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Stewardship Report

2.3c APG NEW: Improve the integrity of the SSI program by ensuring that 95 percent of our payments are free of overpayment (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	93.3% accuracy rate	92.7% accuracy rate	93.7% accuracy rate	92.4% accuracy rate	93.0% accuracy rate	Data available April 2016		
Target							95% accuracy rate	95% accuracy rate
Target Met								

Results: Payment accuracy is one of our highest priorities. As a result, we established challenging stretch targets with the understanding that our historical results are lower than our goal.

Data Definition: We determine the overpayment accuracy rate by dividing the total overpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year and subtracting this percentage from 100 percent. We determine the underpayment accuracy rate by dividing the total underpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year and subtracting this percentage from 100 percent.

Data Source: Title XVI Payment Accuracy (Stewardship) Report

2.3d: Complete the budgeted number of full medical continuing disability reviews (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	324,567	345,492	443,233	428,568	525,875	799,013		
Target			435,000	422,000	510,000	790,000	850,000	1,100,000
Target Met			Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: We exceeded our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The number of full medical continuing disability reviews completed in the fiscal year. This number represents only full medical reviews completed by state DDS offices and other agency components and cases where we initiated a review but could not complete one because the individual failed to cooperate.

Data Source: Continuing Disability Review Tracking Files

2.3e: Complete the budgeted number of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) non-medical redeterminations (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	2,465,878	2,456,830	2,624,170	2,634,183	2,627,518	2,266,993		
Target	2,422,000	2,422,000	2,622,000	2,622,000	2,622,000	2,255,000	2,522,000	2,822,000
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: We exceeded our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The number of non-disability SSI redeterminations completed in the fiscal year. This number includes scheduled (i.e., identified for review through profiling) and unscheduled reviews (i.e., reviewed because of changes that may affect payment), as well as targeted redeterminations (i.e., limited issue reviews).

Data Source: Integrated SSA Unified Measurement System Counts Report

Strategic Goal 3: Serve the Public through a Stronger, More Responsive Disability Program

From fiscal year (FY) 2007 to FY 2015, initial disability claims increased about 10 percent, and our hearings workload increased over 30 percent. In FY 2015, our average processing time for hearing requests was 480 days, and the number of hearings pending was over one million. Although the agency made measurable progress through 2011 toward eliminating the hearings backlog, severe budget cuts combined with other key factors began to affect our progress adversely. Due to budget constraints, we were unable to open new hearings locations, and we continued to face difficulty in hiring a sufficient number of qualified administrative law judges. As a result, wait times for a disability hearing began to rise again.

While our customers expect us to make timely decisions, they also expect us to make the right decisions, appropriately and consistently applying our rules and regulations. We will continue to balance timeliness with an emphasis on quality and consistency in decision-making. We continue to look for ways to strengthen policies, improve processes, and increase the use of automation.

We recently received our second Deming Award for innovative training – this one for our data-driven, skills-based training program for administrative law judges, which focused on the critical thinking and analytical skills involved in applying our policies. To ensure the special training achieved the desired results, we developed a detailed review of decisional quality, comparing the pre-training hearing decisions to post-training hearing decisions against 84 metrics. After training, we found a 5 percent or greater improvement in 35 of the 84 performance metrics and a 2 - 4.99 percent improvement in 14 of the 84 metrics. Statistically speaking, this training had a significant impact on improving our administrative law judges' performance.

We also strive to provide timely and appropriate services to beneficiaries. We plan to meet the needs of our disability beneficiaries by increasing opportunities for those who want to return to work and by collaborating with other federal agencies to coordinate our disability programs.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Improve the Quality, Consistency, and Timeliness of Our Disability Decisions

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

We continuously strive to improve the timeliness, quality, and consistency of our disability processing times and decisions. We need to make sure our decisions are accurate and made at the earliest possible point in our process. We also need to ensure our policies are applied consistently across the country.

Strategies

- Expand use of management information to identify training needs and areas for improvement;
- Broaden use of case-analysis tools;
- Expand use of predictive modeling;
- Simplify policies;
- Collaborate with Bureau of Labor Statistics to collect updated occupational information; and
- Formalize our pre-decisional quality review processes to increase national uniformity.

Progress Update

The Social Security Administration, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, has highlighted this objective as a **focus area for improvement**. We took the following steps in FY 2015 to improve the quality, consistency, and timeliness of our disability decisions (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Completed Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) focus reviews to provide ALJs with feedback and training resources to improve the quality of decisions;

- Added the ability for all sites to process electronic adult initial continuing disability review in the electronic case analysis tool;
- Released the Electronic Bench Book version 5.0;
- Established a medical experts committee to advise on advancements relevant to making disability decisions;
- Made the inline quality review process more comprehensive;
- Increased hearing capacity by adding additional video hearing sites;
- Completed deliverables on the Bureau of Labor Statistics project; and
- Prepared for the receipt of data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in September 2015.

Next Steps

- Examine opportunities to develop new applications to address existing and emerging management information needs;
- Continue leveraging management information to identify training needs;
- Add functionality to the Electronic Case Analysis Tool to support additional claim types;
- Develop more functionality in the Electronic Bench Book;
- Continue development and testing of predictive modeling projects in the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review;
- Update research base for the vocational factors considered in disability evaluations; and
- Develop and submit at least three rules for public comment, five final rules, and three Social Security Rulings to update the medical listing of impairments.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to improve the quality, consistency, and timeliness of our disability decisions:

- Hiring sufficient ALJs;
- Sufficient resources to add new functionality to our electronic tools;
- Ability to recruit and retain qualified data analytics staff to fill predictive modeling and data analysis gaps;
- Balancing high workload demands and quality assurance activities with staffing resources; and
- Ability to recruit and retain a skilled staff to process workloads.

Key Initiatives

Enhancing the Electronic Claims Analysis Tool

We continue to enhance our web-based Electronic Claims Analysis Tool, which guides adjudicators through the sequential evaluation process for determining disability. Throughout the application, there are links to the policy that support each step of the process. The tool produces a detailed, policy-compliant explanation of the determination and stores the supporting documentation. A subsequent reviewer can then review the explanation to understand the decision maker's analysis and conclusions throughout the adjudication processes.

All disability determination services sites use the tool for initial and reconsideration level disability claims. In FY 2015, we enhanced functionality for processing electronic adult initial level continuing disability reviews. In FY 2016, we plan to add functionality to process childhood continuing disability reviews, as well as add enhancements in response to policy changes and input from its users. In FY 2017, we plan to add functionality to process adult reconsideration continuing disability reviews.

Expanding Use of Electronic Bench Book

The Electronic Bench Book is a policy compliant, web-based application that aids in documenting, analyzing, and adjudicating disability hearing cases consistently with our regulations. The Electronic Bench Book allows users to perform file reviews, capture hearing notes, and document decisional instructions. The Electronic Bench Book guides users through each step of the sequential evaluation process. We expect the systematic process will reduce errors,

improve consistency, and reduce remands to the Appeals Council while helping enhance and execute agency plans to modernize our systems.

Approximately 2,200 unique hearing office users are accessing the Electronic Bench Book each week and administrative law judges are using it to process decisional instructions on approximately 1,500 cases per week. Enhancements released in April 2015 enabled users to generate a case information summary with a single click. Additional backend and performance enhancements were implemented in June 2015.

In FY 2016, we plan to deliver a decision writing feature that fully integrates with MS Word giving decision writers both pre-population of some of the decision language as well as full word processing and editing capabilities. We also plan to streamline the application for ease of use and work on adding more templates.

In FY 2017, we plan on adding more templates and implementing instruction refinements.

Developing an Occupational Information System

Currently, we rely on occupational information found in the Department of Labor's Dictionary of Occupational Titles to determine whether adult disability applicants can do their past work or any other work. The Department of Labor no longer updates its Dictionary of Occupational Titles because a new job placement tool called the Occupational Information Network has replaced it.

We have been working with the Bureau of Labor Statistics to develop a new web-based occupational information system. Our new web-based system will be easier to use and will increase the quality of disability decisions by providing current information about specific job requirements. Unlike the old system, which was a job placement tool, the new system will contain information needed to help us determine disability.

The new system will contain information about occupations' specific vocational preparations, physical demands, and environmental conditions. Unlike the prior system, the new system will contain the mental and cognitive requirements of occupations, enabling more standardized decisions for claimants with mental impairments.

Our policy experts worked with the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2013 to define current mental and cognitive work demands. In 2014, the Bureau of Labor Statistics started testing the collection of the mental and cognitive work demands.

In early FY 2015, we conducted a large-scale preproduction test that included all data elements. In the summer of 2015, testing included direct observation of several occupations to help determine if the data collection methodology is valid. In September 2015, we used production data in disability adjudication. Fully populating the new system with occupational data will take about three years.

In FY 2016, we will continue analyzing the data from the FY 2015 preproduction test. We will use the data to develop a new information technology platform. We are planning a limited implementation in FY 2017. Testing and further reviews will continue into FY 2019. Full implementation is scheduled for late FY 2019.

Updating the Medical Listing of Impairments

The medical Listing of Impairments (Listings) is one of the most effective tools used to make disability decisions. The Listings allow us to find a claimant disabled when his or her impairment meets specified medical criteria, without the need to consider age, education, or work experience. The Listings improve the consistency and accuracy of our decisions throughout all levels of the disability process.

We update the Listings on a three-to-five year cycle. During each cycle, we seek input from medical experts and other stakeholders to ensure the Listings reflect current approaches in medicine, science, technology, and the work environment.

In FY 2014, we published four rules for public comment, one final rule, and three Social Security Rulings in an effort to update and revise medical policy. In FY 2015, we developed and submitted four final rules and one Social Security Rulings for the medical listings for publication in the Federal Register. In both FY 2016 and FY 2017, we plan to develop and submit four final rules, two Social Security Rulings, and targeted updates for the medical listings for publication in the Federal Register.

Conducting Inline Quality Reviews

The inline quality review of hearing level claims promotes consistency and continuous improvement in case processing by ensuring that:

- Case files are properly prepared and scheduled;
- Records are adequately developed; and
- Draft decisions are legally sufficient.

We initially conducted inline quality reviews on cases where senior attorney adjudicators drafted fully favorable decisions and on cases where files were prepared and ready to be scheduled for a hearing. We began the review in 2010, and in November 2013, we expanded the reviews to include cases drafted by decision writers. We increased the number of inline quality reviews from 2,590 in FY 2013 (0.4 percent of all hearing decisions) to 13,258 in FY 2014 (2.4 percent of all hearing decisions).

In FY 2015, we expanded the list of questions reviewers must answer when deciding if errors exist. There are now more than 100 questions. Because the reviews are more comprehensive than before, we are able to address more issues proactively. In FY 2015, we conducted almost 13,000 reviews (2.4 percent of all hearing decisions). Additionally, analyzing the findings from the reviews enables us to identify trends and areas for targeted training.

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, we will continue to review support staff work for quality and policy compliance. We also plan to explore adding more quality review specialists, as budgets permit.

Reducing the Pending at the Appeals Council

As we decide more cases at the hearing level, the Appeals Council receives more requests for review of hearing decisions. Historically, we received approximately 100,000 requests for review annually. However, from FY 2011 until FY 2013, requests for reviews grew to 175,000 annually. While we saw a reduction in requests to 155,000 in FY 2014 and 149,000 for FY 2015, we finished FY 2015 with more than 150,000 cases waiting for review.

The Appeals Council replaced staff losses in FY 2015, and we continue to seek resources to expand the Appeals Council to address customer wait times.

We are focusing on decreasing the percentage of pending Appeals Council requests for review over 365 days old. In FY 2014, we completed about 162,000 Appeals Council requests for review, and in FY 2015, we completed over 150,000 cases. We will continue to adjust Appeals Council staff levels to reduce the Appeals Council backlog and meet any changes in capacity at the DDS and the hearings levels.

Hire Sufficient Administrative Law Judges to Ensure Public Access to Agency Services

From FY 2008 to FY 2010, the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review made significant progress in reducing the pending of claimants waiting for an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) hearing. However, our inability to hire ALJs in sufficient numbers due to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) delays coupled with the Federal Government shutdown and budget constraints caused a public service crisis. Now more than one million claimants are waiting for a hearing, more than any other time in history.

We received a new list of ALJ candidates from the OPM in March 2014, but the lengthy hiring process resulted in us beginning FY 2015 with 35 fewer judges than we had at the beginning of FY 2014. We hired more ALJs as FY 2015 progressed, though not as many as we had budgeted for due to hiring setbacks. We ended the year with nearly 1,530 ALJs on duty, about 85 more than we had at the beginning of the year.

We expect to bring our pending cases below one million by the end of FY 2017.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 3.1

3.1a: Ensure the quality of our decisions by achieving the DDS net accuracy rate for initial disability decisions

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	98% net accuracy	98% net accuracy	98% net accuracy	98% net accuracy	98% net accuracy	98% net accuracy		
Target	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: We have consistently met the target for this measure since FY 2010.

Data Definition: Net accuracy is the percentage of correct initial state disability determinations and is based on the net error rate (i.e., the number of corrected deficient cases with changed disability decisions), plus the number of deficient cases not corrected within 90 days from the end of the period covered by the report, divided by the number of cases reviewed.

Data Source: Disability Quality Assurance Databases

3.1b: Increase our ability to provide timely decisions by reducing the percentage of pending Appeals Council requests for review 365 days or older

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance			88%	91.1%	84%	82%		
Target			80% of cases pending less than 365 days	81% of cases pending less than 365 days	79% of cases pending less than 365 days	80% of cases pending less than 365 days	81% of cases pending less than 365 days	82% of cases pending less than 365 days
Target Met			Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: We exceeded our FY 2015 target. At the end of FY 2015, 82 percent of our cases were pending less than 365 days. We have consistently met the targets for this measure since FY 2012.

Data Definition: The percentage of Appeals Council cases that are pending less than 365 days at the end of the fiscal year. The percentage is derived by dividing the number of Appeals Council cases pending 365 days or more by the total number of Appeals Council cases pending.

Data Source: Appeals Review Processing System

3.1c APG NEW: Improve customer service by reducing the wait time for a hearing decision (Agency Priority Goal)

Fiscal Year	2015	2016	2017
Performance			
Target		Decide 99% of the cases that begin the fiscal year at 430 days old or older	Decide 99% of the cases that begin the fiscal year 365 days old or older
Target Met			

Data Definition: For FY 2016, we will decide 99 percent of those cases that are 430 days old or older at the beginning of the fiscal year. For FY 2017, we will decide 99 percent of those cases that are 365 days old or older at the beginning of the fiscal year. We derive the percentage by dividing the total number of those targeted cases disposed during the fiscal year by the total number of those targeted cases identified during the fiscal year.

Data Source: Case Processing and Management System

3.1d: Complete the budgeted number of initial disability claims (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	3,161,314	3,390,936	3,206,869	2,987,883	2,861,895	2,759,432		
Target	3,081,000	3,273,000	3,173,000	2,962,000	2,947,000	2,767,000	2,695,000	2,810,000
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The number of Social Security and SSI initial disability claims that state DDS offices and other agency components complete in the current fiscal year up to the budgeted number.

Data Source: National DDS System and Disability Operational Data Store

3.1e: Complete the budgeted number of disability reconsideration claims (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	735,067	828,010	808,521	803,194	757,198	723,485		
Target			787,000	787,000	778,000	739,000	702,000	715,000
Target Met			Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The number of Social Security and SSI disability claims completed at the reconsideration level in the state DDS offices and other agency components in the current fiscal year up to the budgeted number.

Data Source: National DDS System and Disability Operational Data Store

3.1f: Complete the budgeted number of hearing requests (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	737,616	795,424	820,484	793,580	680,963	663,129		
Target	725,000	815,000	875,000	793,000	735,000	727,000	703,000	784,000
Target Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The number of hearing requests completed in the current fiscal year.

Data Source: Case Processing Management System

3.1g: Achieve the target number of initial disability claims pending (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	842,192	759,023	707,700	698,127	632,656	621,315		
Target	1,041,000	845,000	861,000	804,000	642,000	621,000		
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Not Met		

Results: We made very good progress in reducing initial disability claims pending.

Data Definition: The number of Social Security and SSI initial disability claims pending in state DDS offices and other agency components at the end of the fiscal year.

Data Source: National DDS System and Disability Operational Data Store

3.1h: Achieve the target number of disability reconsiderations pending (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	157,977	164,049	197,788	173,472	170,255	143,540		
Target			184,000	220,000	174,000	143,000		
Target Met			Not Met	Met	Met	Not Met		

Results: We came very close to meeting our target for FY 2015.

Data Definition: The number of Social Security and SSI disability claims pending at the reconsideration level in state DDS offices and other agency components at the end of the fiscal year.

Data Source: National DDS System and Disability Operational Data Store

3.1i: Average processing time for initial disability claims (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	111 days	109 days	102 days	107 days	110 days	114 days		
Target	132 days	118 days	111 days	109 days	109 days	109 days	113 days	113 days
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our target for FY 2015.

