



Social Security Administration (SSA)  
Progress to Implement the 21st Century Integrated  
Digital Experience Act (21st Century IDEA)

2021 Annual Report

## Background

Section 3(d) of the [21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act](#) (21st Century IDEA)<sup>1</sup> 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 [2020 report](#). We also focused on priorities that surfaced in 2021 as we adjusted our service model to continue to serve the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, even as we limited in-person service in our field offices. Our [IT Modernization 2020 Update](#) communicated our focus on improving service, which includes providing a variety of better digital service options to the public, aligning with the intent of the statute. The information below details our efforts to further modernize websites and digital services in 2021.

**Digital Identity** – More than 64 million Americans have registered for a secure personal account in the [my Social Security](#) portal. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, we changed our registration process to make it easier for customers to sign up to use our electronic services. To increase secure registration options for individuals registering for a [my Social Security](#) account, we added a driver's license verification option available to individuals residing in 43 states and the District of Columbia, covering approximately 83 percent of the population. This change improved the registration rate by approximately 20 percent. We also partnered with the General Services Administration's Login.gov service to provide an identity that the public can use across government agencies.

**Internet Social Security Number (SSN) Replacement Card** – We continue to collaborate with the states to expand our internet SSN replacement card application, which allows for U.S. citizens over the age of 18 with a driver's license or State ID, to request a replacement social security card as long as they do not need to make any changes to their record. As of December 2021, 46 states and the District of Columbia participate in the application. We also added an online receipt feature to reduce visits to the field office.

**Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System (HACPS)** – Vendors who participate in our disability hearings process can now file invoices electronically, view call orders and invoices, and receive electronic notification of payments. Electronic invoicing is only available for cases processed in HACPS. Other cases have paper-based invoicing. We will phase out paper-based invoicing as these cases are resolved.

**Digitized Forms** – During 2020, SSA began exploring new platforms for digitizing paper forms and services. Beneficiaries can now complete continuing disability Form SSA-455 Disability Update Report online, upload supporting documentation, and electronically sign and transmit the form in real-time for employees to review virtually, reducing processing time. Beneficiaries can also now apply online to enroll in Medicare Part B (Supplementary Medical Insurance) based on a Special Enrollment Period. Additionally, representatives and their clients can now complete the entire representative appointment process online, including accepting electronic signatures on notices of Appointment of Representative (Form SSA-1696). Other forms digitized through this process include the:

- Request to Withdraw a Hearing Request (HA-85);
- Request to Withdraw an Appeals Council Review (HA-86);

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law 115-336, 132 Stat. 5025-5028.

- Waiver of Your Right to Personal Appearance Before an Administrative Law Judge (HA-4608);
- Work Activity Report -Self Employment (SSA-820); and
- Work Activity Report-Employee (SSA-821).

**Access to Electronic Files** – Unrepresented claimants may now view and download their electronic files via [my Social Security](#). If they do not have a [my Social Security](#) account, they can make a request through a SSA field office to receive a PDF copy of their file via secure email. We are exploring tools for automating the process via [my Social Security](#) in the future. Appointed representatives can now view their claimants file at the initial and reconsideration levels via Appointed Representative Services. We also increased the maximum file size for uploading digital documents.

**Notices** – We continue to expand the availability of electronic notices through the [my Social Security](#) portal and now offer customers the choice to opt-out of receiving mailed notices that they are able to receive electronically through the portal. New notices launched in FYs 2020 and 2021 include: Garnishment, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount Benefit Rate Increase, the SSN Replacement Card Receipt Notice, the Advanced Designation of Representative Payees Receipt and Annual Reminder Notices, and the Consolidated Claim Medicare Award and Disallowance Notices.

**SocialSecurity.gov Website Redesign** – We launched a test site for ssa.gov that includes streamlined content and a redesigned home page. We will use customer feedback from online surveys and focus groups to adjust the beta site. We expect to increase the customer satisfaction score for the redesigned website by two points compared to the ssa.gov satisfaction score for the prior year. In FY 2022, we plan to transition the final redesigned ssa.gov website into production. To ensure the website is accessible to individuals with disabilities, the redesign process has included accessibility experts from its inception and will be tested for Section 508 compliance.

**Online “Voice of Customer” Feedback** – We established a centralized feedback collection supporting all service channels. In June 2021, we deployed a “Feedback” option to a number of high-traffic ssa.gov pages. In July 2021, we established an online customer feedback hub and marketed it on our National 800 Number Network and field office phone lines. We will continue marketing this feedback option across all service channels to help us improve service.

**my Social Security Claims Status Tracker Releases** – Allows individuals that have a [my Social Security](#) account to check the status of their pending or recently adjudicated claims online. In 2021, we added information about overall processing time estimates for disability claims. We also simplified the user interface, removed jargon, and provided helpful links to applicable publications at each step of the claims process.

**Electronic Remittances** – We made several public-facing improvements to our agency’s manual remittance process. In January 2021, we partnered with the Department of the Treasury to implement our first online repayment option for Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients to repay benefit overpayments via credit or debit card and an automated clearing house (i.e., a checking or savings account). In July 2021, we launched Online Bill Pay that replaced paper checks. Online Bill Pay allows us to receive remittances from debtors electronically from their financial institution. As of September 30, 2021, we processed over 324,000 remittances for nearly \$80 million via these new electronic remittance channels.

**Individual Representative Payee Portal (iRPP)** – Individual payees with a [my Social Security](#) account can now electronically request replacement Medicare cards for beneficiaries they represent and obtain benefit verification letters with updated formatting. Over 7,400 Medicare Replacement Cards have been ordered through iRPP since the capability was released on May 1, 2021, and the portal has seen over 600,000 successful submissions for benefit verification letters since the electronic request feature was released on June 26, 2021.

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