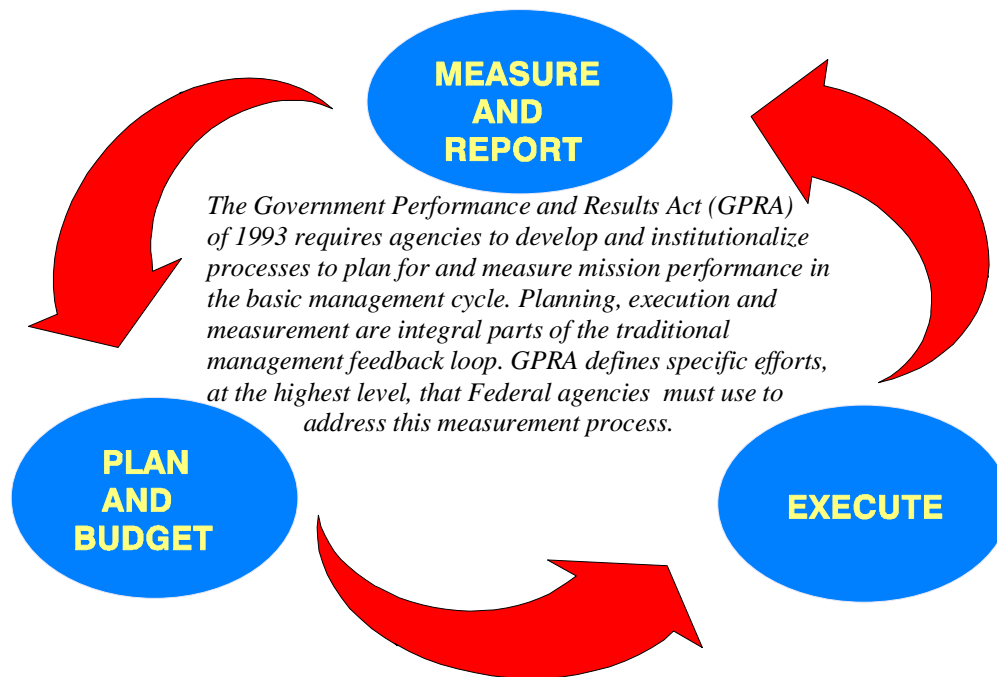


# Program and Financial Performance Measures

## FY 1997 GPRA Annual Performance Reporting

### Traditional Management Feedback Loop



SSA recently completed participation as a pilot agency under the provisions of GPRA that deal with performance measurement. Performance measures were prepared and submitted in the form of annual performance plans for FYs 1994, 1995 and 1996. These efforts helped us develop a set of transitional measures and associated goals for FY 1997, which are shown on pages 66 and 67. A few of these transitional measures have subsequently been removed from GPRA plans and are not reported in the table on the following pages. Related output measures for several priority workloads are also included. In response to the mandates of GPRA, SSA has been working to create a framework of PMs that better defines service from the perspective of our customers.

To this end, SSA's new Strategic Plan "Keeping the Promise" released in September 1997 will provide the basis for SSA's GPRA Annual Performance Plans beginning with FY 1998. The new strategic plan is the first that SSA has created as an independent Agency. In recognition of the additional responsibilities of leadership and service that this new position gives us, we have reframed our mission statement in this way: "to promote the economic security of the nation's people through compassionate and vigilant leadership in shaping and managing America's social security programs." To support this mission, the new plan establishes an improved set of five general goals that encompass all of our programs and addresses the competing needs of the wide variety of SSA stakeholders. The five strategic plan goals are:

- To promote valued, strong and responsive social security programs and conduct effective policy development, research and program evaluation;
- To deliver customer-responsive world-class service;
- To make SSA program management the best in business, with zero tolerance for fraud and abuse;
- To be an employer that values and invests in each employee; and
- To strengthen public understanding of the social security programs.

The plan reflects the perspectives of our employees and stakeholders and describes levels of performance that SSA will aim for in the coming years, as well as strategies and initiatives that we will use.

## Progress in Meeting FY 1997 GPRA Goals

	FY 1996 Actual	FY 1997 Actual	FY 1997 Goal	% of Goal Met
<b>GOAL: Rebuild Confidence in Social Security</b>				
1. <i>Percent of public "very well informed" or fairly well informed" about Social Security</i>	59.0%	56.0%	59.0%	94.9%
2. <i>Number of PEBES issued upon request and automatically by SSA</i>	9,020,650	15,690,571	14,000,000	112.1%
3. <i>Percent of individuals issued SIPEBES as required by law</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>GOAL: Provide World-Class Service</b>				
<b>Overall</b>				
4. <i>Percent of public "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with courteousness of SSA staff:</i>				.
<i>Visit courtesies</i>	85.0%	84.0%	90.0%	93.3%
<i>Telephone courtesies</i>	85.0%	85.0%	90.0%	94.4%
5. <i>Percent of public rating SSA service as "very good" (1)</i>	46.0%	52.0%	46.0%	113.0%
<b>Enumeration</b>				
6. <i>Percent of original and replacement social security cards issued within 5 days of receiving all necessary documentation</i>	96.9%	98.2%	97.0%	101.2%
<b>Earnings</b>				
7. <i>Percent of earnings items posted correctly</i>	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	100.0%
<b>OASI/SSI Aged Claims</b>				
8. <i>Percent of OASI claims processed by the time the first regular payment is due or within 15 days from effective filing date, if later</i>	84.3%	82.9%	83.0%	99.9%
<b>DI/SSI Disability Claims</b>				
9. <i>Percent of DI claims decided within 6 months after onset or within 60 days after effective filing date, whichever is later (2)</i>	57.5%	52.4%	40.0%	131.0%
10. <i>Percent of SSI disability claims decided within 60 days of filing (2)</i>	29.5%	25.0%	20.0%	125.0%
11. <i>Initial disability claims processed by DDSs</i>	2,360,034	2,187,263	2,009,000	108.9%
12. <i>Initial disability claims processing time (days)</i>	89	99	136	100.0%

(1) Current performance data represents the percent of public who rate SSA service as "very good". In FY 1998, SSA intends to measure the percent of public rating service as "excellent", consistent with the Agency goal to provide world-class service.