Data Definition: The number of Social Security and SSI initial disability claims that state DDS offices and other agency components complete in the current fiscal year up to the budgeted number.

Data Source: Management Information Central

3.1j: Average processing time for reconsiderations (Budgeted Workload Measure)³

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	108 days	113 days		
Target				109 days
Target Met				

Data Definition: We count the average number of days it takes to process a reconsideration disability claim from the date a reconsideration claim is filed in a field office to the time the state DDS office makes a determination.

Data Source: Social Security Unified Management System Appeals/Management Information Central

3.1k: Average processing time for hearing decisions (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	426 days	360 days	353 days	396 days (September only)	422 days	480 days		
Target	485 days	373 days	321 days	389 days (September only)	415 days	470 days	540 days	555 days
Target Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The average processing time is the cumulative processing time for all hearing requests processed divided by the total number of hearing requests processed in the fiscal year.

Data Source: Case Processing Management System

³ We developed management information for Average Processing Time for Disability Reconsiderations in FY 2013. FY 2014 was the first full fiscal year for which data was available for this measure. Now that we have had the opportunity to analyze at least two years of actual data, this year we developed a performance target for FY 2017.

3.1l: Achieve the budgeted goal for disability determination service case production per workyear (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	273	287	324	322	311	307		
Target	268	275	322	320	319	313		
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The average number of all state DDS cases produced per workyear expended. A workyear represents both direct and indirect time, including overhead (time spent on training, travel, leave, holidays, etc.). It includes the time of staff on the DDS payroll, including doctors under contract to the DDS. The DDS case production per workyear is a national target.

Data Source: National DDS System and Disability Operational Data Store

3.1m: Achieve the budgeted goal for hearing case production per workyear (Budgeted Workload Measure)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	105	109	111	109	102	95		
Target	108	107	114	111	106	104		
Target Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The average number of hearings completed per direct workyear used. A direct workyear represents actual time spent processing cases. It does not include time spent on training, ALJ travel, leave, holidays, etc.

Data Source: Office of Disability Adjudication and Review’s Monthly Activity Report, Case Processing and Management System, Payroll Analysis Recap Report, Travel Formula, and Training Reports (Regional reports on new staff training, ongoing training, and special training).

Strategic Objective 3.2: Maximize Efficiencies throughout the Disability Program

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

We remain committed to meeting the public's needs by using technology and tools that are cost effective for the taxpayer and convenient for our customers. We have a history of finding smarter, more cost-effective ways of doing business. With workloads still at high levels, we continue to explore new technologies and business processes to help cut costs, operate more efficiently, and provide the service that our customers expect and deserve.

Strategies

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

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to maximize efficiencies throughout the disability program (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Implemented Agile practices in developing the consolidated Disability Case Processing System;
- Implemented the national skills-based routing system to increase field office telephone answering capability;
- Implemented data analytics and predictive modeling to identify disability applicants with severe medical conditions; and
- Expanded our health IT partnerships.

Next Steps

- Continue developing a Disability Case Processing System capable of processing all case types by the end of FY 2016 (additional enhancements planned for FY 2017);
- Continue our participation in national and federal health IT policy and standards workgroups, ensuring our requirements are included; and
- Continue expanding the use of health IT for disability claims processing to increase the amount of medical evidence received and the number of states with participating providers.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to maximize efficiencies throughout the disability program:

- Medical community's response time to our request for records – not all providers have the same electronic capabilities, so we must continue to provide a full range of response options, including traditional methods of obtaining medical records;
- The industry does not have electronic health record policies and standards that provides the specific health information we need for disability determinations; and
- Developing DCPS has been more complex and challenging than initially anticipated.

Key Initiatives

Developing the Disability Case Processing System

In an ongoing effort to improve our effectiveness and efficiency in making timely, accurate disability decisions, we are modernizing our disability case processing system technology. The Disability Case Processing System will replace 54 independent legacy systems currently used throughout the disability determination services (DDS) offices nationwide.

The Disability Case Processing System will yield substantial benefits to the government and citizens by providing:

- Faster and more accurate case processing;
- Improved service to citizens;
- Reduced administrative costs; and
- Structured data that will support our fraud analytics efforts.

Developing the new system has been more complex and challenging than initially anticipated. Based on feedback from users, increasing program cost estimates, and extended timelines, we conducted a review of the project in early 2014. We implemented corrective actions later that year, including appointing a single accountable executive, restructuring the organization, and increasing user engagement.

In FY 2015, we focused our efforts on planning and analysis activities and implemented an Agile development approach. The Agile methodology uses shorter development cycles with frequent checkpoints. These shorter cycles help us identify issues earlier and enable us to be more responsive to changing user needs and priorities. We plan to develop and deploy the core product in FY 2016, adding additional functionality to process all types of disability cases throughout FY 2016 and 2017.

Using Health Information Technology to Expedite Disability Decisions

Obtaining medical records electronically from health care organizations increases efficiencies in our disability determination process and dramatically improves service to the public by:

- Reducing the time to obtain medical records;
- Decreasing the time to complete a disability claim;
- Helping offset increasing workloads and staffing constraints; and
- Enabling computerized decision support.

We request more than 15 million medical records from about 500,000 providers for approximately 3 million initial disability claims annually. Our primary goal is to increase the volume of medical evidence received via health IT by expanding existing partnerships and adding new partners.

In FY 2015, we expanded our health IT partnerships from 3,143 to more than 7,000 providers and increased the number of organizations from 28 to 48. We also increased the number of states, plus the District of Columbia, with participating health IT providers from 29 to 33. We increased the percentage of initial disability claims with health IT medical evidence to 6.1 percent, exceeding our performance goal of 6 percent.



Performance Measure – Strategic Objective 3.2

3.2a: Improve the disability determination process by increasing the percentage of initial disability claims using electronically transmitted health records and medical evidence (Health IT)

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	3% (84,779 initial claims)	6.1% (167,626 initial claims)		
Target	2.5% of initial disability claims processed with health IT medical evidence (75,000 initial claims)	6% of processed initial disability claims with health IT medical evidence (164,820 initial claims)	8% of processed initial disability claims with electronically transmitted health records and medical evidence (Health IT) (222,000 initial claims)	11% of processed initial disability claims with electronically transmitted health records and medical evidence (Health IT) (308,000 initial claims)
Target Met	Met	Met		

Results: We met our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: Percent of initial disability claims processed with health IT medical evidence.

Data Source: Health IT Management Information Database for number of initial level health IT cases, Performance Management Reports for number of initial level disability cases

Strategic Objective 3.3: Enhance Employment Support Programs and Create New Opportunities for Returning Beneficiaries to Work

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

To increase the numbers of beneficiaries returning to work, we must create clear, consistent employment incentives. The complexity of our rules and the fear of incurring an overpayment (because of earnings) discourage beneficiaries' attempts to work. We continue to:

- Look for ways to simplify work incentives and minimize improper payments due to earnings;
- Strengthen our employment support programs, including the Ticket to Work program; and
- Provide help for beneficiaries who want to work through the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance program.

To encourage beneficiaries' work efforts and prevent potential work-related overpayments, we updated our Supplemental Security Income (SSI) work incentive notices in 2013 to provide more information on our work incentive policies and clearly explain beneficiaries' reporting responsibilities. We encourage young people who receive SSI benefits to work and reduce their dependency on disability benefits. Recent agency-funded research has found that policy changes and improved services to young adults who receive SSI can sharply improve employment outcomes.

We focus our employment support efforts on ensuring that people who use those supports not only work, but also work at their maximum capacity, reaching self-sufficient earnings whenever possible.

We are working with other federal agencies to develop early intervention demonstration proposals that would provide resources and support to workers with disabilities to help them stay in the labor force as long as possible.

Strategies

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

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to enhance employment support programs and create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to work (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Initiated the national evaluation of the PROMISE project;
- Promoted the use of Ticket to Work program to disabled beneficiaries:
 - Enhanced marketing campaign;
 - Resumed targeted ticket mailings in April 2015; and
 - Designed virtual job fairs to connect beneficiaries with federal contractors.
- Held a technical panel to develop a process to identify individuals with mental illnesses who are at risk of becoming beneficiaries; and
- Implemented new real-time online services to employment support service providers to assist them in providing better service to beneficiaries returning to work.

Next Steps

- Continue evaluating and overseeing work incentive programs:
 - PROMISE project; and
 - Ticket to Work.

Risks and External Factors

The following risk or external factor may affect our efforts to enhance employment support programs and create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to work:

- Failure to achieve the work incentive programs' target numbers.

Key Initiatives

Improving Employment Support Programs

Many disabled beneficiaries want to work and, with adequate support, some beneficiaries attain self-sufficiency. The Ticket to Work program and the Vocational Rehabilitation Cost Reimbursement program help beneficiaries transition to employment.

Employment networks coordinate and deliver employment services under the Ticket to Work program. In addition to helping beneficiaries find jobs, the employment network staff also helps beneficiaries stay employed, advance in their jobs, and remain off the disability rolls.

We monitor the business practices of employment networks to ensure they provide quality services. We continue to develop clear performance goals to ensure employment networks support beneficiaries in gaining and sustaining long-term employment, economic security, and financial independence. We survey beneficiaries who are working with employment networks annually and provide the satisfaction results on a website. Beneficiaries can use the survey results and other information on the website to evaluate and select an employment network that best meets their needs, interests, and employment goals.

In June 2015, we began to conduct comprehensive reviews of employment networks. We will use the results of these reviews to ensure the networks are providing quality service to beneficiaries.

We are expanding our Internet Ticket Operation Support System (iTOPSS) to centralize the systems support for various applications in our return to work programs. Our partners can use iTOPSS to assign Tickets, request payment, report on beneficiaries' progress, receive marketing files, and access reports about their programs. Many actions in iTOPSS are real time, enabling both our partners and our beneficiaries to have access to the most current information available.

We are improving our beneficiary outreach and education efforts by expanding our Ticket to Work call center, Internet information, and social media tools (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter). All our work incentive seminar events are now available via webinars.

While there were 84,027 new Tickets assigned during FY 2014 (a 26 percent increase in new Ticket assignments over the prior year), the net number of Tickets assigned or in use dipped from 321,218 at the end of FY 2013 to 316,363 at the end of FY 2014. However, the number of beneficiaries using Tickets who were removed from the disability rolls because they successfully returned to work increased from 8,682 to 10,529.

In FY 2014, we reported how many participating beneficiaries earned at least at the trial work level (\$770 per month in FY 2014) within a year of starting the program. In FY 2015 and beyond, we will report the number of disability beneficiaries who use their Tickets and earn above trial work level, regardless of how quickly they did so. Our reporting will provide data on beneficiaries each year (not cumulative) and will tell us how many program participants have earnings at least at the trial work level or higher in the reporting year.



We joined with many other federal agencies to plan for and implement new regulations published by the Department of Labor in FY 2014. The regulation encourages businesses awarded federal contracts to hire people with disabilities. As part of that effort, we began using our outreach tools to link beneficiaries participating in our employment support programs with federal contractors seeking to hire people with disabilities.

In FY 2015, our marketing contractor developed plans to host virtual job fairs to connect beneficiaries participating in the Ticket to Work program with federal contractors seeking to hire people with disabilities. We will also work with other federal agencies to help keep more people with disabilities in the workforce and off disability benefits.

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, we will continue to improve our outreach and job matching activities, focusing on bringing more beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries into the federal contractor workforce. We will continue hosting virtual job fairs and expect to see an increase in the number of working Ticket participants. The history of the Ticket programs suggests that Ticket assignments lag behind the Ticket mailings by up to 18 months. Therefore, we expect a measurable increase in assignments in FY 2016 and FY 2017.

Improving Employment Support Outreach to Targeted Working-Age Beneficiaries

Historically, we told our beneficiaries about our work incentive programs by mailing them a paper ticket and brochure when they began receiving benefits. We stopped the mailings in June 2011 and resumed them in April 2015. We expect these mailings will increase awareness of the program and result in an increase in participation in FY 2016 and FY 2017.

We also make automated telephone calls to beneficiaries we determine are the most likely to return to work. The calls tell individuals about their eligibility for the employment services and support available through the Ticket to Work program. In FY 2015, we expect to send tickets to 60,000 beneficiaries ages 18-56.



Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 3.3

3.3a: Increase the number of beneficiaries returning to work by achieving the target number of Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income disability beneficiaries with Tickets assigned and in use, who work above a certain level

Fiscal Year	2015	2016	2017
Performance	Data available April 2016		
Target	50,000 beneficiaries	55,000 beneficiaries	60,000 beneficiaries
Target Met	TBD		

Results: Our data will not be available until April 2016. We will report our performance for FY 2015 in next year's report.

Data Definition: The total number of Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, and concurrent beneficiaries who used their Ticket to sign up with an employment network or state vocational rehabilitation agency and who have recorded quarterly earnings in the Office of Child Support Enforcement database that are at or above three times the trial-work-level.

Data Source: Office of Child Support Enforcement earnings database

Strategic Goal 4: Build a Model Workforce to Deliver Quality Service

Our employees are the cornerstone of our organization and are critical to fulfilling our public service mission. Their commitment, along with our partners in disability determination services (DDS) offices across the country, allows us to provide dedicated and compassionate services to the public. We provide consultation, products, and services that foster solutions to critical workforce issues.

It is critical we maintain a quality workforce by creating a work environment that supports excellent service. Especially with our economic challenges, our employees are our most vital and valued asset. Their training, developmental opportunities, and institutional knowledge-sharing are a high priority, and we continue to invest in these areas.

As our employees' expectations change, we continue to seek ways to be an employer of choice. We are expanding flexible workplace options, such as telework, and creating more opportunities for skills development.

Strategic Objective 4.1: Attract and Acquire a Talented and Diverse Workforce that Reflects the Public We Serve

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

We have one of the most diverse workforces among agencies our size. We take great pride in knowing our employees reflect the diversity of the people we serve.

To remain an employer of choice for top talent, we are improving our hiring processes by using modernized recruitment strategies, such as social networking tools and virtual job fairs. We will retain this talent by updating our human resources programs, and equipping employees with the essential tools and support needed to complete their work and communicate with people of all ages, education levels, and cultural backgrounds.

Strategies

- Compete for top talent through modernized recruitment strategies;
- Use hiring flexibilities and programs to expand qualified applicant pools;
- Market and expand use of hiring authorities for veterans and individuals with disabilities; and
- Bridge knowledge gaps with core competencies for mission-critical positions.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to attract and acquire a talented and diverse workforce (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Implemented modernized recruitment strategies such as:
 - Social networking tools;
 - Virtual job fairs; and
 - Promoting workplace flexibilities like telework.
- Used the following Pathways Programs for recruitment:
 - The Internship program;
 - The Recent Graduates program; and
 - The Presidential Management Fellows program.
- Hired a recruitment manager to support agency recruitment efforts.

Next Steps

- Implement agency recruitment plan;
- Develop marketing strategies;
- Share employment opportunities with veteran service groups; and
- Share employment opportunities with vocational rehabilitation agencies, employment networks, and college and university service coordinators.

Risks and External Factors

The following risk or external factors may affect our efforts to attract and acquire a talented and diverse workforce that reflects the public we serve:

- Competition with the private sector to attract and retain talented individuals; and
- Lack of knowledge about federal job opportunities.

Key Initiatives

Focusing on the Employment of Veterans and Individuals with Disabilities

We honor the courage and sacrifice the men and women in our armed forces made during their active service. We also respect the skills gained during their service. Offering veterans career opportunities provides us with experienced employees and allows us to honor their service.

We also recognize the rich talent pool that exists among individuals with disabilities. We benefit from their experience as we develop strategies to improve our service to the American people.

Each fiscal year we establish goals for recruiting veterans and individuals with disabilities. Despite recent hiring limitations and budget constraints, we achieved or exceeded our commitments to hiring veterans and disabled workers.

In FY 2015, veterans represented 39.32 percent of our total hiring. Disabled veterans represented 18.57 percent of our total hiring. In FY 2016 and FY 2017, our hiring goals are 25 percent for veterans and 17.50 percent for disabled veterans. We expect to meet or exceed those goals.



We also employ individuals with targeted disabilities at nearly twice the rate of the Federal Government as a whole. In FY 2015, employees with targeted disabilities represented 2.02 percent of our total workforce.

In FY 2015, to assist with hiring and retaining both veterans and individuals with disabilities, we:

- Developed resources to guide recruiters, hiring officials, and managers throughout the hiring process;
- Issued a reminder to all employees about the reasonable accommodation process and the benefits and protections of self-identifying as an employee with a disability;
- Collaborated with federal, state, and local veteran support networks to communicate employment and internship opportunities, including the:
 - **Non-Paid Work Experience program**, offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for disabled veterans, and
 - **Operation War Fighter Internship program**, offered by the Department of Defense for injured service men and women who are still on active duty, but awaiting medical discharge.
- Continued to participate in the Vocational Rehabilitation Internship Program (VRIP), which provides unpaid work experience to clients of state vocational rehabilitation agencies;
- Enhanced our web tool used by staff nationwide to request reasonable accommodation for customers. Staff can now track the status of their requests;
- Hosted events during National Disability Employment Awareness Month highlighting contributions made by our employees with disabilities. Events were also held showcasing assistive technology and explaining the reasonable accommodation process;
- Participated in job fairs, meetings, and other events targeted to veterans and individuals with disabilities;
- Worked with the VA to establish a national approval for a GI Bill on-the-job training benefit for five front-line positions, including benefit authorizer, claims authorizer, claims representative, service representative, and teleservice representative.

