Social Security Administration (SSA)

Progress to Implement the *21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (21st Century IDEA)*

2020 Annual Report

Prepared for the Office of Management and Budget and the public per the requirements of section 3(d) of Public Law 115-336.

Background

Section 3(d) of the [21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act](#) (21st Century IDEA)[1] requires the head of each Federal executive branch agency to report annually (through 2023) to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the public on the agency's progress to implement the requirements of the Act, and modernize websites and digital services.

SSA Efforts to Date

We continue to leverage the 21st Century IDEA to streamline our digital footprint and deliver a safe and convenient online experience for customers and business partners, building on [the work we began in 2019](#). In particular, we focused on improvements to the priorities listed in the 2019 report. We also focused on priorities that surfaced in 2020 as we adjusted our service model to continue to serve the public during the COVID 19 pandemic, even as we discontinued public contact in our field offices. Our [IT Modernization 2020 Update](#) communicates our focus on improving service and providing more and better digital service options to the public, which aligns with the intent of the statute. The information below details our efforts to modernize websites and digital services in 2020.

External Facing

Digital Identity – More than 52 million Americans have registered for a secure personal account in the *my*Social Security portal. To improve digital service, we added the option for driver's license verification for 38 states and the District of Columbia and allowed customers to verify an electronic address, improving the successful registration rate from 44 percent to 62 percent.

Internet Social Security Number Replacement Card – Added five states for driver's license and state ID verifications and added a receipt feature to the online Message Center to reduce visits to the field office for proof of the transaction.

Enhanced Retirement Calculator – Included the ability to estimate spousal benefits in the Enhanced Retirement Calculator.

Medicare Enrollment – Implemented an online application for beneficiaries to enroll in Medicare Part B (Supplementary Medical Insurance) for the Special Enrollment Period.

Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System – Enabled vendors who participate in our disability hearings process to file invoices electronically, view call orders and invoices, and receive electronic notification of payments.

SSA-455 Disability Update Report Online – The online form allows the public to complete continuing disability forms online, upload supporting documentation, data and sign the form, and transmit the form to the Wilkes-Barre Direct Operations Center in real-time for staff to review virtually, reducing processing time.

Video Service Delivery – Added video services in 123 sites to balance workloads, reduce wait times, and provide a face-to-face service option for individuals living in rural areas. Also implemented the technical foundation for using Microsoft Teams for video hearings.

Access to Electronic Files – Provided access for unrepresented claimants to view their electronic files via secure email and provided access for Appointed Representatives to their claimants' electronic files (at initial and reconsideration levels). We also increased the maximum file size for uploading documents to the Electronic

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[1] Public Law 115-336, 132 Stat. 5025-5028.

Records Express and added critical document types requested by the user community.

Individual Representative Payee Portal – Individual payees with a *my*Social Security account can now obtain benefit verification letters and replacement SSA-1099/1042S tax forms, view previously submitted accounting reports, update reports with exceptions, and update their address and phone number.

Redesign and Modernize socialsecurity.gov – Modernized the Retirement Benefits pages resulting in a 20 percent increase in visits to the Retirement landing page, a 26 percent increase in page views from organic searches, and a 2.4 percent increase in "Apply for Retirement Benefits" conversions.

Notices – Continued to expand the ability for beneficiaries to receive notices electronically. Converted two notices to modernized architecture allowing secure online access through *my*Social Security and the ability to opt-out of receiving printed versions.

Desktop Faxing – Implemented Desktop Faxing to Field Offices, Teleservice Centers, Hearing Offices, and the Office of Appellate Operations allowing them to send and receive faxes electronically through email, significantly reducing costs and improving processing times.

Targeted Event Based Emails – Inform claimants electronically of the status of the processing of their claim. Sending emails to targeted users reduces follow up inquiries by one-third.

Internal

SSA's Transition from eFOIA to FOIAonline (Federal Shared Service) – This lower cost option stores our Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests within a modern cloud environment. We worked with the Environmental Protection Agency's contractors to perform a data migration from the old eFOIA program to FOIAonline. This enabled our Division of Earnings and Business Services to process requests that use pay.gov for fee collection in FOIAonline. We expect to save $34,024 in eFOIA support costs each year.

Administrative Instructions Manual System (AIMS) Website – Redesigned website for increased functionality, including a streamlined business process, a new certification review process for policies, and component access to update and publish AIMS instructions and policies.

Adobe Connect – Launched a new distance-learning platform that delivers live and recorded interactive training directly to employees' computers and enables collaboration and interaction in real-time; resulted in an annual cost savings of approximately $7.6 million, which increased to $8.7 million once satellite infrastructure and maintenance costs were eliminated later that year. In fiscal year 2020, cost savings increased to $18.8 million.

weLearn – Launched a new Learning Management System to provide a more modern, intuitive, and comprehensive platform for delivering, completing, and tracking agency-wide workforce development activities; created a cost avoidance of over $700,000.

Human Resources (HR) Service Center – Streamlined information from our two most popular sites and updated the design to provide an intuitive customer experience, reducing the time employees spend looking for HR resources by 10 percent; estimated annual savings of $950,000.

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