(2) Disability claims processing times are projected to increase temporarily while SSA completes the one-time welfare reform work. However, SSA is committed to significantly reducing processing times by FY 2000.

## Progress in Meeting FY 1997 GPRA Goals, Cont'd

<b>GOAL: Provide World-Class Service (Cont'd)</b>	<b>FY 1996 Actual</b>	<b>FY 1997 Actual</b>	<b>FY 1997 Goal</b>	<b>% of Goal Met</b>
13. <i>Initial disability claims pending as of 9/30</i>	510,454	399,392	741,000	100.0%
14. <i>Number of hearings decisions made and notices sent within 120 days of filing for a hearing (3)</i>	10.1%	10.0%	13.0%	76.9%
15. <i>Number of hearings processed by OHA</i>	580,832	574,795	605,000	95.0%
16. <i>Hearings processing times (days) (4)</i>	392	397	360	90.7%
17. <i>Number of hearings pending in OHA as of 9/30</i>	510,895	483,712	455,000	94.1%
<b><i>Postentitlement</i></b>				
18. <i>Number of periodic CDRs processed</i>	498,445 <sup>(5)</sup>	690,478 <sup>(5)</sup>	603,000	114.5%
<b><i>Face-to-Face Service</i></b>				
19. <i>Percent of public with an appointment waiting 10 minutes or less</i>	84.8%	84.9%	85.0%	99.9%
20. <i>Percent of public without an appointment waiting 30 minutes or less</i>	70.0%	72.7%	70.0%	103.9%
<b><i>800 Number Telephone Service</i></b>				
21. <i>Percent of callers who reach 800 Number within five minutes of their first attempt</i>	83.0%	96.2%	95.0%	101.3%
22. <i>Percent of calls handled accurately</i>				
<i>Payment accuracy (6)</i>	94.8%	95.3%	94.0%	101.4%
<i>Service accuracy (6)</i>	81.8%	86.5%	80.0%	108.1%
<b><i>Mail</i></b>				
23. <i>Percent of public who are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the clarity of SSA mail</i>	78.0%	82.0%	78.0%	105.1%
<b>GOAL: Create a Supportive Environment for SSA Employees</b>				
24. <i>Percent of front-line employees with intelligent workstations, connected to a local area network</i>	27.4%	50.2%	48.0%	104.6%
25. <i>Percent of supervisory staff</i>	11.0%	9.0%	10.0%	100.0%

(3) Actual data are for September of each fiscal year.

(4) Represents average processing time for September of the fiscal year.

(5) In addition, SSA processed 19,239 additional medical reviews related to work issues in FY 1996 and 20,224 in FY 1997.

(6) For six month period ending March 1996 and 1997, respectively.

This section discusses how effectively and efficiently SSA performs its day-to-day business processes and service delivery functions. Included are performance measures to assess the effectiveness in achieving intended results relating to service delivery goals and objectives outlined in the Agency's Strategic Plan published in FY 1991 and workload and unit cost data to measure the efficiency of operations. NA indicates that actual data are unavailable for that particular fiscal period. When current dollars are presented to restate prior period costs at the 1996 cost levels, the conversion from "actual dollars" to current dollars is calculated based on the change in the cost of an average SSA workyear. The "deflator" factors used to adjust prior period costs are 1.004113 for 1996, 1.075216 for 1995, 1.128997 for 1994 and 1.200057 for 1993.

## Enumeration Process

### Service Delivery

Social Security numbers (SSN) allow SSA to maintain the public's lifetime earnings records, which in turn, determine OASDI eligibility and benefit amounts. As such, they must be maintained and safeguarded. SSNs are crucial to the accuracy and protection of these earnings records. The issuance of new and replacement numbers must be prompt and efficient. Overall, SSA's percentage of applicants notified of their SSNs within the timeframes outlined in the service delivery objectives is high and rapidly approaching SSA's goal of 100 percent. Requests for SSNs are processed timely, without sacrificing the integrity of the numbers issued.

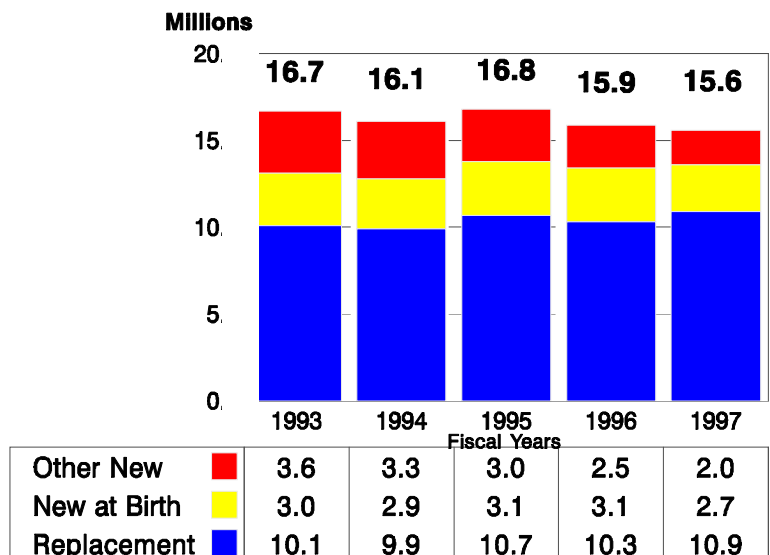
	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
◦ % of applicants that can be notified orally of their SSN within 24 hours of completing an application	NA	86.6%	91.2%	92.2%	94.4%
◦ % of SSN cards issued within 5 days of completing an application	NA	94.6%	97.0%	96.9%	98.2%
◦ Average processing time (days)	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.6	0.4
◦ % of SSNs issued accurately *	99.7%	99.9%	99.8%	99.6%	NA

\* Represents performance for the period July to June, i.e., for 7/90-6/91 (FY 91) and 7/91-6/92 (FY 92) and 7/92-6/93 (FY 93). FY 94, FY 95 and FY 96 represents performance for January to December 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

### Operational Efficiency

SSA has issued approximately 390 million SSNs since the program began in 1936. Resources required by SSA for the enumeration function were substantially impacted by IRS' initiative to strengthen Federal income tax enforcement. Workloads increased when parents contacted SSA to obtain SSNs for their children to support deductions on Federal income tax returns filed in January 1987 (5 years or older), January 1989 (2 years or older) and January 1992 (1 year or older). To soften the resource impact of the IRS initiative, SSA implemented a process in 1988 to automatically enumerate children at birth. SSA's planned system improvements in integrated telecommunications linkages, including those with States and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, coupled with online searching of master files will permit an SSN to be assigned immediately and improve future efficiency.