By working with groups like the VA, the Wounded Warrior program, vocational rehabilitation agencies, college and university disability services offices, armed forces job fairs, disability advocacy organizations, and other employment

networks supporting veterans and individuals with disabilities, we aim to create awareness of our employment opportunities.

For FY 2016 and FY 2017, we plan to expand the existing initiatives and add more initiatives. We will focus on developing retention strategies to support our hiring efforts.

Highlighting the Pathways Programs (for Students and Recent Graduates to Federal Careers)

Students and recent graduates infuse our workplaces with new enthusiasm, talents, and perspectives. Our Pathways programs offer opportunities through three specific programs:

- **The Internship program** provides students in high schools, colleges, trade schools, and other qualifying educational institutions with paid opportunities to explore federal careers while completing their educations;
- **The Recent Graduates program** provides developmental experiences to individuals who, within the previous two years, graduated from qualifying educational institutions; and
- **The Presidential Management Fellows program** provides entry-level positions and leadership development for advanced degree candidates and recent advanced degree graduates.



Hiring through these programs enables us to offer participants clear career paths, along with meaningful training and development opportunities. These programs enhance our ability to attract and hire a talented and diverse workforce that reflects the public we serve.

In FY 2015, we hired about 15 percent of our new employees through the Pathways programs. As our budget allows, we will continue participating in the Pathways program to attract new employees.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 4.1

4.1a: Maintain the target veteran and disabled veteran new hire percentage to improve their representation in our workforce

Veterans Hiring

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	17.33%	26.72%	36.78%	46.60%	41.28%	39.32%		
Target			26.72%	18.00%	25.00%	25.00%		
Target Met			Met	Met	Met	Met		

Disabled Veterans Hiring

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	8.72%	13.59%	15.49%	18.10%	19.68%	18.57%		
Target			14.59%	15.00%	16.49%	17.50%		
Target Met			Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: We have exceeded our target for both veteran and disabled veteran hiring over the past four years.

Data Definition:

Veteran Hiring: For a given fiscal year, the percentage of overall permanent hires who are veterans (e.g., an employee who has been discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions, has a 5-point or 10-point Veterans' Preference, has creditable military service, has an annuitant indicator, or has an appointment under either the Veterans Recruitment Appointment, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, or the 30 percent or more disabled veteran hiring authorities).

Disabled Veteran Hiring: For a given fiscal year, the percentage of overall permanent hires who are disabled veterans (e.g., an employee who has been discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions and has a 10-point preference due to a service-connected disability). This category is a subset of the overall veterans hiring statistic.

Data includes full-time permanent and part-time permanent employees only.

Data Source: Federal Personnel and Payroll System Datamart

4.1b: Strengthen workforce diversity by maintaining the representation of employees with targeted disabilities

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%		
Target			2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Target Met			Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met		

Results: We met our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: The percentage of the on-duty workforce, as of the end of the fiscal year (September 30), who self-identified as an individual with a targeted disability (e.g., an employee who has self-identified with one or more of the following physical or mental impairments: deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability, or dwarfism).

Data includes full-time permanent and part-time permanent employees only.

Data Source: Federal Personnel and Payroll System Datamart

Strategic Objective 4.2: Strengthen the Competency, Agility, and Performance of Our Workforce to Align with the Needs of the Public

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

No matter how much automation we use to help us work more efficiently, we must equip our employees with the information and tools they need to perform every task well. Providing our employees with ongoing training ensures our employees can deliver outstanding service and meet our customers' needs.

Strategies

- Ensure effective use of the agency's performance management systems to manage employee performance;
- Expand supervisor proficiencies;
- Prepare employees for future leadership opportunities;
- Develop methods to share subject matter expertise;
- Reduce skills gaps in mission-critical positions; and
- Provide employees with continued access to training and developmental experiences.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to strengthen the competency, agility and performance of our workforce (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Enhanced employee-management communications:
 - Acknowledged employee work contributions through monetary and honor award recognitions;
 - Expanded program efforts for knowledge management, managerial, and leadership development; and
 - Implemented Skills Connect pilot as part of our GovConnect initiative.
- Launched National Mentoring Program pilot;
- Implemented supervisor proficiencies plans and leadership initiatives:
 - Established internal leadership development programs; and
 - Rolled out Leadership Essentials for New Supervisors.
- Procured an updated Learning Management System with competency modeling capability;
- Worked with Office of Personnel Management to develop a framework for competency/skills development and assessment;
- Implemented Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) One Stop, a comprehensive online library of up-to-date, legally compliant, uniform information about EEO laws, policies, and procedures, for employees, managers, and EEO practitioners nationwide; and
- Launched wEEO Radio, an innovative mechanism to disseminate EEO training to managers nationwide via bi-monthly "radio broadcasts" (teleconferences) in a talk show format.

Next Steps

- Evaluate Skills Connect pilot and prepare for agency-wide launch;
- Assess merit-based execution of the Performance Culture gauged by evaluation of performance and award actions;
- Continue to enhance Performance Assessment and Communications System training; and
- Develop continuous learning programs for experienced supervisors and managers that will include an assessment and job coaching.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to strengthen the competency, agility, and performance of our workforce to align with the needs of the public:

- Inability to replace employees at or near the attrition rate in previous years has resulted in ongoing skills gaps;
- Limited training and developmental opportunities for interested employees; and
- Insufficient training and support provided to current management and leaders.

Key Initiatives

Creating Management Training

We are building a cadre of leaders whose skills are transferable throughout our organization. Our Leadership Essentials for New Supervisors training integrates technical skills with leadership competencies, while emphasizing performance management.

In FY 2015, we assigned new supervisors to the LENS training. Following training, we conducted competency gap assessments to target future training.

In FY 2016, we will revise the curriculum based on participant feedback. Participants also have access to online resources, including a management discussion forum. We expect the forum will improve communication and knowledge sharing. Further enhancements planned for FY 2017 include automatically enrolling new supervisors within a month of their promotions.

Reducing Skills Gaps

Identifying and reducing skill gaps at all levels of the organization is important for our success.

In FY 2015, we began developing competency assessments for two mission critical occupations in our operations area: the 105 Series Social Insurance Specialists and the 962 Series Contact Representatives. Additionally, we worked to reduce skills gaps in three other positions throughout the organization:

- Human Resources Specialists throughout the nation;
- Legal Assistants in our Office of Disability Adjudication and Review; and
- Social Insurance Specialists in our Office of Retirement and Disability Policy.

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, we will reassess the new models, conduct gap reduction activities, and continue to develop new models for other mission critical occupations.

Our efforts also align with the Cross-Agency Priority goal “Create a Culture of Excellence and Engagement to Enable Higher Performance”. More information on Cross-Agency Priority goals is available on performance.gov.

Focusing on Career Development Programs

Our future depends on developing employees’ leadership and management skills throughout their careers. One way we identify and develop potential leaders, helping ensure we have a strong succession management pipeline, is through our National Career Development Programs:

- **The Leadership Development Program** prepares employees for General Schedule (GS)-11 through GS-13 leadership positions. We will announce and select employees for this program in FY 2016; and
- **The Advanced Leadership Development Program** prepares employees for GS-14 and GS-15 leadership positions. The 2014 class will end in FY 2017.

These programs target employees with proven leadership potential. We strengthen their leadership skills through developmental assignments and formal training.

To help our experienced managers prepare for senior-level positions, we offer the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program. This program is a key element of our succession management strategy for filling future executive-level leadership vacancies.

In addition to our formal leadership programs, many of our employees gain leadership skills through progressively higher positions requiring greater levels of responsibility, accountability, and employee interactions.

Using SkillsConnect to Share Talent Across Our Agency

The Office of Personnel Management recently partnered with federal agencies to implement GovConnect. GovConnect is a federal initiative designed to create a culture of excellence based on collaboration and teamwork within and across agencies.

SkillsConnect is our GovConnect pilot. SkillsConnect enables employees to use their existing skills, establish networks, and gain exposure to opportunities outside their own work areas. Participating employees remain in their current positions, and may work on a project for up to 20 percent of their workday for up to six months, depending on the project.

Our SkillsConnect pilot began in January 2015. One-third of our agency, approximately 21,000 employees, participated in the pilot. Based on our evaluations, which we started at the end of July 2015, we will work with stakeholders and make updates needed before launching the initiative agency-wide in FY 2016.

Enhancing our Human Resources Services Portal

Our Human Resources (HR) business processes rely on several standalone applications, most requiring separate security access. Our enhanced portal provides one-stop shopping for our managers, employees, and specialists to access HR information and applications. Access is role-based, and where possible, we have implemented single sign on.

In FY 2015, we added links to existing services and information. We are also building a nationally available version of a regional application that interfaces with the federal personnel and payroll system data.

We expect to release an electronic version of SSA-7B Employee Record, by the end of the FY 2016. This application will allow managers and supervisors to view information displays with interactive functionality for their employees. We are planning additional releases in FY 2017.

Marketing Availability of On-Demand Training and Development

We continue to promote our electronic libraries, online and distance training, and just-in-time training for employees. Our comprehensive online library delivers agency-specific content and training on new skills. It provides over 3,500 interactive courses, 49,000 eBooks, 4,800 leadership videos, 13,940 information technology desktop application videos, and 480 audio books. Most of the training sessions are less than an hour long, and employees can choose the format and training pace that accommodates their job, work location, and personal commitments.

In FY 2015, we used infomercials to advertise, educate, and inform employees of our available human resource services, programs, and soft skills training offerings.

Supporting Employees through Mentoring

Mentoring is a dynamic developmental and learning partnership through which one person (mentor) shares knowledge, skills, information, experience, perspective, and wisdom to foster the personal and professional development of another (mentee) through ongoing communication.

To support our employees and help prepare them for future job requirements, we piloted our National Mentoring Program, which is open to all employees. Mentoring programs increase morale and organizational productivity and help participants plan their career paths.

The primary goal of the National Mentoring Program is to foster relationships that enhance personal and professional growth and development. Through the mentoring relationship, mentors have the opportunity to coach, guide, and share experiences, knowledge, and skills, which will help to foster an inclusive culture that leads to greater retention of well-experienced and empowered employees.

Our goals for the mentoring program are to:

- **Promote a “Knowledge-sharing Culture” to Support Succession Planning Efforts** - Mentoring facilitates knowledge sharing, while developing top talent and a pipeline of well-qualified candidates;
- **Facilitate Skill and Competency Development to Support Employee Talent Development** - Mentoring facilitates self-improvement, serving as a conduit for employee development, career planning, and sustaining optimum skills, competencies, and performance; and
- **Increase Employee Engagement to Improve Employee Morale and Retention** - Mentoring helps foster an inclusive culture and can lead to a greater retention of well-qualified and empowered employees.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 4.2

4.2a: Strengthen workforce competence by improving our talent management index score

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	61%	62%	59%	55%	57%	59%		
Target						Increase the talent management index score to 60%	Increase the talent management index score to 61%	Increase the talent management index score to 63%
Target Met						Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2015 target; however, our talent management score increased from 57 percent in FY 2014 to 59 percent in FY 2015.

Data Definition: During a given year, the Office of Personnel Management uses data from seven Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey questions to determine the extent to which employees perceived the organization has the talent necessary to achieve organizational goals. The seven survey questions follow:

Question 1 - I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.

Question 11 - My talents are used well in the workplace.

Question 18 - My training needs are assessed.

Question 21 - My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills.

Question 29 - The workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.

Question 47 - Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit support employee development.

Question 68 - How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job?

Data Source: Office of Personnel Management – Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Strategic Objective 4.3: Foster an Inclusive Culture that Promotes Employee Well-Being, Innovation, and Engagement

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

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 they do for the American people.

We care about the well-being of our workforce and support their engagement at work. We know that the more effort we place on employee safety, collaboration between management and labor representatives, and agency-wide communication, the better the opportunities we will have to generate creativity and innovation.

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 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.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to foster an inclusive culture that promotes employee well-being, innovation, and engagement (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Expanded employee telework participation;
- Promoted work-life balance support offered to employees;
- Used Diversity and Inclusion Council to pilot the National Mentor Program;
- Established an Employee Engagement Community of Practice;
- Switched to new digital emergency radio system;
- Surveyed employees to find out their experiences with diversity and inclusion;
- Established a program to identify and overcome barriers hindering our diversity and inclusion efforts; and
- Collaborated with our three labor unions on workplace issues and held reoccurring forums.

Next Steps

- Identify and market potential career paths for employees;
- Expand the number of eligible employees participating in telework;
- Research and develop plan for reducing realty costs through initiatives like hoteling and shared workplaces;
- Continue labor management and employee relations forums; and
- Establish a web-based platform and electronic message board for employees to collaborate on work topics and engage in idea sharing.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to foster an inclusive culture that promotes employee well-being, innovation, and engagement:

- Some employees are unaware of work-life support options or unable to take advantage of them;
- Lack of computers available to support telework expansion;
- Varying expectations and needs of a multigenerational workforce;
- Low employee morale; and
- Reaching labor agreements.

Key Initiatives

Improving the Employee Satisfaction

Our employees are essential to meeting our challenges and achieving agency goals. Therefore, it is important that we foster an environment that embraces employee engagement. Employee satisfaction is a priority for our agency. The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results allows us to gauge employee satisfaction in various categories, such as work environment, workloads, employee development, employee programs, and leadership.

In response our FEVS results, we conduct a comprehensive analysis and, as a result, developed the Improving Employee Satisfaction Plan. The Plan summarizes the FEVS results and identifies our strengths, areas for improvement, and includes action steps. We update the Plan annually, after we receive our FEVS results.

We develop our action steps using the following information:

- Comprehensive analyses of the survey results to identify strengths, trends, and areas for improvement;
- Action-planning guidance from OPM, the Partnership for Public Service, and the Corporate Executive Board;
- Extensive review of current research, benchmarking studies, and best practices; and
- Input collected from our components, labor unions, advisory councils, management associations, the Human Capital Executive Steering Committee, and previous Improving Employee Satisfaction-related workgroups.



Our 2015 FEVS results showed that we have talented, dedicated, and hardworking employees who understand how their work relates to our mission. The results also identified employee development, work-life balance, effective leadership, and communication as areas that need our attention.

Our Plan serves as a roadmap for agency-wide change and improvement in employee engagement and satisfaction.

Creating Management and Labor Forum Meetings and Predecisional Involvement Opportunities

We are committed to fostering a collaborative labor-management relationship with our three unions (American Federation of Government Employees, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, and National Treasury Employees Union) through discussions during forums. Working with our unions before we make decisions on workplace issues is crucial for strengthening the labor-management relationship. The input and support of employees and management are critical to meeting our long-term public service commitment. We will continue to work collaboratively with employee representatives to ensure we deliver the highest quality service to the American people.

In FY 2015, we:

- Coordinated joint labor-management events, developed forum improvement objectives, and are working on areas of improvement reflected by the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) Results;
- Developed an Executive Steering Committee consisting of union and management co-chairs, under the direction of Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. There is also a relationship by objective committee, which meets monthly to discuss National forum improvements, plan agendas, and brainstorm ideas for improving relationships at all levels in the Agency;
- Met quarterly at the regional level to discuss specific issues affecting the region. In addition, Office of Disability Adjudication and Review forums met bimonthly;
- Established labor-management workgroups to address complex issues, plan joint labor-management relationship training and develop actions plans to improve work processes and communication; and
- Met with labor and management forum members to get pre-decisional input on our Skills Connect pilot, Job Experience Learning Program, and National Mentoring Program. We entered into an agreement on

SkillsConnect, and we entered into a memorandum of understanding on the job experience program and on the mentoring program.

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, we will continue using labor-management committees, workgroups, and forums to foster collaborative labor-management relationship with our unions. We plan to build additional relationships across regions and increase our pre-decisional involvement sessions.

Highlighting Diversity and Inclusion

We serve a diverse nation and strive to recruit, promote, and retain a workforce that draws from all segments of society. We have a long-standing history of being among the most diverse federal agencies – a goal we achieved through careful planning and recruitment efforts.

Our *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*, developed in FY 2012, highlights proven best practices for attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce. The plan also describes how we can foster a work environment that draws on our collective talents, respects individual differences, and leverages diversity.

To sustain our commitment, we instituted a Diversity and Inclusion Council with representation from all levels of the agency, including senior leadership, labor, management associations, and Advisory Councils. The Council's ongoing mission is to provide overarching guidance and support for our diversity and inclusion efforts by recognizing employees' unique perspectives and contributions.

Our human resources staff collaborates with the Council on training, marketing, employee engagement, and outreach. Council members serve as role models and champions on initiatives that promote inclusiveness and leverage the diversity of our workforce.