## SSN Cards Issued



	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ Workyears	2,487	2,534	2,560	2,577	2,811
◦ Production Per Workyear	6,703	6,370	6,575	6,187	5,539
◦ Unit Costs (Current Dollars)	\$11.30	\$11.68	\$11.53	\$12.56	\$13.58

## Earnings Process

### *Service Delivery*

Each year approximately 2 to 3 percent of wage items received cannot be posted to an individual's earnings record because the reported names and SSNs do not match to our master file of SSNs. Initially, SSA posts these unmatched items to its Earnings Suspense File (ESF) and then through various automated and human intervention techniques, and contacts with employees and employers, attempts to find a match to our SSN master file. These routines typically correct and post between 40 to 50 percent of the incorrectly reported items. Many of the items remaining on the ESF after these automated and manual purification processes are those which were reported with no SSN and/or no name or those with an SSN that was never issued.

It is important to note that the ESF is but one tool SSA uses to assist individuals in documenting their earnings record when earnings appear to be missing. SSA does not require an ESF record to post missing earnings to an individual's record. Other evidence or confirmation techniques often are used.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ % of reported earnings posted accurately to individuals' earnings record	98.9%	98.8%	98.7%	99.0%	99.0%
◦ % of AWRs posted within:					
— 6 mos. following close of tax year	83.0%	62.1%	83.9%	86.2%	86.7% *
— 9 mos. following close of tax year	97.6%	97.4%	97.4%	97.3%	97.6% *
◦ Number of months to post 98.5 percent of AWRs for tax year	9.6	10.5	10.1	10.3	10.0 *
◦ % of self-employment income posted within					
— 9 mos. following close of tax year	83.5%	83.2%	84.9%	61.4%	81.5% *
— 12 mos. following close of tax year	99.6%	99.5%	98.1%	99.7%	NA

\*Estimates

## Operational Efficiency

SSA's efficiency in maintaining the public's lifetime earnings records has increased steadily over the past 4 years. Over this time, the unit cost to process earnings items has decreased by over 33 percent. This trend is expected to continue as more employers report wage information electronically as opposed to paper reporting.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ Earnings Processed	222,028,566	221,949,522	235,314,733	239,958,058	249,123,545
— Workyears	1,375	1,556	1,595	1,540	1,303
— Production Per Workyear	161,475	142,641	147,515	155,842	191,210
— Unit Costs (Current Dollars)	\$0.51	\$0.57	\$0.53	\$0.45	\$0.38

## Claims Process

### Service Delivery

The "Initial Payment Accuracy Rate" is the measure of accuracy of the first payment made to newly awarded OASI and SSI claimants. It is calculated by dividing the amount of payments made correctly by the total amount that should have been paid. In FY 1996, most OASI errors were attributable to earnings records, benefit rate computations, date of birth, application-related issues and relationship/dependency issues. In SSI, the majority of the error dollars in awards involved the top three error categories; i.e., unearned income, earned income and other living arrangements.

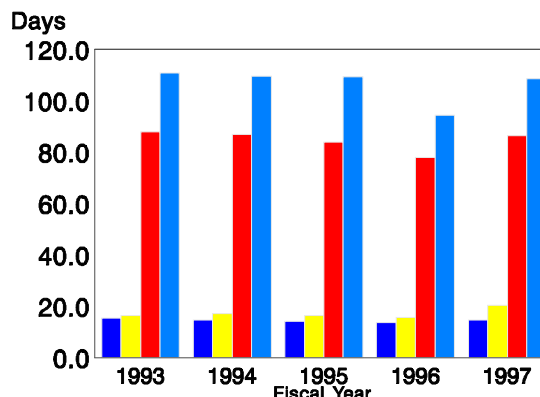
	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ Initial payment accuracy rate:					
— OASI	90.8%	95.2%	94.7%	93.7%	NA
— SSI	94.0%	93.7%	93.7%	93.4%	NA

The Index of Dollar Accuracy is based on a statistically reliable sample of the workloads reviewed. It measures the dollar accuracy of adjudicative decisions over the retrospective, current and prospective lifetime of the payment. For OASI, the Index of Dollar Accuracy rate represents total dollars paid divided by dollars that should have been paid over the life cycle of the award. For SSI, it expresses the relationship of field office processed initial claims and redeterminations dollars paid to dollars that should have been paid over the expected life of the award or redetermination. The lifetime of the SSI award continues until termination or redetermination. The percent of lifetime dollars paid correctly for OASI initial awards has remained consistently high for the past several years. The SSI index of dollar rate has remained relatively stable, i.e., the changes in accuracy from one year to the next are not statistically significant.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ % of lifetime dollars from a claims award or redetermination that is paid correctly:					
— OASI	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	99.7%	NA
— SSI	96.2%	95.9%	94.8%	93.2%	NA
— Awards	95.3%	95.3%	94.6%	93.4%	NA
— Redeterminations	96.8%	96.2%	95.0%	93.1%	NA

## Initial Claims Processing Times

Providing "World Class Service" to our customers is one of the Agency's top priorities. Ensuring their claims for benefits are processed as accurately and efficiently as possible is a major factor in providing this level of service. Over the last few years, the processing times for OASI claims had shown steady, consistent, improvement. Average processing time for initial OASI claims improved from 14.7 days in FY 1994 to 14.0 days in FY 1995 and to 13.5 days in FY 1996. However, FY 1997's processing time increased to 14.5 days. This slight increase reflects the impact of the Welfare Reform work on SSA's field offices, and is not expected to be a continuing trend.



	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
OASI	15.3	14.7	14.0	13.5	14.5
SSI Aged	16.4	17.0	16.4	15.5	20.3
DI	87.9	86.9	83.8	77.9	86.3
SSI Blind/Disabled	110.8	109.6	109.2	94.4	108.4

SSI Aged claims processing times increased in FY 1997 compared to FY 1996 (20.3 days and 15.5 days, respectively). Welfare reform legislative changes in the policies affecting non-citizens have caused these processing times to increase for the first time since FY 1994.

Also, the effects of Welfare Reform Legislation (the focus on processing childhood disability redeterminations) were evident in both disability initial claims processing times during FY 1997. Additionally, the processing of drug addict and alcoholic (DA&A) cases had a significant impact on the Disability Determination Services (DDS) and to some extent on the field offices during the first half of FY 1997. These cases were labor-intensive and required special handling (e.g., hearings) in the DDSs. The resulting disability backlogs helped cause increased overall processing times, even before the impact of Welfare Reform began to be felt. DI processing times increased from 77.9 days in FY 1996 to 86.3 days in FY 1997. SSI blind/disabled processing time increased from 94.4 days in FY 1996 to 108.4 days in FY 1997. Prior to FY 1997, there had been steady improvement in both disability claims processing times for each year since FY 1993.

One of the major components of customer satisfaction is timeliness of benefits paid. The long range objective for meeting each of the service delivery objectives is 100 percent. The data below clearly points out that we have not yet met our objectives. Given competing workload demands, primarily related to the Welfare Reform and continuing disability review work, FY 1997 has proven to be a year of decline in many of SSA's performances, after two or more years of improvement. As we complete the Welfare Reform work, we expect these measures to improve in FY 1998.

	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
◦ % of OASI applications completed before the first regular payment is due or within 15 days from the effective date of filing, if later	79.5%	81.1%	83.0%	84.3%	82.9%
◦ % of initial SSI Aged claims either paid or denied within 14 days of the filing date	62.6%	63.2%	65.4%	66.4%	59.5%
◦ % of continuing monthly payments made on the scheduled delivery date:					
OASDI	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%
SSI	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%

## Operational Efficiency

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY1997</b>
◦ Workload Receipts					
— OASI	3,272,878	3,183,573	3,140,331	3,044,834	3,112,022
— DI	1,867,954	1,858,231	1,783,757	1,670,897	1,529,513
— SSI Aged	230,970	204,424	181,629	165,169	128,492
— SSI Blind/Disabled	<u>2,037,061</u>	<u>2,037,639</u>	<u>1,918,162</u>	<u>1,757,791</u>	<u>1,496,408</u>
— Total	7,408,863	7,283,867	7,023,879	6,638,691	6,266,435
— Year-to-Year Change	+4.5%	-1.7%	-3.6%	-5.5%	-5.6%
◦ Workload Processed					
— OASI	3,300,932	3,205,793	3,162,881	3,058,745	3,129,238
— DI	1,875,315	1,888,807	1,881,802	1,711,281	1,662,353
— SSI Aged	230,367	204,402	181,329	161,649	125,680
— SSI Blind/Disabled	<u>2,055,175</u>	<u>2,052,347</u>	<u>2,016,790</u>	<u>1,759,870</u>	<u>1,498,520</u>
— Total	7,461,789	7,351,349	7,242,802	6,691,545	6,415,791
— Year-to-Year Change	+6.3%	-1.5%	-1.5%	-7.6%	-4.1%
◦ End-of-Year Pendings					
— OASI	58,696	64,060	57,751	59,410	56,844
— DI	335,611	334,166	269,938	260,769	167,081
— SSI Aged	4,058	3,613	3,471	6,349	8,138
— SSI Blind/Disabled	<u>493,523</u>	<u>475,765</u>	<u>377,965</u>	<u>372,022</u>	<u>367,625</u>
— Total	891,888	877,604	709,125	698,550	599,688
◦ End-of-Year Pendings as a % of Current Year's Dispositions					
— OASI	1.8%	2.0%	1.8%	1.9%	1.8%
— DI	17.9%	17.7%	14.3%	15.2%	10.1%
— SSI Aged	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	3.9%	6.5%
— SSI Disabled	24.0%	23.2%	18.7%	21.1%	24.5%
◦ Workyears	23,362	23,338	20,717	19,436	19,560
◦ Production Per Workyear	319	315	350	344	328
◦ Unit Cost (Current Dollars)					
— OASI	\$216.42	\$217.39	\$202.52	\$197.57	\$201.22
— DI	569.12	570.98	529.00	538.51	544.24
— SSI Aged	199.96	269.05	249.61	268.92	311.05
— SSI Disabled	497.26	485.24	452.10	456.99	518.97
— Overall Average	381.90	384.45	358.02	354.71	366.47



# Disability Determination Services (DDS)

## Service Delivery

The decisional accuracy of disability claims reflects the percentage of accurate determinations issued by the State DDSs. The decisional accuracy of disability determinations for DI and SSI initial claims has remained relatively constant for the last 5 years, despite increased workloads. Decisions to allow disability continue to be more accurate than denials.

◦ % of accurate disability determinations by State agencies (DI and SSI combined):	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY1997
— Overall Decisional Average	96.8%	96.8%	96.6%	96.9%	96.5%
— Allowances	97.9%	97.7%	97.9%	98.0%	97.7%
— Denials	95.9%	96.3%	95.9%	96.4%	95.9%

The following tables illustrate the DDS performance accuracy for disability determinations. Performance accuracy rates reflect the estimated percentages of initial disability determinations and reconsideration disability determinations that do not have to be returned to the DDS for development of additional documentation or correction of the disability determination. Accuracy of initial disability determinations have remained relatively constant over the last 5 years.

◦ Performance accuracy initial disability determinations:	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
— Overall Average	94.2%	94.4%	94.2%	94.5%	94.0%
— Allowances	95.9%	95.8%	96.0%	96.5%	95.9%
— Denials	93.0%	93.7%	93.4%	93.6%	93.1%
◦ Performance accuracy reconsideration disability determinations:					
— Overall Average	93.6%	92.7%	91.7%	92.7%	92.3%
— Allowances	96.0%	95.8%	96.2%	95.6%	94.0%
— Denials	93.2%	92.3%	91.0%	92.3%	92.0%

The following table reflects net accuracy of initial disability determinations. Net accuracy is the percentage of correct DDS disability determinations. The net accuracy rate is based on the net error rate (defined as the number of corrected deficient cases with changed disability decisions plus the number of deficient cases that are not corrected within 90 days from the end of the period covered by the report) divided by the number of cases reviewed. "Net accuracy of initial disability determinations" differs from the "percent of accurate disability determinations by State agencies" in that the latter measure is not adjusted to include the results of the cases that are returned to the DDSs for correction of the decision or for development of additional documentation. Net accuracy of initial disability determinations has remained fairly stable over the past 4 years.