Our diversity and inclusion practices help ensure we have a workforce that is representative of our customers and that we support Executive Order 13583, *Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce*.

We celebrate our individual differences and encourage full employee engagement by supporting these diverse Employee Advisory Councils within our workforce:

- American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Council;
- Black Affairs Advisory Council;
- Hispanic Affairs Advisory Council;
- National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Advisory Council;
- National Women's Advisory Council;
- Pacific Asian American Advisory Council; and
- Veterans and Military Affairs Advisory Council.

Our Advisory Councils work with our Diversity and Inclusion staff and our executive leadership through the Diversity and Inclusion Council to help create an inclusive environment for our employees and provide excellent customer service to the diverse public we serve. The Advisory Councils provide ideas on improving services and promoting our programs in their respective communities.

Each year, we hold up to 12 commemorative programs or exhibits, recognizing groups that are under-represented in the Federal Government. In FY 2015, we held the first Unity Celebration, honoring workforce diversity beyond the under-represented groups and featuring exhibits highlighting our employees' varied nationalities.

Supporting Work-Life Balance

Our Work-Life programs help our employees balance the demands of the workplace and their personal lives.

Telework provides employees with more flexibility and lower commuting costs, while still meeting the agency's needs. In recruiting, we find telework is a sought-after option, helping make us an employer of choice.

We have also seen an upward trend in our FEVS results related to telework satisfaction. Additionally, telework helps us address workspace issues. We will continue to expand telework, as equipment and job functions allow.

We are actively making other efforts to increase our ranking to place within the Top 5 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government. We promote family friendly policies, work/life services, and employee seminars on personal topics like financial literacy, fitness, stress management, and career development. We have also increased career opportunities across components.

In FY 2014, the agency implemented a new telework policy allowing employees to work in alternate locations, other than their official work locations. In FY 2015 and FY 2016, we will continue to increase participation in the agency's telework program.

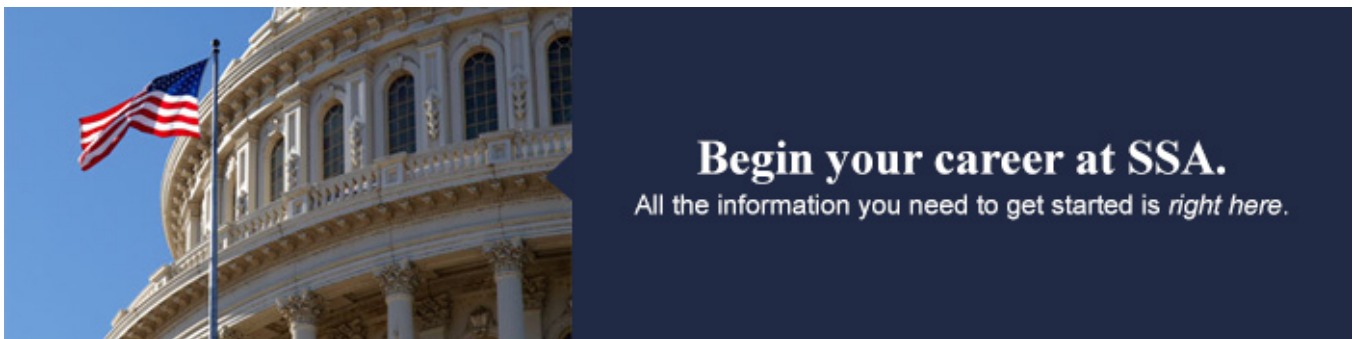
Establishing an Employee Engagement Community of Practice

Developing and maintaining a strong partnership with our employees is essential to our success. Our new Employee Engagement Community of Practice helps strengthen our existing employee engagement and mission performance culture. The new Community of Practice will have representatives from each deputy commissioner-level office.

Our employee engagement score in the FEVS Engagement Index will be one of the measures we review to determine the Community of Practice's success.

To strengthen employee engagement, the Community of Practice group will focus on five key areas:

- **Discuss key FEVS/Improving Employee Satisfaction (IES) actions** from components and identify actions that could help other components;
- **Identify and share best practices** within components and work units with high engagement scores;
- **Identify areas needing attention** and help develop action steps;
- **Sustain successful approaches** by identifying supporting human capital policies and establishing strong outcome metrics; and
- **Monitor/update component IES plans** quarterly using HRStat, a quarterly, data-driven review of key performance metrics. Component-level IES plans will be tracked as part of the Community of Practice's work.



Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 4.3

4.3a: Become one of the Top 5 Best Places to Work among large agencies in the Federal Government

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	Top 10 Ranking	Top 10 Ranking	Top 10 Ranking	Top 10 Ranking	Top 10 Ranking	Top 10 Ranking		
Target					Achieve a Top 10 Ranking	Achieve a Top 10 Ranking	Achieve a Top 5 Ranking	Achieve a Top 5 Ranking
Target Met					Met	Met		

Results: We met our FY 2015 target. Since 2007, our employees have ranked us in the top 10 [Best Places to Work in the Federal Government](#). In FY 2015, we ranked number 6 out of 19 large federal agencies.

Data Definition: During a given year, the Partnership for Public Service uses responses to three Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey questions to develop index scores. The Partnership for Public Service ranks Federal Government agencies based on the calculated index scores using a proprietary formula. The rankings provide a rating of employee satisfaction and commitment across government. The three Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey questions follow:

Question 40 - I recommend my organization as a good place to work.

Question 69 - Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?

Question 71 - Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization?

Data Source: The Partnership for Public Service

4.3b: Increase workplace flexibilities by expanding telework opportunities for employees

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	104% increase over FY 2013 levels (8,547 employees)	13,514 employees participating in telework		
Target	Increase the percentage of employees participating in telework by 100% over FY 2013 levels (8,200 employees)	Increase the number of employees participating in telework to 16,400 by the end of the fiscal year		
Target Met	Met	Not Met		

Results: In FY 2015, 13,514 employees participated in telework.

Data Definition: The agency is increasing the number of employees nationwide who telework (as reported to the Office of Personnel Management annually). We define telework as working arrangements in which employees work officially assigned duties at an alternative duty station.

Data Source: Office of Personnel Management, Annual Telework Data

4.3c NEW: Increase employee engagement as measured by the employee engagement index score

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	70%	72%	69%	67%	66%	68%		
Target							69%	70%
Target Met								

Results: Our Employee Engagement Index score increased from 66% in FY 2014 to 68% in FY 2015.

Data Definition: During a given year, the Office of Personnel Management uses responses from 15 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey questions to develop the Employee Engagement Index scores. The Office of Personnel Management calculates the index scores by first determining the percent positive for each question in the subfactor indices. Then the unrounded percent positive scores are averaged across the questions in the index to get the index score. This subfactor index score is then rounded for reporting purposes. To create the overall Employee Engagement Index score, the unrounded subfactor index scores are averaged. This overall index score is then rounded for reporting purposes. The rankings provide a rating of employee satisfaction and commitment across government. The subfactor indices and Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey questions follow:

Subfactor Index: Leaders Lead (five items)

Question 53 - In my organization, leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce.

Question 54 - My organization’s leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity.

Question 56 - Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization.

Question 60 - Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor/team leader?

Question 61 - I have a high level of respect for my organization’s senior leaders.

Subfactor Index: Supervisors (five items)

Question 47 - Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit support employee development

Question 48 - My supervisor/team leader listens to what I have to say.

Question 49 - My supervisor/team-leader treats me with respect.

Question 51 - I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.

Question 52 - Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor/team leader?

Subfactor Index: Intrinsic Work Experience (five items)

Question 3 - I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.

Question 4 - My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.

Question 6 - I know what is expected of me on the job.

Question 11 - My talents are used well in the workplace.

Question 12 - I know how my work relates to the agency’s goals and priorities.

Data Source: Office of Personnel Management – Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Strategic Objective 4.4: Enhance Planning and Alignment of Human Resources to Address Current and Future Public Service Needs

Vision 2025 Priority: Exceptional Employees

Large multilayered organizations often lack the agility to keep up with the frequent changes required to address public service needs. We will analyze our current workforce and develop strategies to meet our future organizational needs. Using workforce restructuring and reshaping programs, we will develop approaches to streamline and align our workforce. Our approaches will be supported by data analysis and forecasting to ensure we are prepared for the near term and for future service delivery needs.

Strategies

- Use workforce restructuring and reshaping programs (e.g., Voluntary Early Retirement Authority) to adjust and align the workforce with agency needs;
- Use human resource management information 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.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to enhance planning and alignment of human resources to address current and future public service needs (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Drafted Retirement Wave report analysis to address workforce challenges;
- Restructured agency workforce;
- Held first integrated performance improvement officer/HRStat session;
- Approved analytics projects for the analytics hub pilot; and
- Released two video-on-demand training sessions on:
 - Performance management; and
 - The importance of communication for managers.

Next Steps

- Continue transition to competency-based human capital management;
- Produce an annual workforce analysis performance report using HRStat;
- Integrate at least one process or program into HRStat Review process;
- Pilot at least one project for the analytics hub;
- Continue to hold quarterly HRStat data driven reviews;
- Conduct a comprehensive study of new hire population;
- Release third video installment on performance management for managers; and
- Use Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey for HR performance data analyses.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to enhance planning and alignment of human resources to address current and future public service needs:

- Ability to recruit and retain subject matter expertise in data analytics;
- Insufficient human resources staff to align agency priorities with public needs; and
- Limited access to latest technology supporting data-driven performance.

Key Initiatives

Implementing HRStat Review Process

Our HRStat reviews provide the information we need to determine our strengths and weaknesses, monitor program implementation, and evaluate our performance of our human capital initiatives and metrics. HRStat also enables us to track interim results of our human capital planning.

As part of our HRStat approach, we conduct quarterly data-driven human capital reviews. Senior executives review each quarter's outcomes to monitor our human capital outcomes.

For our initial FY 2015 HRStat session, we reviewed metrics and developed goals. We expect to meet or exceed established targets in 75 percent of the measures.

We also integrated our Human Capital Operating Plan initiatives into our HRStat review process. During quarterly review sessions, we monitor progress and develop strategies to address challenges.

By FY 2016, we expect HRStat to be implemented as a core business process.

Using Applicant Flow Data

We must attract, develop, and retain a world-class workforce that delivers results for the American people. We strive to provide a level playing field and the opportunity for employees to achieve their potential.

One tool we use to examine our recruitment efforts is Applicant Flow Data. Applicants using USAJobs.gov can provide demographic information, including sex, ethnicity, and race, and how they learned about the position. Applicant Flow Data refers to the analysis of this information to determine selection rates among different groups for particular jobs.

We use this information to:

- Examine the fairness and inclusiveness of recruiting efforts;
- Determine whether recruitment efforts are reaching all segments of the population, consistent with federal equal employment opportunity laws;
- Identify barriers to employment and best practices at each stage of the hiring process: application, qualification, referral, and selection; and
- Target resources to address strategic challenges.

Collecting demographic data, including Applicant Flow Data, is an integral part of the process we use to identify barriers (in compliance with the policy guidance provided in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Management Directive 715).

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, we will continue to analyze the data by components, regions, major occupations, and grade levels. As we identify differences in selection rates among different groups in a particular component or region, we will work to address those challenges.

Implementing the Human Capital Operating Plan

Human capital is a major concern for leaders across the government. Federal leadership faces the challenge of recruiting, retaining, and developing a talented workforce in a tight fiscal climate. In the face of increasingly complex and demanding realities, we must have employees with the right skills, in the right places, at the right times to achieve our mission.

The Human Capital Operating Plan represents our commitment to renew our focus on human capital and succession management. The plan aligns with, and supports, the goals of our [Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014 – 2018](#) and [Vision 2025](#). Our plan includes a mandate to build a model workforce to deliver quality service as one of our five strategic goals.

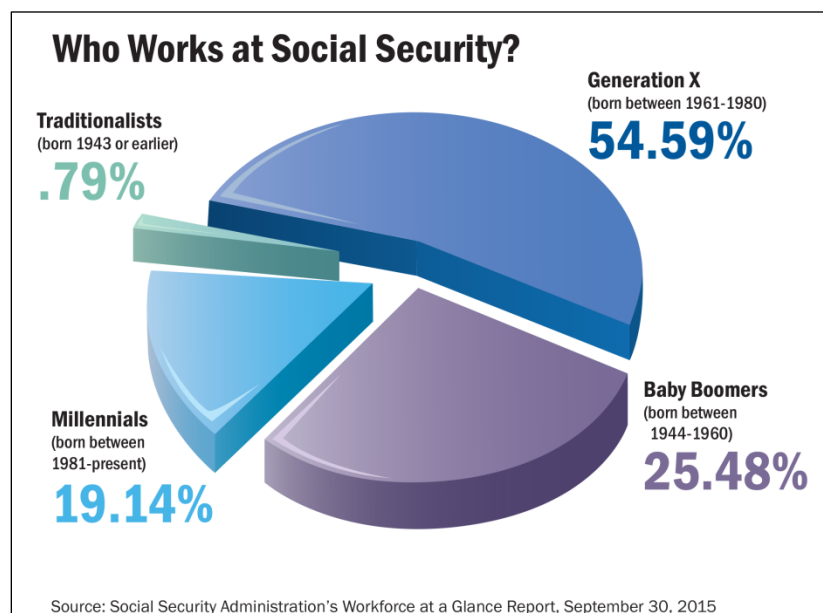
Our plan includes an analysis of our current and future workforce, identifies agency-specific initiatives, milestones, and outcome metrics, and focuses on the following key areas:

- Transform the agency into an employer of choice;
- Transition to competency-based human capital management;
- Expand leadership and core competency skill development; and
- Establish an integrated and collaborative human capital management framework.

Human capital management encompasses the process of managing how people are hired, developed, deployed, motivated, and retained. It builds upon the traditional model of HR by focusing on results. It also seeks to align HR decisions and investments more directly with our agency’s mission, goals, and objectives.

We must adopt a more proactive and data-driven approach toward managing human capital to meet the needs of our future workforce. Further, we must commit adequate training resources to ensure staff remains fully prepared to provide quality service both now and in the future.

This initiative, coupled with the resources and governance structure to monitor success, provides a solid foundation for achieving a reimagined, revitalized effort toward the attraction, acquisition, development, engagement, and retention of our greatest asset – our employees.



Analyzing Retirement Wave Analysis

We continue to face the challenge of a workforce that is decreasing while service demands increase. Our employees are essential to providing outstanding service to the public. Steady losses of employees from retirements present a unique opportunity to reshape our workforce. With just over 16 percent of our workforce eligible to retire, we will continue to build generational bridges and create an environment that focuses on developing a culture of continuous learning.

In FY 2015, we developed the FY 2015-2024 *Retirement Wave Report*. This report provides valuable workforce data that our decision-makers can use for human capital and financial management decisions. We analyzed and provided information on actual retirements, retirement eligibility, and retirement projections. This analysis gives an outlook on how our workforce may change over time. We will look for ways to prevent gaps and build the succession bench to guarantee continuity of the quality of service to the American public.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 4.4

4.4a: Lay the foundation for building a 21st century workforce by meeting or exceeding targeted Human Resources measures

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	77%	83%		
Target	Achieve 75% of the human capital metrics	Achieve 75% of the human capital metrics	Achieve 78% of the human capital metrics	Achieve 80% of the human capital metrics
Target Met	Met	Met		

Results: We achieved 83% of the human capital metrics, exceeding our goal of 75%.

Data Definition: After the end of the fiscal year, we determine the number of initiatives that met or exceeded the established target. We divide the number of metrics where we achieved the selected targets by the total number of initiatives that we monitored throughout the fiscal year.

Data Source: Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, Federal Personnel and Payroll System, Human Resources Operational Data Store, Office of Personnel Management’s Applicant Satisfaction Survey, Office of Personnel Management’s Manager Satisfaction Survey.

Strategic Goal 5: Ensure Reliable, Secure, and Efficient Information Technology Services

As the demand for our agency's services increases, the American public expects to interact with us using every technology available to them. Online and mobile service options are in high demand for those who prefer electronic channels, yet some people and some services still require in-person assistance at a field office.

A robust and cost-effective information technology (IT) environment is at the core of every service our agency provides for the American public and for our employees. We support our mission-critical business and service operations by designing, deploying, and maintaining one of the Nation's most sophisticated IT infrastructures.

With advances in technology, come increased security risks. Ensuring information and systems security is vital, and enhancing our cyber security protection is an ongoing task. When fully operational, our new data center, the National Support Center, will serve as the hub for our information technology operations. The National Support Center opened in September 2014, and we expect to complete the full systems migration by the end of 2016. We have planned carefully to ensure there is no service interruption during the transition.

Strategic Objective 5.1: Maintain System Performance and the Continuity of Information Technology Services

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Technology is essential to everything we do. If our systems experience a problem, our productivity and service immediately decline. Maintaining strong IT performance is vital, despite rising IT demands, increasing cyber security risks, and constant industry changes.

We rely on a large and complex technology infrastructure. Our infrastructure includes dual data centers, extensive national databases, hundreds of software applications, large supporting computing platforms, and thousands of networked computers, printers, telephones, and other devices. Change to our IT infrastructure is constant, and we will ensure responsive, reliable performance.