◦ Net Accuracy of Initial Disability Determinations	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY1997
— Overall Average	96.6%	96.8%	96.6%	96.7%	NA
— Allowances	97.9%	97.6%	97.8%	97.9%	NA
— Denials	95.9%	96.4%	96.1%	96.1%	NA

SSA is mandated by statute to review 50 percent of the favorable disability determinations made by State DDSs. These reviews of initial and reconsideration allowances are conducted prior to effectuation of the DDS determination. We also perform reeffectuation reviews of DDS determinations of continuing eligibility. Cases selected for review are profiled so that the cases with a greater likelihood of an incorrect decision to allow or continue benefits receive greater review.

◦ Pre and Reeffectuation Review	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
— % of accurate decisions to allow or continue benefits by State DDSs	97.6%	97.4%	98.0%	97.6%	96.4%
— Number of cases reviewed	281,040	270,363	271,363	238,752	248,880
— Number of cases returned to DDS due to error or inadequate documentation	6,734	6,991	5,498	5,658	8,965

SSA also performs quality assurance reviews to measure the level of decisional accuracy for the State DDSs against standards mandated by regulations. These reviews are conducted prior to effectuation of the DDS determinations and cover initial claims, reconsiderations and determinations of continuing eligibility. The chart below shows that the State DDSs have consistently made the correct decision to allow benefits.

◦ Quality Assurance Review	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
— % of accurate decisions to allow or continue benefits by State DDSs	96.6%	96.0%	96.0%	96.2%	95.8%
— Number of cases reviewed	25,572	26,957	26,536	27,150	42,402
— Number of cases returned to DDS due to error or inadequate documentation	863	1,079	1,078	1,030	1,801

## *Operational Efficiency*

The volume of initial claims remains a challenge for SSA as this business process consumes approximately over 38 percent of the administrative budget (see page 56). The DDSs received nearly 400,000 fewer initial disability cases in FY 1997. Thus over 84 percent of all initial disability case workloads available to be processed in FY 1997 were completed. SSA has begun to implement its plan to reengineer the disability process to further improve efficiency and effectiveness. The table below displays workload trend data for State DDSs.

◦ Workload Receipts	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
— Initial Disability Cases	2,564,163	2,609,498	2,488,878	2,439,658	2,076,201
— Total Cases	3,469,345	3,611,377	3,647,337	3,714,060	3,805,920
◦ Workload Processed					
— Initial Disability Cases	2,585,835	2,615,809	2,611,622	2,360,034	2,187,263
— Total Cases	3,476,665	3,607,482	3,786,535	3,601,856	3,804,111
◦ End-of-Year Pendings					
— Initial Disability Cases	555,478	549,167	430,805	510,454	399,392
— Total Cases	717,420	721,307	590,045	702,316	703,696
◦ Production Per Workyear	261	272	281	278	269

# Due Process Operations

## Service Delivery

The following measure focuses on the reconsiderations of initial claims (which constitute the majority of all reconsideration actions). The full scope of the Agency's continued efforts to redesign the disability process encompass this objective. Accurate and more efficient processing of initial claims should result in a decrease in the number of initial claims reversed as a result of a reconsideration.

However, should a reconsideration be filed, it is expected that the beneficiary receive a prompt reply. The Agency's percentage of reconsiderations processed within 60 days after filing has fluctuated over the last four years. The decrease in the percentage of timely processed reconsiderations for FY 1997 is consistent with the overall decline in the Agency's performance for processing initial claims timely and may be attributed to the focus on the Welfare Reform and CDR workloads.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ % of requests for reconsideration of denied disability claims completed within 60 days of filing	NA	57.4%	53.8%	57.9%	53.2%

The September average hearings processing time in FY 1997 was 397 days, a 1 percent increase over September FY 1996. The FY 1997 goal was to obtain an average hearings processing time of 360 days. Processing time for September was higher than projected because of two unanticipated circumstances. A higher than usual proportion of Medicare case clearances in September (with an average processing time of 506 days for these cases), and a significant number of SSI Childhood disability case clearances on cases that aged several months during FY 1997 pending implementation of legislative changes. Average processing time for all other dispositions issued in September was 360 days. Continuation of Short-Term Disability initiatives, the national roll-out of the Adjudication Officer (AO) program, and implementation of Process Unification will have a favorable impact for FY 1998 processing times.

The AO program was created to facilitate the appeals process and be the primary focus for all pre-hearing activities when a request for an ALJ hearing is filed. The AO will work to narrow the issues for appeal, obtain new evidence and further develop the record. The AO has the authority to issue fully favorable decisions if warranted by the evidence. This would lead to more timely decisions resulting in reduced processing times.

The remanding of selected cases to the DDSs and requiring DDS medical consultant review when new medical evidence is presented at OHA is one of several initiatives under Process Unification which will result in decisions made earlier in the appeals process therefore reducing processing time.

OHA is also expected to receive and dispose of approximately 52,000 cases tied to the new Welfare Reform Legislation during FY 1998. These cases are given priority and are expected to be disposed of within four to six months from time of receipt. So as to not disadvantage other claimants who have cases pending with OHA, additional Administrative Law Judges and staff have been hired, and eight temporary hearing offices are being opened to process the workload.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ Hearings processing time (days) <sup>(*)</sup>	263	337	357	392	397

(\*) Represents average processing time for September of the fiscal year.