Our two data centers, the National Computer Center and the Second Support Center, maintain beneficiary demographic, wage, and benefit information, enabling us to promptly and accurately make benefits payments. The National Computer Center has been in continuous operation since 1980.

As part of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, Congress approved funding to build a new data center. All current production data center operations now housed in our aging National Computer Center will transition to the new National Support Center in 2015 and 2016. The new center will provide increased capacity and improved operational reliability and efficiency.

Strategies

- Successfully transition to the new National Support Center; and
- Maintain responsive, reliable system performance.

Progress Update

The Social Security Administration, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, has determined that performance toward this objective is making **noteworthy progress**. We took the following steps in FY 2015 to maintain system performance and the continuity of information technology services (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Set up new IT infrastructure at the National Support Center, as scheduled; and
- Maintained system continuity, as planned.

Next Steps

- Continue transition plan to the National Support Center; and
- Maintain current systems reliability metrics throughout the transition to the National Support Center.

Risks and External Factors

The following risk or external factor may affect our efforts to maintain system performance and the continuity of information technology services:

- New legislation, changing technology, and high volumes of workloads may affect planned activities.

Key Initiatives

Enhancing Our Infrastructure

Our new National Support Center will dramatically increase our computing power, reduce our energy consumption, and provide the foundation for future infrastructure enhancements. We completed the IT infrastructure set up in April 2015, and by August 2016, all IT services should be completely migrated to the new center.

We designed the facility to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certified. Minimal staffing, lighting most areas only when staff are present, and managing the infrastructure remotely will help reduce energy costs. Innovative heating and cooling systems will also help reduce costs. For example, when outside temperatures are below 55 degrees (about 145 days each year), there will be practically no cooling costs.

Over the next several years, we will implement several technologies including high-speed disc replication, dynamic load balancing with high bandwidth connectivity between data centers, additional data center capacity, and automatic failover and staging systems.

Maintaining Systems Performance While Transitioning to the National Support Center

Moving our data infrastructure is no simple task. The transition is a complex process and the nature of our business requires continuous operation. Our goal is to provide uninterrupted service during the transition from our National Computer Center in Baltimore to the new National Support Center in Western Maryland.

Our service migration began in October 2014 and will continue until August 2016. Our multiyear strategy includes using the latest technological advances to enhance the capacity, flexibility, and performance of our IT environment and infrastructure.

Our migration project recently received the 2015 Project Management Excellence Award from the Government Information Technology Council. A panel of government and industry representatives selected the winner, based on six criteria: significant mission outcomes, cost savings, risk management, customer experience, innovative approach, and quality assurance.

Improving Information Technology Cost and Performance

We use proven technologies to lower IT cost and improve performance. As part of our capital planning and investment control process, we evaluate the cost of IT projects in terms of their return on investment.

We adopt new technologies to provide stable and high-performing environments, like:

- **Server consolidation:** Buying fewer, larger servers;
- **Server virtualization:** Dividing one large server into smaller sections which operate as individual servers, running their own operating systems and applications;
- **Data deduplication:** A specialized data compression process used to identify data chunks and reference them, instead of repeat them;
- **Hot aisle containment:** Installing a physical barrier to direct hot air exhaust to the air conditioning return system, increasing cooling efficiency;
- **High density computing:** Maximizing a computer's performance as much as possible in the smallest amount of space possible with as little heat as possible; and
- **Cloud computing:** Internet-based, instead of hard-drive based.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 5.1

5.1a: Provide uninterrupted access to our systems during scheduled times of operation

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	99.84% availability	99.89% availability	99.9% availability	99.96% availability	99.97% availability	99.96% availability		
Target			99.5% availability	99.5% availability	99.5% availability	99.5% availability	99.5% availability	99.5% availability
Target Met			Met	Met	Met	Met		

Results: We have consistently exceeded this target since FY 2012. In FY 2015, we provided uninterrupted access to our systems 99.96 percent of the time during scheduled times of operation.

Data Definition: We define enterprise availability as a weighted total availability of service channel mission-critical applications for all our customers. We consider an application available when the end user can perform all business functions within the application with reasonable response times. The weighting takes into account the relative impact that an outage could have on our customers, considering both the functionality and the service hours that are potentially affected. Six different service channels (i.e., online, electronic disability process, Internet, telephone, data exchange, and weekend online services) and accompanying applications are included. Mission-critical services in our enterprise availability include:

- Self-service Internet benefits applications;
- Automated telephone menu data applications;
- Email and case processing systems used by our direct support staff or by our partnering disability determination services staff; and
- External business services, including application services between us and other federal agencies, as well as data exchange systems used by our governmental or business partners.

Data Source: Hewlett-Packard OpenView Service Center (data is limited to Critical Application Severity 1 outages)

Strategic Objective 5.2: Enhance and Execute Plans to Modernize Our Systems

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Our information technology (IT) solutions are constantly evolving as we meet our business needs with stable, modern technologies. We support and employ technologies championed by the Federal Chief Information Officer Council and the Federal Information Technology Reform Plan, such as:

- Digital government;
- Shared services;
- Modular development;
- Near 24/7 system availability; and
- Cloud (Internet-based) computing architecture.

We are revising our computer code, once dominated by older programming languages (e.g., Common Business Oriented Language and Assembler Language Code) to provide a better balance of more modern code while maintaining older, highly functioning code. Improving the presentation and usability of our older systems, while removing technical risks, continues to be our focus.

As funding permits, we invest in new business applications, while improving existing applications and infrastructure. We incrementally modernize our older software applications based on business opportunity and technical risk. We continue to enable newer, more adaptable technologies, when appropriate, while maintaining the code base and systems supporting the services we provide the American public every day.

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.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to enhance and execute plans to modernize our systems (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Enhanced our annual application portfolio management review by combining data collection and detail analysis; and
- Implemented additional fraud detection algorithms to detect potential fraud.

Next Steps

- Expand use of our application portfolio management process to applications developed outside the Office of Systems;
- Expand antifraud applications, identifying both internal and external threats; and
- Convert selected databases to relational database technology.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to enhance and execute plans to modernize our systems:

- Modernization of some systems is delayed because they are currently stable and running smoothly;
- Subject matter experts who fully understand underlying business processes behind legacy systems are approaching retirement – thus we may lose institutional knowledge before those systems are migrated into new platforms; and
- Legislative changes and other federal mandates often require reallocation of scarce resources.

Key Initiatives

Modernizing Older Software Applications

We manage our IT application portfolio the same way individuals manage their investment portfolios. First, we evaluate existing software applications to ensure they meet our business goals while fitting into our overall IT plan. Then we use those evaluations to retire, modernize, or maintain the applications.

Our application portfolio management practice includes ongoing reviews of all our applications.

Modernization efforts include:

- Updating database designs by converting them to relational databases;
- Eliminating the use of Assembler Language Code;
- Replacing outdated user interfaces;
- Upgrading infrastructure; and
- Integrating our services more completely.

Improving Information Technology Governance and Architectural Planning

IT governance and architectural planning covers a wide range of systems development and planning activities related to standards and regulations, systems management, life-cycle support, user groups, performance and availability, and new technologies. Governance helps ensure that we adhere to our policies and to federal IT requirements.

We provide IT governance and planning through our:

- Architecture Review Board;
- Infrastructure Review Board;
- Design Review Board;
- Enterprise data architects;
- Solutions architects;
- Security Architects; and
- Enterprise Architects.

These groups provide support for the design, installation, and maintenance of the hardware and software needed to ensure a reliable, efficient, and effective environment for all of our platforms.

Enhancing the *my* Social Security Portal

We plan to redesign the *my* Social Security portal to enhance our customers' experience, provide greater protection for the public's data, and expand our secure online service options.

The redesign will provide critical enhancements to the *my* Social Security portal, allowing for new tabs for additional online services. The new tabs will group similar online services within the *my* Social Security portal, making the portal easier to navigate and enhancing our customers' experience.

The redesign will also add more robust anti-fraud and authentication capabilities to the *my* Social Security portal. The enhancements will provide users with a secure way to request replacement Social Security number cards online. As we expand our online service options, we are committed to providing secure online services both now and in the future.

Enhancing the *my* Social Security portal is vital to the success of our online services. We are adding responsive design so that our online services are available to our customers across a variety of devices (i.e. customer service stations, tablets, mobile devices, etc.). Enhancements will affect both current and future applications scheduled for release in FY 2016. Additionally, the redesign will plan for services coming behind the portal to ensure appropriate space is available.

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, the redesign project will include:

- Enhancing security for the online Social Security number replacement card functionality;
- Enhancing online fraud detection capabilities;
- Adding responsive design to the *my* Social Security portal; and
- Adding tabs within the portal to group services to improve the customer experience.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 5.2

5.2a: Enhance systems performance and reliability by upgrading the telecommunications infrastructure in our offices

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	Upgraded infrastructure to better incorporate new technologies	Refreshed 100% of our network connection devices		
Target	Complete the infrastructure upgrade to incorporate modern technologies that support future Internet and network capacity needs and new capabilities	Refresh 50% of our network connection devices by September 30, 2015		
Target Met	Met	Met		

Results: We exceeded our goal by refreshing 100% of our network connection devices.

Data Definition: This target provides for the design, installation, implementation, monitoring, and maintenance of our Wide Area and Local Area Networks and the connectivity to these network services to end users nationwide. It also provides the communication medium through which our employees receive data such as voice and video, administers the Network’s services agency-wide, and the exchange of data with other federal and state agencies. The projects in this initiative involve the National 800 Number, Satellite and Wireless Communications Solutions, Video Teleconferencing, fax, Voice over Internet Protocol, Electronic Messaging, and the procurements of system hardware and software services.

Data Source: Our Wide Area and Local Area Networks and Connectivity Plan

5.2b NEW: Improve customer service by using information technology to provide new online services to users of *my Social Security*

Fiscal Year	2015	2016	2017
Performance			
Target		Implement new fraud and authentication capabilities to enable customers to obtain replacement Social Security Cards securely through the <i>my Social Security</i> portal	Modernize the <i>my Social Security</i> portal framework to speed the integration of service offerings and to better group available functions together to focus on targeted user groups
Target Met			

Data Definition: This target improves access to our online services by providing citizens a way to request and obtain a Social Security replacement card through the *my Social Security* portal.

Data Source: Social Security Administration, Office of Systems

Strategic Objective 5.3: Incorporate Innovative Advances in Service Delivery

Vision 2025 Priority: Innovative Organization

Advances in computer technology, the increase of high-speed networks, and widespread use of mobile technology have reshaped our service channels. Our customers expect us to provide exceptional service, regardless of the technology they use.

We are constantly reviewing emerging technologies, and we are planning effective, efficient service delivery options based on our research. As we develop new options, we are targeting areas where reengineering is most needed.

We actively participate in the Federal Chief Information Officers Council and leverage the expertise of industry experts, as well as our own business and technical staffs, to develop the most effective solutions for our customers and our employees. Additionally, we are participating in the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative for Desktops and Laptops to support our infrastructure enhancement efforts.

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 Key Initiatives.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to incorporate innovative advances in service delivery (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Tested several new emerging technologies in our lab;
- Developed an agency-wide strategy for video service delivery; and
- Continued participation in the Federal Chief Information Officers Council.

Next Steps

- Continue to support and maintain the testing lab with current devices based on trending internal and external usage patterns.

Risks and External Factors

The following risks or external factors may affect our efforts to incorporate innovative advances in service delivery:

- The public demands more sophisticated, integrated service channels to supplement our traditional structure; and
- Implementing and maintaining customer service stations may not be cost effective.

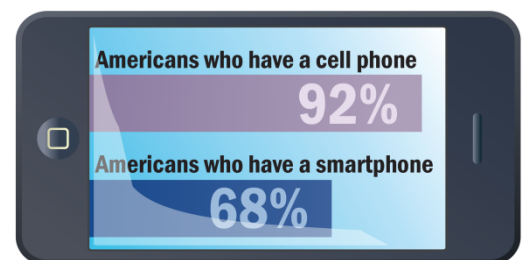
Key Initiatives

Enhancing our National 800 Number Infrastructure

With our new National 800 Number infrastructure fully implemented, enhancements for FY 2014 focused on strategic planning and day-to-day management of our call centers to improve performance.

Those enhancements improved speech recognition, enabling callers to complete their business using our automated services.

In FY 2015, we implemented a set of standard indicators designed to help us gauge how our agents are performing. In addition, we developed tools to help managers work with agents to improve their customer interaction skills.



Source: Pew Research Center Internet Project Survey, October 2015.

By the end of FY 2016, under our new National 800 Number infrastructure, we plan to enhance customer service delivery with the use of post-call customer surveys, training, quality management, and performance monitoring.

Additionally, the enhancements will include speech analytics that will allow us to better manage customer expectations and help detect fraud.

Expanding Video Conferencing Capabilities throughout the Agency

We expanded video conferencing throughout the agency, including hearing offices, field offices, disability determination services offices, and individual employee workstations. We currently use desktop video units to provide video conferencing between sites and in rural areas where there is no local office. These units reduce travel time and costs while improving case production and allowing for more flexible scheduling. We continue to explore cost saving alternatives in equipment, service, and software.

Performance Measures – Strategic Objective 5.3

5.3a: Enhance our IT infrastructure by implementing innovative systems accessibility and performance capabilities

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	Bandwidth-on-Demand capabilities are operational at over 75% of agency sites	Reduced our open systems infrastructure size to 1,000 servers		
Target	Implement Bandwidth-on-Demand, which will provide the ability to increase telecommunications capacity to quickly meet the changing service needs of our offices and clients	Reduce open systems infrastructure size from 1,500 servers to 1,000 servers by September 2015	Deploy new applications with a modern look and feel, accessible from the web or over mobile devices	Develop and implement our plan (strategy, policy, business model, and security requirements) for the establishment of an agency cloud service
Target Met	Met	Met		

Results: We are down to 1,000 open system servers as of September 2015.

Data Definition: This target provides for the design, installation, implementation, software, monitoring, and maintenance of our Wide Area and Local Area Networks and the connectivity to these network services to end-users nationwide. It also provides the communication medium through which our employees receive data such as voice and video, administers the network's services agency-wide, and the exchange of data with other federal and state agencies. The projects in this initiative involve the National 800# Call Center, Satellite and Wireless Communications Solutions, Video Teleconferencing, Fax, Voice over Internet Protocol, Electronic Messaging, and the procurements of system hardware and software services.

Data Source: Our Wide Area and Local Area Networks and Connectivity Plan

5.3b: Explore the use of emerging technologies by establishing a testing lab to promote research and development of innovative technology solutions that provide more effective and flexible ways for the public to conduct business with us online and for our employees to complete their work

Fiscal Year	2104	2015	2016	2017
Performance	We are actively supporting new agency electronic initiatives such as customer service stations and an upgraded environment for self-help personal computers	Conducted three new research projects		
Target	Identify and implement new innovative tools to expand the capabilities of the testing lab to develop solutions that accommodate evolving customer preferences.	Conduct three new research projects in emerging technologies such as predictive analytics, cloud, shared services, self-help personal computers, real-time chat, digital analytics, and cognitive computing by September 30, 2015		
Target Met	Met	Met		

Results: We met our FY 2015 target.

Data Definition: Because of today’s volatile and unpredictable mobile, tablet, and personal computer environment, we must conduct compatibility testing with a multitude of devices, browsers and operating systems to ensure our online customers are able to conduct business successfully with us no matter what device they use. By monitoring the advances being made in delivery channels and by monitoring the use of these channels to access our services, we determine which devices to purchase and test in our testing lab, focusing on the devices with the highest percent of use.

Data source: Industry and national trends. Google Analytics

Strategic Objective 5.4: Continuously Strengthen Our Cyber Security Program

Vision 2025 Priority: Superior Customer Experience

Given the sensitive nature of the highly personal information and data within our systems, data integrity, security, and protecting individual privacy are critical to sustaining public trust in our services. New services and delivery channels expose us to modern threats. We must be vigilant and continue to strengthen our cyber security intelligence and protections.

We maintain a comprehensive, agency-wide information security program of controls that protect our information and communications assets. We continually review policies and processes, taking appropriate corrective action to prevent misuse and unauthorized access to assets and sensitive data, including personally identifiable information.

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.

Progress Update

We took the following steps in FY 2015 to strengthen our cyber security program (see Key Initiatives and Performance Measures for more details):

- Implemented several new processes and capabilities to strengthen our cybersecurity program, including:
 - Security awareness training campaign;
 - Continued implementation use of Personal Identity Verification credentials; and
 - Continuous dashboard monitoring.

Next Steps

- Implement new technical architecture to strengthen our audit trail system capabilities and help prevent fraud; and
- Continued compliance (meet or exceed targets) with all applicable cyber security guidance, best practices, mandates, and requirements related to the Cross-Agency Priority goals.

Risks and External Factors

The following risk and external factor may affect our efforts to strengthen our cybersecurity program:

- As the agency continues to shift its business model to enable the public to use more online services, the potential for fraud will increase. Sufficient resources are essential to safeguard personal information and protect the public trust against online security threats.

Key Initiatives

Protecting Our Systems and Data

We continue to strengthen our information security program to meet the standards and requirements of the *Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002*, as amended by the *Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014*, by training our employees and implementing effective cybersecurity technologies.

Our systems and data are constantly at risk from emerging threats and technology. We deploy new tools and techniques as threats are discovered. Software flaws pose an ongoing risk, potentially making our systems vulnerable



to malicious or accidental actions. In response, we have added additional licenses for a tool our developers use to scan their code and repair it before release if security flaws are found.

Threats to data and systems can also come from within an organization. We are rolling out an agency-wide automated access control system, replacing our current paper-based system. The new system will improve timeliness in granting and removing user access, improve accuracy in assigning access to information resources, and provide clearer audit records. We are also analyzing new technologies to review employee activity. Our changing service delivery channels and other system changes require ongoing updates to our monitoring systems.

Finally, employee security awareness and training remains a high priority. Agency-wide on-demand video training helps raise employee awareness on protecting our systems and data. Because our work often involves personal interactions, we must always be on guard against a threat known as social engineering, where people pretend to be coworkers, repair technicians, or any other role, where they could access our systems or data. We have invested heavily in special training for all of our employees to help them recognize and prevent social engineering activities and other types of activities that can cause system problems.

Implementing Audit Trail System New Architecture Phase II

Our audit trail system ensures we protect our records and funds by collecting and maintaining detailed information about both internal and external transactions. The system stores data from programmatic and select Internet applications, allowing us to review transactions for signs of fraud and abuse.

The new audit trail system architecture will strengthen our fraud detection and prevention efforts by capturing details of transactions most vulnerable to fraud. The proposed architecture was approved in February 2014 and a WebSphere user interface was piloted in March 2015. Additional enhancements are planned before a full roll out in FY 2016.

Implementing an Information Security Program

We maintain a comprehensive, agency-wide information security program to protect information and communications assets. We review our policies and processes continually to ensure adequate safeguards are in place to prevent misuse and unauthorized access to our systems and data. We are also strengthening the security of our systems by implementing consistent management controls at all of our data facilities.

We have completed the following activities supporting both the federal Cybersecurity Cross-Agency Priority Goals and the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Network Security Compliance and Assurance program:

- Established Trusted Internet Connection Access Provider designation through the Department of Homeland Security;
- Participated in the National Cyber Protection System, a collaboration between the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies to share security resources;
- Collaborated with the Department of Homeland Security to develop monthly security assessments of our public-facing network;
- Defined and implemented an information security continuous monitoring strategy to manage information security risks;
- Participated in the Department of Homeland Security's Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation program to ensure we have an accurate view of our risks and the effectiveness of our controls. We share our computer security information across the federal civilian government agencies to help ensure they are aware of the threats to their infrastructures and can swiftly take corrective measures; and
- Implemented personal identity verification credentials, as defined in Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12, as a secure form of identification within our systems (with the exception of DDS systems, which are still in progress).

New services and delivery channels expose us to modern threats. We must be consistently diligent and continue to strengthen our cybersecurity intelligence and protections. We continually adjust our information security program to reflect changes in technology, the sensitivity of covered information and information systems, and internal or external threats to information and communications.

Performance Measure – Strategic Objective 5.4

5.4a: Provide secure and effective services to the public by improving cyber security performance

Fiscal Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Performance	<p>Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 Compliance – result 85%</p> <p>Information Security Continuous Monitoring – result 96%</p> <p>Trusted Internet Connections Consolidation – result 100%</p> <p>Trusted Internet Connections 2.0 Capabilities – result 96%</p>	<p>Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 Compliance – result 87%</p> <p>Information Security Continuous Monitoring – result 98%</p> <p>Trusted Internet Connections Consolidation – result 100%</p> <p>Trusted Internet Connections 2.0 Capabilities – result 94%</p>	<p>Hardware Asset Management – result 100%</p> <p>Software Asset Management – result 100%</p> <p>Vulnerability and Weakness Management – result 100%</p> <p>Unprivileged Network Users – result 86%</p> <p>Privileged Network Users – result 99%</p> <p>Anti-Phishing Defense – result 100%</p> <p>Malware Defense – result 100%</p> <p>Blended Defense – result 100%</p>		
Target		<p>Meet the performance requirements of the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Network Security Compliance and Assurance program and the Cyber Security Cross-Agency Priority Goals</p>	<p>Meet the performance requirements of the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Network Security Compliance and Assurance program and the Cyber Security Cross-Agency Priority Goals</p>	<p>Achieve an average of 97% for the following Cyber Security Cross-Agency Priority Goals:</p> <p>Anti-phishing defense; Malware defense; Blended defense (anti-phishing and malware defense measures); Hardware asset management; Software asset management; and Vulnerability and weakness management.</p>	<p>Achieve an average of 99% for the following Cyber Security Cross-Agency Priority Goals:</p> <p>Anti-phishing defense; Malware defense; Blended defense (anti-phishing and malware defense measures); Hardware asset management; Software asset management; and Vulnerability and weakness management.</p>
Target Met		Met	Met		

Results: We met our FY 2015 target and are compliant in all areas of the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Network Security Compliance and Assurance program and the Cyber Security Cross-Agency Priority Goals.

Data Definition: Define and implement strong controls to continuously monitor the security status of network, systems, and information and ensure that individuals with access to our network resources are using strong authentication to connect.

Data Source: [Cybersecurity Cross-Agency Priority Goals on Performance.gov](https://www.performance.gov/cybersecurity-cross-agency-priority-goals)

Appendix A:

Our Management and Performance Challenges

As we strive to improve our performance, we face a variety of challenges. Each year the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) identifies what it sees as our top management and performance challenges. In addition, our management identifies challenges, which often overlap with the OIG report.

Below is a listing of the challenges we have collectively identified. To avoid redundancy, the OIG report findings are listed first, since they also reflect challenges our leadership has identified. The management challenges identified by our leadership follow. Key initiatives we are undertaking to address these challenges are listed below each item.

Challenges Identified by OIG

In fiscal year (FY) 2015, OIG identified seven top management and Social Security Administration (SSA) Management Issues. (Responsible official acronyms are listed in [Appendix F, Summary of Key Management Official's Responsibilities.](#)) To read the full OIG report, please refer to the [Fiscal Year 2015 Inspector General Statement on SSA's Major Management and Performance Challenges.](#)

Improve the Responsiveness and Oversight of the Hearings Process (DCDAR)

Challenge: While SSA continues focusing on the quality and consistency of hearing decisions, it is facing worsening average processing times and increasing pending hearings.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expanding Video Service Delivery (pg. 42);
- Expanding Use of Electronic Bench Book (pg. 73); and
- Hiring Sufficient Administrative Law Judges to Ensure Public Access to Agency Services (pg. 75).

Improve the Timeliness and Quality of the Disability Process (DCO, DCORDP, DCBFQM)

Challenge: SSA needs to address receipt of millions of initial disability and reconsideration claims and backlogs of initial disability claims and continuing disability reviews, while also protecting its disability programs from fraud and encouraging beneficiaries to return to work.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expanding Video Service Delivery (pg. 42);
- Expanding the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (pg. 51);
- Establishing the Office of Anti-Fraud Programs (pg. 62);
- Enhancing the Electronic Claims Analysis Tool (pg. 73);
- Developing an Occupational Information System (pg. 74);
- Updating the Medical Listing of Impairments (pg. 74);
- Developing the Disability Case Processing System (pg. 82);
- Using Health Information Technology to Expedite Disability Decisions (pg. 83); and
- Improving Employment Support Programs (pg. 86).

Reduce Improper Payments and Increase Overpayment Recoveries (DCRDP, DCBFQM, DCO, DCS, DCDAR, OCSO)

Challenge: SSA is responsible for issuing over \$932 billion in benefit payments annually, to approximately 65 million people.⁴ Given the amount of overall dollars involved in SSA's payments, even the slightest error in the overall process can result in millions of dollars in over or underpayments.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expanding Our Cooperative Disability Investigation Program (pg. 67);
- Promoting the use of Supplemental Security Income Telephone Wage Reporting System and the Supplemental Security Income Mobile Wage Reporting (pg. 65);
- Using Predictive Modeling in the Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation (pg. 66);
- Using Predictive Modeling in the Redetermination Process (pg. 66);
- Expanding the Access to Financial Institutions Initiative (pg. 66);
- Improving the Death Reporting System Process (pg. 67);
- Implementing Data Exchange and Verification Online (pg. 68); and
- Implementing New Tools for Debt Collection (pg. 68).

Improve Customer Service (DCDAR, DCO, DCBFQM, DCS)

Challenge: SSA faces several challenges, such as increasing workloads and representative payee oversight, as it pursues its mission to deliver services that meet the public's changing needs.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expanding Online Access through Social Security Express (pg. 35);
- Enhancing Delivery Option for the Replacement Social Security Benefit Statement (pg. 36);
- Implementing Online Social Security Number Replacement Card Application (pg. 39);
- Providing Real-Time Assistance to Online Users (pg. 42);
- Hire Sufficient Administrative Law Judges to Ensure Public Access to Agency Services (pg. 75);
- Modernizing Older Software Applications (pg. 114);
- Improving Information Technology Governance and Architectural Planning (pg. 114);
- Enhancing our National 800 Number Infrastructure (pg. 117); and
- Expanding Video Conferencing Capabilities throughout the Agency (pg. 118).

Invest in Information Technology Infrastructure to Support Current and Future Workloads (DCS)

Challenge: SSA faces the challenge of determining how best to use technology to accomplish its mission within its budget and resource constraints, while ensuring its information systems are secure and sensitive data are protected.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Developing the Disability Case Processing System (pg. 82);
- Using Health Information Technology to Expedite Disability Decisions (pg. 83);
- Enhancing Our Infrastructure, Improving Information Technology Cost and Performance (pg. 111);
- Modernizing Older Software Applications (pg. 114);
- Improving Information Technology Governance and Architectural Planning (pg. 114);
- Enhancing the *my Social Security* Portal (pg. 114)

⁴ The figures were updated to reflect FY 2015 data, and differ from the OIG report.

- Enhancing our National 800 Number Infrastructure (pg. 117); and
- Expanding Video Conferencing Capabilities throughout the Agency (pg. 118).

Strengthen the Integrity and Protection of the Social Security Number (DCS)

Challenge: Protecting the Social Security number and properly posting the wages reported under Social Security numbers are critical to ensuring eligible individuals receive the full benefits they are due.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Increasing Electronic Wage Reporting Filing (pg. 59); and
- Deploying Management System for Personally Identifiable Information and Federal Tax Information (pg. 61).

Strengthen Planning, Transparency, and Accountability (COSS, CSO, DCHR, DCS, DCBFQM, DCO)

Challenge: Planning, transparency, and accountability are critical factors in effective management. Failure to plan properly to meet its mission and challenges will lessen the Agency’s ability to provide its services efficiently and effectively now and in the future. Similarly, mismanagement and waste, as well as a lack of transparency for citizens in Government operations, can erode trust in SSA’s ability to tackle the challenges it faces.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Using Predictive Modeling in the Redetermination Process (pg. 66);
- Using Predictive Modeling in Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation (pg. 66);
- Protecting Our Systems and Data (pg. 121);
- Implementing Information Security Program (pg. 122); and
- Implementing Audit Trail System New Architecture Phase II (pg. 122).

Additional Challenges Identified by Our Leadership

Prevent Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

Waste, fraud and abuse erode the public’s trust in our ability to efficiently and effectively provide vital services. Prevention is critical to conserving valuable resources and meeting our mission to meet the changing needs of the public.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Establishing the Office of Anti-Fraud Programs (pg. 62);
- Promoting Use of the Supplemental Security Income Telephone Wage Reporting System (pg. 65);
- Increasing Social Security Income Mobile Wage Reporting (pg. 65);
- Improving the Death Reporting System Process (pg. 67);
- Expanding the Access to Financial Institutions Initiative (pg. 66);
- Expanding Our Cooperative Disability Investigation Program (pg. 67);
- Implementing Direct Deposit Auto-Enrollment Fraud Prevention (pg. 68); and
- Adding Anti-Fraud Messages in Notices (pg. 68).

Have Enough Employees with the Right Skills in the Right Place at the Right Time

Having exceptional employees with the right skills in the right place at the right time is critical to our vision for a superior customer experience and an innovative organization. Employee turnover challenges our ability to develop and retain empowered, knowledgeable, compassionate, and engaged employees.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Highlighting the Pathways Programs (pg. 95);
- Reducing Skills Gaps (pg. 95);
- Using SkillsConnect to Share Talent Across Our Agency (pg. 96);

- Marketing Availability of On-Demand Training and Development (pg. 96); and
- Supporting Employees through Mentoring (pg. 96).

Innovate the Future of Service Delivery

We must innovate the future of service delivery to better serve the American public. We are constantly improving current, and developing new service delivery options. Our customers expect exceptional customer service, regardless of the service delivery option they use to complete their business with us.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expanding Online Access through Social Security Express (pg. 35);
- Enhancing Delivery Option for the Replacement Social Security Benefit Statement (pg. 36);
- Implementing Online Social Security Number Replacement Card Application (pg. 39);
- Providing Real-Time Assistance to Online Users (pg. 42);
- Developing the Disability Case Processing System (pg. 82);
- Using Health Information Technology to Expedite Disability Decisions (pg. 83).
- Enhancing Our Infrastructure (pg. 111);
- Improving Information Technology Cost and Performance (pg. 111);
- Modernizing Older Software Applications (pg. 114);
- Improving Information Technology Governance and Architectural Planning (pg. 114);
- Enhancing our National 800 Number Infrastructure (pg. 117); and
- Expanding Video Conferencing Capabilities throughout the Agency (pg. 118).

Keep Pace in the Disability Program with Medicine, Technology, and World of Work

Medicine, technology, and the world of work are constantly evolving. We must keep pace creating a more agile, responsive organization committed to meeting the public's needs and maximizing efficiencies throughout the disability program.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Developing an Occupational Information System (pg. 74);
- Developing the Disability Case Processing System (pg. 82); and
- Using Health Information Technology to Expedite Disability Decisions (pg. 83).

Appendix B:

Program Evaluations

We routinely evaluate our programs by conducting a variety of studies and surveys to determine if our programs are effective. We continue to build on our collection of program data, research, and analyses to identify our program strengths and weaknesses. We use information from program evaluations to develop strategies to address the major challenges we face and to improve the day-to-day administration of our programs. We complete many of our evaluations annually while others may be one-time efforts.

We list the evaluations under the strategic goal they support from our [Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2014 – 2018](#).

Strategic Goal 1 – Deliver Innovative, Quality Services

Field Office Telephone Service Evaluation

We conduct an annual evaluation of the telephone service in our field offices. Each year, since 1999, we select a random sample of over 100 field offices across the country for the evaluation. We monitor about 2,000 randomly selected calls over the course of the year to assess the accuracy of the information representatives provide and the actions they take. The representatives do not know when we monitor their calls. We use the results of our Field Office Telephone Service Evaluation to identify training needs and clarify operating instructions for our representatives.

We assess the accuracy of the information representatives provide and the actions they take based on our program policies and operating guidelines. We use three measures of accuracy in our Field Office Telephone Service Evaluation:

- **Payment Accuracy** – indicates the percentage of calls free of payment error. A payment error occurs when a representative's information or action (or failure to give information or take action) has the potential to affect a caller's payment or eligibility for benefits adversely;
- **Service Accuracy** – reflects the percentage of calls free of service error. A service error occurs when a representative does not meet the caller's need for information, causes the caller inconvenience, or creates an unnecessary additional workload; and
- **Access and Disclosure Accuracy** – reflects the percentage of callers properly identified to permit release of personal information from our records. We previously included access and disclosure errors in the calculation of service accuracy.

Our latest published accuracy rates are for fiscal year (FY) 2014. Payment accuracy was 96.2 percent, which was comparable to the FY 2013 rate of 96.8 percent. Service accuracy was 89.2 percent, not significantly lower than the FY 2013 rate of 90.4 percent. Access and disclosure accuracy in FY 2014 was 64.8 percent. This rate was significantly lower than the FY 2013 rate of 70.3 percent by almost 6 percentage points, and reversed the improvement in access and disclosure accuracy that field offices (FO) had maintained from FY 2011 through FY 2013. The FY 2014 rate was not significantly different from the FY 2010 rate of 61.6 percent.

National 800 Number Telephone Service Evaluation

We monitor calls to our National 800 Number to evaluate both the accuracy of the information our telephone agents provide and the actions they take. Each year, since 1989, we monitor about 3,000 calls handled by agents in our 35 call centers nationwide. We randomly select and monitor calls throughout the year based on a statistical sampling methodology. Our agents do not know when we monitor their calls. We use the results of our annual National 800 Number Service Evaluation to identify training needs and improve operating instructions for our agents.