In FY 1997, the processing time for the appeals workload increased dramatically to an average of 340 days. The average processing time was 64 days higher than in FY 1996. Receipts continued at a record pace throughout the year. The Appeals Council implemented streamlining procedures on an ongoing basis and adjusted branch jurisdictional assignments to balance receipts. In addition, the analysts who had served on the STDP the prior year returned to regular duties. These initiatives increased productivity and correspondingly, slowed the rate that the pendings grew during the second half of the year. However, these actions were not enough to counterbalance increased receipts and a greater percentage of aged cases within the total pendings. As a result, the processing time increased.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ Appeals processing time (days)	150	126	149	276	340

This is the fourth year that the percentage of Appeals Council reviews that have decisions made and notices sent within 90 days after filing the appeal was tracked. At the beginning of the year, 3.5 percent of reviews were processed within 90 days. However, because of record receipts, both the overall pending and the number of aged cases increased. The Council implemented numerous initiatives to streamline case processing. As the result of such actions, productivity kept pace with receipts during the second half of the year but the effort was not enough to reduce the pending level. Because the number of pending aged cases increased throughout the year, the number of reviews processed within 90 days decreased.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ % of reviews with decisions made and notices sent within 90 days after filing	NA	40.4%	24.5%	3.5%	1.0%

## *Operational Efficiency*

In FY 1997, OHA disposed of 574,795 cases including 4,000 fully favorable decisions issued by Adjudication Officers (AO). With receipts of 547,612, OHA ended the fiscal year with a pending hearings workload of 483,702, a reduction of over 27,000 cases during FY 1997, marking the second straight year that dispositions have outpaced receipts. Since the end of FY 1995, the hearings pending workload has been reduced by 64,000 cases, from 547,690 to 483,712. Of the current 483,712 pending cases, approximately 7,000 are pending in AO sites.

Hearings and appeals workload receipts decreased by 7.6 percent in FY 1996, reversing a 4-year trend. SSA processed 10.3 percent more hearings in FY 1996 by investing more workyears, and as a result of the significant increase in new hearings and appeals, a record high of pending appeals backlog cases, an increase of over 100 percent, existed at the close of FY 1996. End of year pendings remain unacceptably high and continue to require SSA's close attention.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ Workload Receipts					
— Hearings	509,443	539,871	588,596	544,036	547,612
— Appeals	80,304	83,843	84,472	111,776	128,970
◦ Workload Processed					
— Reconsiderations	1,182,623	1,152,322	1,176,754	1,065,348	1,052,732
— Hearings	374,308	417,333	526,743	580,832	574,795
— Appeals	84,914	82,308	66,129	69,377	104,876
◦ End-of-Year Pendings					
— Hearings	357,564	480,102	547,690	510,895	483,712
— Appeals	25,558	27,093	45,063	93,511	117,605

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ End-of-year Pendlings as % of Current Year's Dispositions					
— Hearings	95.5%	115.0%	104.0%	88.0%	84.2%
— Appeals	30.1%	32.9%	68.1%	134.8%	112.1%
◦ Workyears (total)	9,927	10,500	11,739	12,375	12,773
◦ Production per Workyear (total)	165	157	151	139	136
◦ Unit Costs (Current Dollars)					
— Reconsiderations	\$304.86	\$325.27	\$331.11	\$342.72	\$367.72
— Hearings	1,319.03	1,268.67	1,202.31	1,203.11	1,242.03
— Appeals	643.03	605.70	665.84	581.40	437.67
— Overall Average	606.58	630.07	651.48	695.08	711.46

## Postentitlement Process

### *Service Delivery*

From time to time, SSA conducts reviews of disability beneficiaries to determine their continuing eligibility for benefits. In addition to these periodic CDRs, for FY 1996 through FY 1998 the Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994 requires that SSA annually process a minimum of 100,000 or more SSI CDRs with CDRs on one-third of SSI children at age 18. As a result of the new legislation, we were required to notify all DA&As of the new requirements and to process their appeals of this notification.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ CDR performance accuracy					
— Overall Average	96.9%	96.2%	95.6%	95.9%	94.7%
— Continuances	97.1%	96.7%	96.1%	96.2%	95.1%
— Cessations	96.5%	94.1%	94.1%	94.7%	94.0%

The measure of the dollar accuracy of the monthly OASI payments made in a year is referred to as the “dollar accuracy of payment outlays.” The accuracy rate is obtained by comparing the total amount of error in the monthly payments (both excess payment and insufficient payment) to the total payments for the year measured. The accuracy in OASI benefit payments has remained at a consistently high level over the past four years.

	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
◦ % of benefit payment outlays paid during a FY that is free of error					
OASI Dollar Accuracy					
— Excess Payments	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	NA
— Underpayments	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	NA

The dollar accuracy rate of continuing SSI payments is based on a statistically reliable sample of workloads reviewed. It is the percent of all SSI benefit payment outlays paid during the fiscal year that is free of error. The rate represents the percent of dollars issued free from overpayment, ineligibility or underpayment. The table on the following page shows that dollar accuracy in the SSI program has remained relatively stable over the past 4 years.

◦ % of benefit payment outlays paid during a FY that is free of error	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
SSI Dollar Accuracy					
— Excess Payments	96.0%	95.7%	95.7%	94.5%	NA
— Underpayments	98.7%	98.7%	98.6%	98.8%	NA

SSA has now initiated a new review of OASI postentitlement (PE) actions to determine the accuracy of reported events that affect payment and eligibility. This new measure is being developed incrementally. The results of the sample review of each principal PE workload affecting payment are analyzed and reported on separately. The SSI PE review system was implemented in FY 1995. As the results are evaluated, the precise method of reporting the accuracy of SSI PE events will be determined. In the ongoing system, additional PE reviews will be tested as needed.

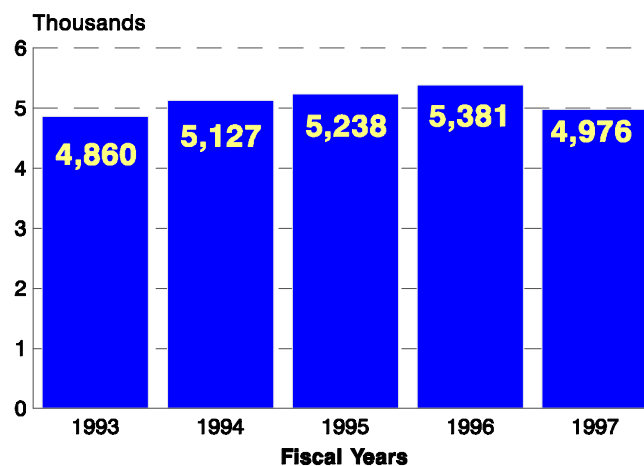
## Operational Efficiency

SSA's efficiency in maintaining the rolls for an increasing beneficiary population has remained fairly consistent over the past 5 years. Over this time, DI and SSI workloads have increased by 29 percent and 26 percent, respectively. Recent legislation is generating a significant additional workload in this area. P.L. 104-121 prohibited DI and SSI benefits for individuals whose drug addiction and/or alcoholism contributed materially to their disability. During FY 1997, over 175,000 disability determinations were conducted on former beneficiaries removed from the rolls due to this legislation.