This evaluation identifies the specific causes of error and the operating policies that our agents did not follow. It uses the same standards of payment, service, and access and disclosure accuracy as our Field Office Telephone Service Evaluation discussed above. Our latest published accuracy rates are for FY 2014. The payment accuracy rate rose significantly from 96 percent in FY 2013 to 97.8 percent in FY 2014, returning to the level sustained from FY 2011 to FY 2012. Service accuracy was 90.8 percent in FY 2014, significantly lower than the rate in FY 2013 (92.4 percent). The access and disclosure accuracy was 94.2 percent in FY 2014. This rate was significantly lower than the FY 2013 rate of 95.7 percent, but was in line with the FY 2012 rate of 94.5 percent. Updates expected in February/March 2016.

Online Authentication Survey

The Online Authentication Survey (OAS) focused on the satisfaction of customers who visited a field office to complete their *my Social Security* account registrations after encountering a problem during the online process. The OAS measured satisfaction with key aspects of the service experience and obtained an overall rating of the online account registration process using our standard six-point rating scale: excellent, very good, good (E/VG/G), fair, poor, or very poor. In addition to addressing satisfaction with the online registration process, the survey also assessed satisfaction with service received during the field office visit or on the telephone.

Our FY 2015 results are not yet available. Our FY 2014 survey found that responder perceptions of the process for resolving an online registration problem and creating an account improved significantly compared with FY 2013. Responders gave a rating of 86 percent E/VG/G for their “start-to-finish” experience creating the account, up from 77 percent E/VG/G in FY 2013. Improved perceptions of telephone service in connection with the account registration contributed to the overall improvement. The rating of telephone service overall rose by 11 percentage points to 71 percent E/VG/G in FY 2014, following the introduction of the *my Social Security* 800 number Help Desk. Ratings of other aspects of the telephone experience, such as ease of access, also improved by a margin of 6 to 17 percentage points. Responders continued to report a high degree of satisfaction with the service they received when they visited the field office, rating the in-person service experience at 91 percent E/VG/G.

Service Satisfaction Surveys

We measure satisfaction with our services by surveying people who use them. The Service Satisfaction Surveys we conduct reflect the public’s perception of the services we provide in person or by telephone at our National 800 Number, and in our FOs. In addition to obtaining ratings of various aspects of service, the surveys elicit factual information about customer experiences, and ask about their preferences for conducting future business, including the potential for Internet use. The surveys also address customers’ need for special accommodations due to medical condition. The feedback helps us identify strengths and weaknesses in our service delivery so we can make necessary improvements. In addition to reporting satisfaction rates from our surveys here, we make them available to the public on Data.gov.

Telephone Service

Results from our FY 2015 surveys of telephone callers showed that overall satisfaction with our FO telephone service remained stable, while satisfaction with our national 800 number service improved significantly. Callers rated the 800 number service overall at 71 percent excellent, very good, or good (E/VG/G), up from 66 percent E/VG/G in FY 2014. Callers rated FO telephone service overall at 77 percent E/VG/G, in line with the FY 2014 rating of 79 percent E/VG/G.

The rise in satisfaction with 800 number access (53 percent, up from 44 percent E/VG/G) contributed to improvement in callers' overall satisfaction in FY 2015. Satisfaction with access to FO telephone service held steady in FY 2015 at 72 percent E/VG/G.

Customers who conducted their business over the telephone were equally satisfied with the quality of service employees provided whether they called the 800 number or a FO, giving ratings ranging from 87 to 90 percent E/VG/G.

In-person Service

The Office Visitor Survey (OVS) includes two separate segments, the FO and hearing office (HO) segment, and the Social Security Card Center (SSCC) segment.

FO visitors reported favorable impressions of in-person service, providing an overall rating of 90 percent E/VG/G. In addition to their office waiting time rating of 75 percent E/VG/G and their employee attribute ratings of 91 to 92 percent E/VG/G, FO visitors gave positive ratings for other key aspects of their experience. HO visitors were also highly satisfied with the service they received when they visited an HO. HO visitors rated both overall service and office waiting time at 85 percent E/VG/G. Rating of employee attributes from HO visitors ranged from 88 to 94 percent E/VG/G. We cannot compare the FY 2015 FO and HO visitors' satisfaction rates to the previous fiscal year because we were not able to conduct the FO and HO segment due to the Government furlough in October 2013.

Overall satisfaction with in-person service in SSCCs increased significantly in FY 2015, up from 86 percent to 91 percent E/VG/G. In FY 2015, SSCC visitor's waiting time rating of 74 percent E/VG/G also reflected significant improvement over their FY 2014 rating of 67 percent E/VG/G. In addition, SSCC visitor's already favorable ratings of employee courtesy and the clarity of their explanations both rose by 3 percentage points to 93 percent E/VG/G.

Retirement Applicant Survey

We conducted the Retirement Applicant Survey (RAS) for the first time in FY 2014 as a complement to our biennial Prospect Client Survey. The RAS fills a gap in the agency's knowledge about customer perception of one of its core business processes. The survey measured satisfaction of retirement benefit applicants who filed online, in person, or on the telephone, and explored their future preferences for conducting Social Security business. The RAS found an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the retirement application process, with respondents rating their overall experience at 96 percent E/VG/G. Applicants were pleased with the ease and speed of the process, regardless of the filing method they used, and gave high marks to agency staff.

About 7 out of 10 respondents indicated that they use the Internet, and over half (53 percent) of those Internet users said they had already created a [my Social Security](#) account. Among the remaining Internet users who had not yet created a [my Social Security account](#), the majority (62 percent) said they would be very or somewhat likely to create one, with 21 percent choosing the top response of very likely.

Strategic Goal 2 – Strengthen the Integrity of Our Programs

Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds

The Social Security Act requires the Board of Trustees of the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance Trust Funds to report annually to Congress on the actuarial status and financial operations of the Trust Funds. [The 2015 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds](#), issued in July 2015, includes projections for years 2015 to 2089. The 2015 report showed a slightly improved projected long-term financial status of the Social Security program as compared to the Trustees' 2014 report.

Highlights in the report included:

- Non-interest income fell below program costs in 2010 for the first time since 1983. Program costs are projected to exceed non-interest income throughout the remainder of the 75-year projection period;
- The combined Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance Trust Fund reserves are still growing and will continue to do so through 2019. Beginning in 2020, the cost of the program is projected to exceed total income, and the trust fund reserves will begin to decline;
- The projected point at which the combined Trust Fund reserves will become depleted, if Congress does not act before then, comes in 2034 – extended one year from the estimate in last year’s report;
- The projected point at which the Disability Insurance Trust Fund reserves will become depleted is 2016 – unchanged from the estimate in last year’s report; and
- The projected actuarial deficit over the 75-year long-range period is 2.68 percent of taxable payroll – improved from 2.88 percent in last year’s report.

Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program

We report annually to the President and to Congress the status of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The report’s purpose is to provide the necessary data to manage the SSI program effectively. The [2015 SSI Annual Report](#), issued in August 2015, includes projections for years 2015 to 2039.

Major findings of the report included:

- By 2039, the end of the 25-year projection period, we estimate that the Federal SSI recipient population will reach 9.1 million. The projected growth in the SSI program over the 25-year period is largely due to the overall growth in the U.S. population, though the growth in the SSI recipient population is projected to be somewhat slower than the growth in the U.S. population.
- As a percentage of the total U.S. population, the number of Federal SSI recipients decreased slightly from 2.53 percent in 2013 to 2.51 percent in 2014. We project this percentage to gradually decline throughout the 25-year projection period, reaching 2.33 percent of the population in 2039.
- We estimate that Federal expenditures for SSI payments in calendar year 2015 will increase by \$1.0 billion to \$55.2 billion, an increase of 1.9 percent from 2014 levels.
- In dollars adjusted by the Consumer Price Index to 2015 levels, we project Federal expenditures for SSI payments will increase to \$60.8 billion in 2039, a real increase of 0.5 percent per year.
- Federal SSI expenditures expressed as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) were 0.31 percent in 2014. We project that expenditures, as a percentage of GDP will decrease to 0.30 percent of GDP in 2015, and continue to decline thereafter to 0.21 percent of GDP by 2039.

Preeffectuation Review of Disability Determinations

Public Law 96-265, Public Health and Welfare, Section 221-c, requires us to review at least 50 percent of all Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and concurrent SSDI/SSI adult disability favorable initial and reconsideration determinations made by the state disability determination services (DDS). In addition, Public Law 109-171, Deficit Reduction Act, requires we review at least 50 percent of all SSI adult initial and reconsideration favorable determinations made by the DDS.

We select Preeffectuation Review (PER) cases from all 54 DDS jurisdictions (the 50 states, plus U.S. territories) using a statistical model to identify allowances with a higher probability of containing substantive errors (i.e., potential to ultimately reverse the determination from allowance to denial).

Three agency components work in conjunction with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to produce a report to Congress on the lifetime savings resulting from PER.

The most recent PER Report to Congress for FY 2013 shows estimated program savings of \$668 million, which include Medicare and Medicaid savings. Preliminary data for FY 2014 indicates that more than 6,500 DDS determinations were reversed, but the program savings information is not yet available. We will make the FY 2014 and FY 2015 results available in a future Annual Performance Report.

Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Stewardship Review

Stewardship findings provide the basic measure we use to report on the accuracy of the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) payments. We base the FY 2014 report findings on non-medical reviews of monthly samples of OASDI payments issued from October 2013 through September 2014. We also provide payment accuracy rates for the current and previous reporting periods. We will publish the FY 2015 findings in the FY 2016 Annual Performance Report.

Overall, the OASDI accuracy rate was 99.5 percent for overpayments in FY 2014 based on improper payments totaling a projected \$4.6 billion (i.e., 99.5 percent of all dollars paid were free of overpayment errors).

Accuracy for OASDI underpayments was 99.9 percent in FY 2014, based on unpaid dollars projected at \$4.72 billion (i.e., underpayment dollar errors, as a percentage of total dollars paid, were 0.05 percent).

Comparable accuracy rates for FY 2013 were 99.8 percent for overpayments and 99.9 percent for underpayments. The changes in the overall OASDI overpayment and underpayment accuracy rates are not statistically significant.

Supplemental Security Income Stewardship Review

The review evaluates non-medical factors of eligibility and measures the accuracy of payments made to people receiving SSI benefits. The primary objective is to measure the accuracy of payments we issued and to report these accuracy rates as required by the *Improper Payments Information Act of 2002* and the *Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010*.

We reviewed 4,015 SSI cases in FY 2014. Accuracy rates are derived using data from the review of SSI cases with a payment made in at least one month of the fiscal year under review. Any difference between what we actually paid and what the quality review determines we should have paid is expressed as an overpayment or underpayment error. The overpayment accuracy rate is the percentage of all dollars paid that are free of overpayment errors. The underpayment accuracy rate is the projected dollar value of underpayment errors represented as a ratio of all dollars paid. The overpayment and underpayment accuracy rates are calculated and reported separately.

In FY 2014, the overpayment accuracy rate was 93.0 percent based on overpaid dollars totaling a projected \$3.9 billion. This represents an increase of 0.6 of a percentage point from the FY 2013 overpayment accuracy rate of 92.4 percent, but this increase is not statistically significant.

In FY 2014, the underpayment accuracy rate was 98.5 percent based on underpaid dollars totaling a projected \$0.8 billion. This represents an increase of 0.2 of a percentage point from the FY 2013 underpayment accuracy rate of 98.3 percent. We will publish the FY 2015 findings in the FY 2016 Annual Performance Report.

Strategic Goal 3 – Serve the Public through a Stronger, More Responsive Disability Program

Office of Quality Review Denial Review

In FY 2015, we conducted an internal control review of medically denied disability applications adjudicated by the DDS and Federal Disability Case Processing Sites (FDCPS). We conducted this review to identify whether denial decisions by the DDS and the FDCPS were policy compliant and supported by the medical and vocational evidence in the case file.

We reviewed 52,165 cases from 52 DDS sites (all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico) and 9 FDCPSs. To select the cases, we used a statistical model to identify cases that matched the profile for highly error-prone medically denied disability applications. Out of the 52,165 cases we reviewed, 4,935 (9.5 percent) contained a substantive error (i.e., an error that could result in a change in the determination of the case).

Our review of denials in FY 2015 resulted in the reversal of 2,849 DDS denial determinations to allowances. These reversals resulted in claimants receiving their benefits at an earlier stage in the process.

Quality Review Assessment of Senior Attorney Advisor Disability Decisions

In our FY 2014 Quality Review Assessment of Senior Attorney Advisor (SAA) Disability Decisions, we agreed with 80 percent of the 627 sampled SAA decisions, because a preponderance of the evidence supported those decisions. We disagreed with 20 percent of the allowance decisions for two main reasons: there was not enough information in file to support the decision or there was conflicting information in file. We cannot compare the FY 2014 findings with prior year reports, because we made substantial changes to our review process.

Disability Case Review of Administrative Law Judge Hearing Decisions

The disability case review is an ongoing, post-effectuation quality review of administrative law judge (ALJ) hearing decisions. The last year for which we have data is FY 2014.

For the FY 2014 Disability Case Reviews of ALJ decisions, we agreed with 84 percent of the 431 sampled ALJ allowance decisions because a preponderance of the evidence supported those decisions. This reflects improvement, but is not a statistically significant increase from the 82 percent agreement rate in FY 2014.

We agreed with 98 percent of the 433 sampled ALJ denial decisions based on a preponderance of evidence. When comparing this finding to the 94 percent agreement rate reported in FY 2013, the difference is statistically significant.

Disability Scorecard Surveys

The disability scorecard surveys measure customer satisfaction with the disability application process at the initial and hearing levels. We conduct the initial and hearing level surveys in alternate years. Our survey samples include both SSDI and SSI claimants in the following groups that reflect different stages of the process:

- **Mid-process** – after an initial disability application is filed but before a decision is made;
- **Initial awards and denials** – after the initial level decision on the application; and
- **Hearing awards and denials** – after the hearing level decision on the application.

We ask those surveyed for an overall rating of the service we provided during the disability application process. Survey findings consistently show that respondent opinion is influenced greatly by the outcome of the application for disability benefits. Our latest results are for FY 2014, when we conducted the initial level segment of the disability scorecard surveys. The results of the Mid-Process Survey show that respondents are for the most part satisfied with the initial disability process at the time they file but before a decision is made, rating overall service 81 percent excellent, very good, or good (E/VG/G). In FY 2014, awarded responders were highly satisfied with the service they received rating overall service 91 percent E/VG/G. At just 51 percent E/VG/G, denied responders rated overall service the lowest of the three groups of responders, no doubt influenced by the unfavorable decision on the claim. In FY 2015, we are conducting the hearing level surveys. We anticipate publishing results in early FY 2017.

Strategic Goal 4 – Build a Model Workforce to Deliver Quality Service

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (formerly the Annual Employee Survey/Federal Human Capital Survey)

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management sent the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to approximately 19,000 of our employees. Our employees had from May 6, 2015 through June 12, 2015 to take the survey. Over half of our permanent employees completed the survey.

We use the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results as a tool for measuring employee satisfaction and engagement throughout our agency. We also use the results to develop both departmental and agency-wide action plans to address areas targeted for improvement. Traditionally, results demonstrate that employee job satisfaction is one of the strengths of our agency.

For more information about survey results, see the [Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey](#).

Management Directive-715

The directive provides policy guidance and standards for establishing and maintaining effective affirmative action programs. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Management Directive-715 requires federal agencies to conduct an annual self-assessment of their Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program to ensure it meets the requirements for each of the six essential elements of a model program. The assessment occurs in the first quarter of a fiscal year, with the report due to the EEOC in the second quarter of the fiscal year.

Below, we present our FY 2014 results, which were not available when we published our *FY 2014 Annual Performance Report*.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) evaluation of our EEO complaint process and anti-harassment programs and its Program Evaluation Report suggested additional opportunities for our leadership to demonstrate their commitment to EEO principles. The Acting Commissioner meets each month with the OCREO Associate Commissioner (SSA's EEO Director) to improve communications and oversight. The Acting Commissioner also designated a Senior Advisor from her immediate staff to monitor OCREO's actions toward becoming a model EEO program. The OCREO Associate Commissioner and the Senior Advisor meet regularly to keep the Senior Advisor apprised of OCREO's efforts to address each of the recommendations in the Program Evaluation Report.

The Acting Commissioner and our executives also support and encourage the following four cross-component workgroups created in FY 2014 to address several recommendations from the Program Evaluation Report:

- **Anti-Harassment Workgroup** – to clarify the existing Anti-Harassment Policy and prepare Standard Operating Procedures for processing harassment allegations;
- **Alternative Dispute Resolution Workgroup** – to increase management and employee use of mediation for early, reasonable resolution of EEO complaints;
- **Standard Operating Procedures Workgroup** – to create a process that will ensure the consistent use of legally compliant and universally applied EEO processes and procedures; and
- **Uniform EEO Training Workgroup** – to create a standardized package of EEO training materials for agency-wide use, to provide consistent, legally compliant EEO training to all agency managers and employees.