SSA regularly reviews SSI cases to ensure that non-disability factors of eligibility continue to be met and that payments are correct. SSA has annually conducted over 1.5 million of these redetermination reviews for the past 5 years.

◦ Workloads Processed	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
— OASI	60,293,811	61,183,205	62,792,654	64,324,391	65,677,579
— DI	10,107,280	10,741,681	11,348,819	12,353,466	13,095,777
— SSI	<u>17,524,040</u>	<u>18,101,383</u>	<u>21,408,956</u>	<u>22,590,307</u>	<u>22,175,293</u>
— Total	87,925,131	90,026,269	95,550,429	99,268,164	100,948,649
◦ Workyears	18,093	17,560	18,240	18,449	20,289
◦ Redeterminations Conducted	2,222,526	1,900,147	1,597,453	1,762,967	1,772,818

## Postentitlement Process Production Per Workyear



Unit Costs (Current Dollars)	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
— OASI	\$10.18	\$9.39	\$9.03	\$8.85	\$9.09
— DI	24.00	24.29	25.62	27.48	31.67
— SSI	29.02	28.55	27.67	29.03	34.69
— Overall Average					
– Per Work Unit	15.53	15.02	15.18	15.76	17.64
– Per Beneficiary	28.44	27.88	29.35	31.08	35.23

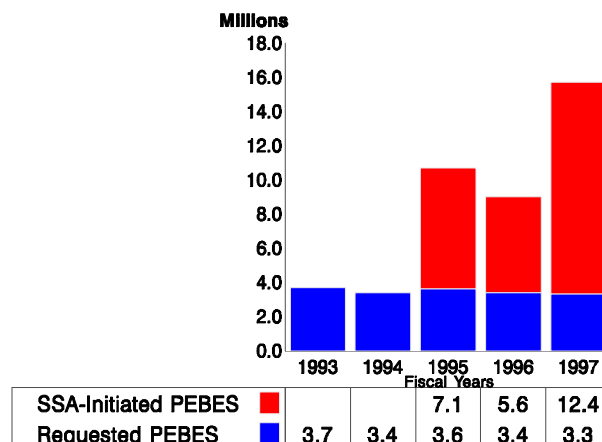
## Informing the Public

### *Service Delivery*

Informing the public about Social Security programs, and educating them about the value and operation of these programs, is a basic Agency responsibility. The public needs an accurate understanding of the basic principles of the social insurance programs, of the value of these programs to themselves and society as a whole, and an appreciation of the role Social Security programs play in the nation's income security system.

SSA publishes pamphlets, newsletters, booklets and other informational materials about its programs, policies and procedures so that the public can be fully informed about its Social Security programs. SSA also produces informational materials in audio, video and computer media. SSA publishes about 50 consumer pamphlets, booklets and fact sheets to inform the public about Social Security programs and policies. SSA also produces about 20 administrative publications, many of which are included as stuffers with notices sent to Social Security beneficiaries. Annually, SSA produces more than 95 million of these 70 or so publications.

### PEBES Issued



### *Operational Efficiency*

Recent legislation requires SSA to annually issue "SSA-initiated" Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statements (SIPEBES) to all eligible individuals who attain age 60 during FYs 1996 through 1999 and to eligible individuals age 25 or over beginning in 2000. The SIPEBES are issued for SSA by a contractor. As earnings corrections and other workloads are generated from the annual SIPEBES issuance, the earnings process will demand a greater portion of SSA's resources. However, this increased resource demand should be tempered somewhat by further productivity improvements that will be realized from systems enhancements currently being implemented.

Earnings Statements	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
— Total Number Issued	3,774,864	3,452,323	10,773,169	9,047,589	15,702,739
— Workyears	217	234	235	251	357
— Unit Costs (Current Dollars) *	\$3.88	\$4.58	\$1.54	\$1.96	\$1.69

\* SSA began issuing SIPEBES in FY 1995, those costs are reflected in the FY 1995-1997 unit costs.

# Face-to-Face Service

## Service Delivery

One aspect of providing "World-Class Service" is providing prompt, courteous service. An important indicator of prompt service is the length of time visitors spend in field offices waiting for service. The information below indicates SSA has consistently reduced its national field office waiting times (wait time to first contact) in each FY from 93-97. In the segment of "visitors with appointments", all areas showed improvement, except one. In FY 1997, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of claimants seen within 15 minutes. In the category of "visitors without appointments", there has been some fluctuation in the percent seen within 30 minutes, but there has been steady improvement in the objective to increase the percent of visitors seen within 60 minutes.

◦ National field office waiting times	<b>FY 1993</b>	<b>FY 1994</b>	<b>FY 1995</b>	<b>FY 1996</b>	<b>FY 1997</b>
Wait time to first contact ( <i>in minutes</i> )	13.6	13.3	12.7	12.5	11.4
◦ Visitors with appointments					
Average wait time ( <i>in minutes</i> )	6.7	6.9	6.8	5.8	5.6
% seen within 10 minutes	NA	83.1%	83.8%	84.8%	84.9%
% seen within 15 minutes	88.9%	88.0%	88.6%	91.6%	90.3%
◦ Visitors without appointments					
Average wait time ( <i>in minutes</i> )	29.1	27.5	25.2	25.4	23.9
% seen within 30 minutes	70.0%	69.8%	72.7%	70.0%	72.7%
% seen within 60 minutes	88.2%	88.1%	90.3%	91.0%	91.6%

Results of the "Thirteenth Annual Social Security Customer Satisfaction Survey" show customers continue to give high ratings to the service provided by SSA staff. The great majority of respondents were also satisfied with the office location and hours of business. Office waiting time, waiting area comfort and the amount of privacy afforded in the office all received much lower ratings than other aspects of field office service, but were not significantly different from the previous year's findings. The table below displays level of satisfaction with various aspects of field office service rated in the survey and compares FY 1997 and FY 1996 results.