In response to our FY 2014 Management Directive-715 self-assessment, we took the following actions to strengthen our EEO program:

- Revised our anti-harassment policy and developed standard operating procedures to:
 - Implement and enforce uniform policy throughout the agency;
 - Assign oversight responsibility to the Office of Human Resources;
 - Designate harassment prevention officers, investigators, and independent reviewers;
 - Avoid conflict of interest; and
 - Establish a uniform tracking system to allow the Office of Human Resources to identify patterns or trends.
- Drafted a policy on the "Role of the Office of the General Counsel in the Equal Employment Opportunity Process" to clarify the role of the Office of the General Counsel at each stage of the EEO process;
- Initiated a benchmarking program to examine best practices, collaborate with other federal agencies, and improve our EEO program.
- Worked with a contractor to evaluate our vacancy announcement process. The contractor also created a survey to collect employee perceptions on diversity, inclusion, and EEO to ensure that our programs, initiatives, and outreach efforts are meeting our employees' needs; and
- Began training headquarters managers on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to resolve workplace disputes in a positive and constructive manner. We will offer training to field office managers and will refresh the ADR video on demand.

We will discuss the results of our FY 2015 assessment in our FY 2016 Annual Performance Report.

Center for Section 504 Compliance

We ensure agency compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and requires federal agencies to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities to individuals with disabilities. In FY 2014, we developed an Intranet application, iAccommodate, to track the accommodations that our employees provide to individuals with disabilities.

In FY 2015, we released iAccommodate 2.1, which improves our ability to track accommodations. iAccommodate 2.1 integrates with the Visitor Intake Process (VIP) and the Case Processing Management System (CPMS), offering quick links to document accommodations provided. Screen enhancements included in iAccommodate 2.1 improve usability and management information, allowing us to create detailed management information charts that analyze Section 504 accommodations by component, region, or specific office code.

The Diversity and Inclusion Survey

The Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Survey measures employee perceptions of diversity, inclusion, and equal employment opportunity (EEO) in the agency, allowing us to determine whether employee perceptions are supported by actual statistical data. The results will ensure that we are making informed decisions about our programs, training initiatives, and outreach efforts.

The Barrier Obliteration Program (BOP) will proactively identify and eliminate real and perceived barriers to EEO. Collaborating with a contractor, we are analyzing D&I Survey results; Workforce Profiles; and data on EEO complaints, awards, appraisals, promotions, hiring, and separations, among other EEO datasets. The analysis will identify any potential triggers or barriers to EEO in individual Deputy Commissioner-level components. If identified, we will work with the contractor and individual components to prepare an Action Plan to reduce and potentially eliminate them.

Strategic Goal 5 – Ensure Reliable, Secure, and Efficient Information Technology Services

Federal Information Security Management Act Report

The Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) is part of the E-Government Act of 2002. FISMA is a framework requiring federal agencies to ensure they provide adequate security and privacy protections for federal information systems and information. We must submit an annual FISMA status report to the Office of Management and Budget.

Our report summarizes the results from security and privacy reviews conducted on our major information systems and programs, progress on correcting identified weaknesses, and the results of other work performed during the reporting period using the Office of Management and Budget's performance measures. Several bills are pending in Congress intended to strengthen FISMA. As Congress considers new cybersecurity legislation, we will continue our efforts to meet and exceed existing information security requirements for protecting federal information systems and personally identifiable information.

For more information, please refer to the complete report, [*FY 2011 Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002*](#).

Appendix C:

How We Ensure Our Data Integrity

We are committed to providing clear, reliable, and valid data. We have internal controls to ensure that our data are quantifiable, verifiable, and secure. Our internal systems and controls include:

- Audit trails;
- Integrity reviews;
- Separation of duties;
- Restricted access to sensitive data;
- Reviews at all levels of management; and
- Validation and verification in our System Development Life Cycles.

We designed these controls to safeguard the integrity and quality of our vast data resources. These controls ensure that our data contain no material inadequacies. These same controls support the Commissioner's Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act Assurance Statement.

Data Integrity Systems and Controls

We gather performance data using automated management information and other workload measurement systems. In fiscal year (FY) 2010, we initiated a new data quality program designed to assess, measure, and monitor the quality of performance data.

We evaluate the data in terms of four quality dimensions:

- Accuracy – measuring how well data adheres to specification (e.g., definitions, rules, and policies);
- Consistency – measuring consistency in internal and external reporting of data;
- Completeness – measuring missing occurrences or attributions of the data; and
- Timeliness – measuring the currency of the data (i.e., data are up to date, and reporting occurs on time).

We conduct these quality evaluations based on established internal methodologies. As we introduce new performance measures, we perform a comprehensive data assessment using these four quality dimensions. From the assessment results, we establish a baseline. After the baseline, we automate continuous monitoring to sustain high-quality data. Continuous monitoring allows us to follow data trends and proactively remediate potential issues.

In FY 2013, we performed baseline assessments for the following performance measures:

- Increase the percentage of claims filed online;
- Net disability determination services accuracy by state;
- Medicare determinations by state; and
- Enumeration accuracy.

We conducted these assessments in addition to continuously monitoring previously base lined performance measures, thereby expanding data quality program.

In our data quality program, we also derive several accuracy and public satisfaction measures from surveys and work samples. These measures provide confidence levels of 95 percent or higher.

As part of our fiduciary responsibility to the public, we use an Audit Trail System (ATS) to protect our records and taxpayer funds from improper use. The Audit Trail System collects and maintains detailed information about SSA and public transactions. We store the data from programmatic and select internet applications, so we can review transactions for fraud and abuse.

Audit of Our FY 2015 Financial Statements

The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 requires the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) or an independent external auditor that it selects to audit our financial statements. OIG selected Grant Thornton, LLP to conduct the FY 2015 audit. The auditor found we present fairly the basic financial statements, in all material respects, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America for Federal entities. The auditor also found that management fairly stated that our internal control over our financial reporting was operating effectively.

The audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The audit did not find instances of noncompliance with laws, regulations, or other materials tested.

Role of the Office of the Inspector General

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) plays a key role in protecting our programs and operations from waste, fraud, and abuse. OIG conducts independent and objective audits, evaluations, and investigations. OIG provides timely, useful, and reliable information and advice to agency officials, Congress, and the public.

OIG's Office of Audit conducts performance audits and makes recommendations to make sure we achieve our program objectives.

In late FY 2014, OIG issued an audit, evaluating two of our Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010 performance indicators: (1) Recruit and hire veterans and disabled veterans, and (2) Employ individuals with targeted disabilities. In early FY 2015, OIG issued another audit evaluating one GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 performance indicator, Minimize average wait time for initial disability claims.

The reports are:

- [Performance Indicator Audit: Recruiting and Employment Indicators \(A-13-14-14033\)](#); and
- [Performance Indicator Audit: Minimize Average Wait Time for Initial Disability Claims \(A-07-14-24004\)](#).

The objectives of these audits were to:

- Document the sources of data collected to report on the performance indicators;
- Identify and test critical controls of systems from which the specified performance data were gathered;
- Test the adequacy, accuracy, reasonableness, completeness, and consistency of the underlying data for the specified performance indicators; and
- Recalculate the values reported for the indicators to verify accuracy.

For the performance indicators, recruit and hire veterans and disabled veterans, and employ individuals with targeted disabilities, OIG stated:

“Underlying data used for reporting SSA’s FY 2012 Recruiting and Hiring Veterans and Disabled Veterans was adequate, reasonable, complete, and consistent; and we were able to recalculate the performance reported for both PIs using data provided by SSA. However, we were unable to test the underlying data for Employing Individuals with Targeted Disabilities because updated employee disability status information replaced the previous disability data in the FPPS, and the Agency was not required to maintain the forms submitted by employees. Furthermore, the Agency did not include employees converted from temporary to permanent employment in its performance reporting for recruiting and hiring veterans and disabled veterans. However, starting in FY 2015, the Agency will adopt a new OPM performance model. Lastly, SSA incorrectly identified the data source for both PIs in certain performance reports.”

For the third performance indicator, minimize average wait time for initial disability claims, OIG stated:

“Underlying data used to report the PI were adequate, accurate, reasonable, complete, and consistent; and we were able to recalculate the performance reported for the PI using data provided by SSA. Our assessment of the PI did not identify any significant exceptions related to the accuracy of presentation or disclosure of the information related to the PI in the AFR or to the PI’s meaningfulness.

However, during our evaluation of the effectiveness of the control environment over the business process, we found claims representatives did not always ask the applicants all of the questions SSA policy requires to verify identity. Because not all of the required identity questions were asked, there is an increased risk of an individual using the identity of another person to file a fraudulent claim to obtain benefits.”

These and other OIG reports are located on [OIG's webpage](#).

Appendix D:

Changes to Performance Measures

Results for Discontinued Fiscal Year 2014 Performance Measures

Results for these measures were not available until after we published our [Annual Performance Report 2014-2016](#).

2.3b: Maintain the low percentage of improper payments made under the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Program

Fiscal Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Performance	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%		
Target						No more than 0.4% of all payments made under the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program are improper payments (i.e., overpayment and underpayments)		
Target Met						Not Met		

Results: We did not meet our FY 2014 target. Our improper overpayment rate was 0.5 percent and our total improper underpayment rate was 0.1 percent.

Data Definition: We determine Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance payment free of overpayment and underpayment error by an annual review of a statistically valid sample of the beneficiary rolls. We determine the overpayment error rate by dividing the total overpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year. We determine the underpayment error rate by dividing the total underpayment error dollars by the total dollars paid for the fiscal year.

Data Source: Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Stewardship Report

3.3a: Achieve the target number of beneficiaries participating in the Ticket to Work program who begin earning above a certain level

Fiscal Year	2014	2015	2016
Performance	1,420 beneficiaries		
Target	1,300 beneficiaries		
Target Met	Met		

Results: We exceeded our target for FY 2014.

Data Definition: The number of Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income and concurrent beneficiaries who have achieved trial-work-level earnings for the first time within 12 months after assigning their Ticket to an employment network or to a state vocational rehabilitation agency operating as an employment network. Beneficiaries achieving trial-work-level earnings prior to Ticket assignment will not be counted in this measure, nor will beneficiaries who place their Ticket in use with vocational rehabilitation. Ticket assignments that occur in the previous fiscal year may be counted if trial-work-level earnings are first achieved within the reporting period.

Data Source: Office of Child Support Enforcement earnings database and the Disability Control File

Performance Measures Established in Fiscal Year 2016

1.1b APG NEW	Improve customer service and convenience by increasing online transactions by 25 million each year
1.2e APG NEW	Increase customer satisfaction with our services
1.4b NEW	Assess field and hearing office lease expirations and increase colocation of our field and hearing offices to reduce our physical footprint
2.3c APG NEW	Improve the integrity of the SSI program by ensuring that 95 percent of our payments are free of overpayment
3.1c APG NEW	Improve customer service by reducing the wait time for a hearing decision
4.3c NEW	Increase employee engagement as measured by the employee engagement index score
5.2b NEW	Improve customer service by using information technology to provide new online services to users of my Social Security

Carryover Performance Measures with Title Changes

Fiscal Year 2016 New Title		Fiscal Year 2015 Old Title
2.1a	Improve the accuracy and timeliness of the earnings data used to calculate benefits	Redesign our earnings system to improve the accuracy and timeliness of the earnings data used to calculate benefits
3.1a	Ensure the quality of our decisions by achieving the DDS net accuracy rate for initial disability decisions	Ensure the quality of our decisions by achieving the DDS decisional accuracy rate for initial disability decisions
3.2a	Improve the disability determination process by increasing the percentage of initial disability claims using electronically transmitted health records and medical evidence (Health IT)	Improve the disability determination process by increasing the percentage of initial disability claims with health information technology (IT) medical evidence
4.1b	Strengthen workforce diversity by maintaining the representation of employees with targeted disabilities	Achieve the target on-board representation of employees with targeted disabilities
4.2a	Strengthen workforce competence by improving our talent management index score	Reduce skills gaps for leaders and potential leaders to improve leadership competencies
4.4a	Lay the foundation for building a 21 st century workforce by meeting or exceeding targeted human resources measures	Achieve target number of human capital metrics to ensure progress toward building a model workforce

Appendix E:

Summary of Key Management Officials' Responsibilities

Commissioner of Social Security (COSS), Carolyn W. Colvin (Acting), manages all agency programs and staff. Also serves as the Chief Operating Officer, responsible for improving agency management and performance.

Deputy Commissioner of Social Security (DCOSS), VACANT, an appointed position, authorized to act on behalf of the COSS.

Chief Strategic Officer (CSO), Ruby Burrell, advises and assists the Commissioner to ensure that we achieve our mission and goals through strategic and performance planning, measurement, analysis, regular assessment of progress, and the use of performance information to improve the results achieved. The CSO also oversees our transparency efforts and serves as the **Performance Improvement Officer**.

Chief Actuary (CAct), Stephen C. Goss, plans and directs program actuarial estimates and analyses for our programs and for any proposed changes in programs and trust funds. The CAct provides technical and consultative services to the COSS, the Board of Trustees of the Social Security Trust Funds, Congress, and their respective staffs.

General Counsel (GC), Andy Liu, advises the COSS, DCOSS, and all subordinate organizational components (except the Inspector General) on legal matters.

Inspector General (IG), Patrick P. O'Carroll Jr., promotes economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in administering our programs and operations, and prevents and detects fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, Quality, and Management (DCBFQM), Michelle King (Acting), directs our comprehensive management programs including budget, quality reviews and studies, financial policy, acquisition, grants, facilities supply management, and security and emergency preparedness. The DCBFQM also serves as the **Chief Financial Officer**.

Deputy Commissioner for Communications (DCCOMM), Douglas K. Walker, conducts our national public information and outreach programs and fosters the transparency of our operations.

Deputy Commissioner for Disability Adjudication and Review (DCDAR), Theresa L. Gruber, administers our nationwide appeal and review program in accordance with relevant federal laws.

Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources (DCHR), Reginald F. Wells, Ph.D., administers our human resources programs, including training, human capital initiatives, personnel and employee relations, labor management, and civil rights and equal opportunity. The DCHR also serves as the **Chief Human Capital Officer** and as the senior accountable official on employee engagement initiatives.

Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs (DCLCA), Judy L. Chesser, develops and conducts our legislative program, serves as our liaison to Congress, and analyzes legislative and regulatory initiatives.

Deputy Commissioner for Operations (DCO), Nancy A. Berryhill, directs our network of field offices, National 800 Number Teleservices Centers, and Processing Centers. The DCO oversees the disability determination services.

Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy (DCRDP), Virginia P. Reno, advises the COSS on the major policy issues and is responsible for all major activities in the areas of program policy planning, policy research and evaluation, statistical programs, and overall policy development, analysis, and implementation. The DCRDP serves as liaison with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The DCRDP also serves as the accountable official for improper payments and leads our efforts to improve the clarity, tone, and readability of our notices.

Deputy Commissioner for Systems (DCS), Robert W. Klopp, directs the strategic management of our systems and databases, which includes the development, validation, and implementation of new systems. The DCS directs operational integration, strategic planning processes, and implementation of a systems configuration program. The DCS also serves as the **Chief Information Officer** and the **Chief Technical Officer**, responsible for managing our information technology (IT) investment process and assessing the performance of our major IT investments.

Appendix F:

Glossary of Acronyms

A

AFI	Access to Financial Institutions
APG	Agency Priority Goals
ASA	Average Speed of Answer
ATS	Audit Trail System

C

CAct	Chief Actuary
CAL	Compassionate Allowances
CAP	Cross-Agency Priority
CDR	Continuing Disability Review
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CHO	Chief Human Capital Office
CIO	Chief Information Officer
COSS	Commissioner of Social Security
CSO	Chief Strategic Officer

D

DCBFQM	Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, Quality, and Management
DCCOMM	Deputy Commissioner for Communications
DCDAR	Deputy Commissioner for Disability Adjudication and Review
DCHR	Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources
DCLCA	Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs
DCO	Deputy Commissioner for Operations
DCOSS	Deputy Commissioner of Social Security
DCPS	Disability Case Processing System
DCRDP	Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy
DCS	Deputy Commissioner for Systems
DDS	Disability Determination Services
DoD	Department of Defense

E

eCAT	Electronic Claims Analysis Tool
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
E/VG/G	Excellent/Very Good/Good

F

FISMA	Federal Information Security Management
FPPS	Federal Personnel and Payroll System
FY	Fiscal Year

G	
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GC	General Counsel
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010
GS	General Schedule
H	
HCAAF	Human Capital Accountability Framework
HCAS	Human Capital Accounting System
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HR	Human Resources
HRMA	Human Resources Management Assets
HRODS	Human Resources Operational Data Store
I	
IG	Inspector General
IT	Information Technology
iTOPSS	Internet Ticket Operations Support System
O	
OAS	Online Authentication Survey
OASDI	Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
P	
PER	Pre-effectuation Review
PI	Performance Indicator
PPS	Partnership for Public Service
Q	
QDD	Quick Disability Determinations
S	
SAA	Senior Attorney Advisor
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SSN	Social Security Number
SSNAP	Social Security Number Application Process
T	
TBD	To Be Determined
TOP	Treasury Offset Program
TWL	Trial Work Level
V	
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs



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