### Satisfaction with Aspects of Field Office Service

<b>ASPECT OF SERVICE</b>	<b>FY 1996 SATISFACTION RATING</b>	<b>FY 1997 SATISFACTION RATING</b>
Office Location	87%	86%
Office Hours	88%	89%
Office Privacy	69%	73%
Waiting Time	71%	70%
Waiting Area Comfort	73%	73%
Staff Helpfulness	84%	83%
Staff Courtesy	85%	84%
Staff Knowledge	83%	83%
Clarity of Information	80%	82%



# 800 Number Telephone Service

## Service Delivery

In addition to providing personal face-to-face service, SSA offers a single nationwide toll-free number (1-800-SSA-1213) weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in each time zone. Service is available for the hearing-impaired community during the same hours using a telecommunication device for the deaf. Automated services are also available at all times including after normal business hours, on weekends and holidays. Using the automated services, callers can request applications for Social Security numbers, Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statements, verification of monthly benefit amounts and recorded information on local field offices and Medicare carriers and intermediaries.

A measure of the effectiveness of the 800 number, called the access rate, measures the percent of individual callers who successfully reach the 800 number. For example, the 5 minute access rate in FY 1997 was 96.2 percent, meaning that 96 of every 100 callers who tried to reach the 800 number in FY 1997 were able to get through within 5 minutes of their initial call.

	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
° % of individuals who successfully access the National 800 number within 5 minutes of their initial call	88.4%*	82.2%	73.5%	83.0%	96.2%

\*Excludes the month of January 1993 for which data are not available.

SSA conducts an ongoing service evaluation of the national 800 number service. The payment accuracy rate represents the percentage of all calls free of teleservice failures which have a reasonable potential to improperly affect payment of or eligibility to benefits. There are two measures of payment accuracy: (1) payment accuracy based on the universe of all calls, and (2) payment accuracy based on those calls with the potential to affect payment of or eligibility to benefits. The service accuracy rate represents the percentage of calls free of major teleservice failures in service delivery. Although service errors can cause inconvenience to the public or additional SSA workloads, they do not affect payment of or eligibility to benefits. The accuracy rates are derived by service evaluation of calls handled by full-time teleservice representatives and SPIKE employees (individuals in Program Service Centers who answer 800 number calls during high volume periods). Payment accuracy remains generally about the same. Service accuracy for both teleservice representatives and SPIKE employees has recently shown significant improvement.

° Portion of National 800 number calls handled accurately	For 6 Months Ending				
	3/95	9/95	3/96	9/96	3/97
— % of responses leading to correct payments (payment accuracy - all calls)	96.6%	97.0%	96.5%	96.9%	97.1%
— % of responses leading to correct payments (payment accuracy - payment affecting calls)	93.9%	94.5%	93.9%	94.8%	95.3%
— % of responses preventing inconvenience to the public (service accuracy)	82.6%	81.4%	79.7%	81.8%	86.5%

Ninety-eight percent of callers to SSA's 800 number rated the SSA teleservice center staff as courteous or very courteous. Around 90 percent of callers continue to be highly satisfied with the service provided by the 800 number.

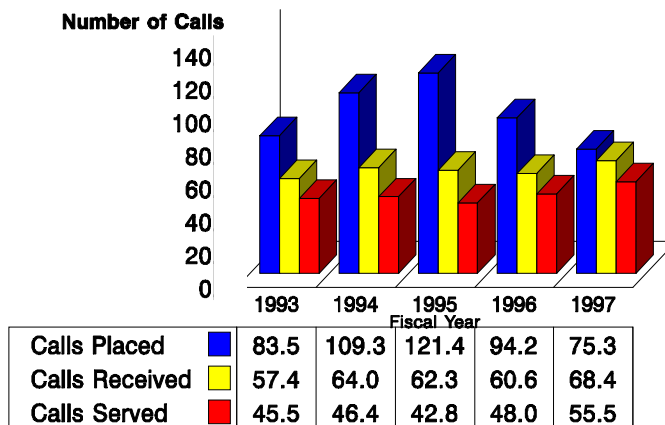
	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
◦ Staff Courtesy*	99%	97%	97%	98%
◦ Service Satisfaction*	94%	90%	91%	89%

\* Based on Survey results for the months of February.

## Operational Efficiency

Calls placed in the chart below represent the actual number of calls placed to the 800 number including busy signals. Calls received consists of all callers that get through and either conduct business or hang up while on hold. Calls served represent all callers that conduct business with SSA. In FYs 1992-1995, SSA was unable to accommodate the volume of calls placed to the 800 number. However, an increase in staff dedicated to this workload has enabled SSA to provide better service to our customers who choose to conduct business via the 800 number. In FY 1995, only 35 percent of calls placed to the 800 number were actually served. SSA showed marked improvement by serving 51 and 73 percent of all calls placed in FY 1996 and FY 1997, respectively.

### SSA's 800 Number Workloads



## Mail

The public can initiate requests for all information and services by writing to SSA. Though members of the public do not often make their first contact with SSA through the mail, SSA's need to make contact on a large scale means that SSA frequently interacts with customers by mail. General program information is mailed to requesters and notices are sent to explain eligibility and payment decisions and to inform clients of their rights and responsibilities. Overall, 82 percent of respondents to SSA's Customer Satisfaction Survey were satisfied with the clarity of written material they received from SSA, a statistically significant improvement over last year's finding of 78 percent. This same level of satisfaction and a corresponding improvement over last year's rating applied specifically to notice clarity as well. These improvements reflect SSA's many continuing efforts to enhance the clarity of written information provided to the public.

	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY1997
◦ % of public who were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the clarity of information mailed to them by SSA	65%*	70%*	73%*	78%*	82%

\* For FYs 1993-1996, customers were asked whether the information mailed to them by SSA was "easy" or "very easy" to understand.