

Programmatic Information

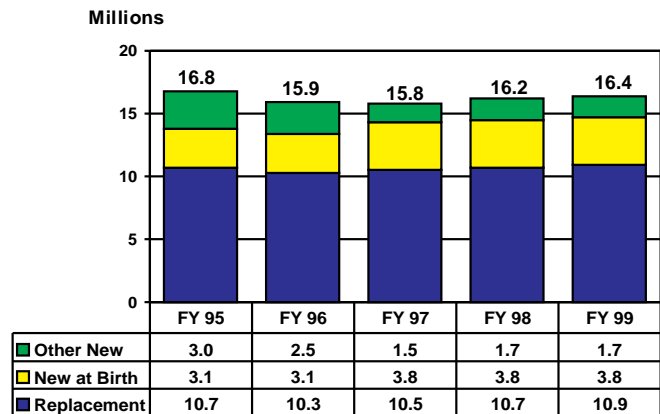
This section supplements the GPRA Performance Report with more detail on how effectively and efficiently SSA performs its day-to-day business processes and service delivery functions. Included are performance indicators to assess the effectiveness in achieving intended results relating to service delivery goals and objectives outlined in the Agency's strategic plan published in FY 1997 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 1999 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 indices used to adjust prior period costs are 1.011655 for 1998, 1.098825 for 1997, 1.103344 for 1996 and 1.181474 for 1995.

Enumeration Process

Enumeration is the process by which SSA assigns Social Security numbers (SSN) to identify workers and beneficiaries, issues replacement cards to people with existing numbers and verifies SSNs for employers and other government agencies. In 1989, SSA implemented the enumeration at birth process which is used to assign SSNs to newborns. At the time of birth, a hospital representative will ask the parents if they want to have an SSN assigned to the child using the information normally supplied to the State's office of vital statistics. The data supplied to the State are then shared with SSA and SSA's systems assign an SSN and issue a card.

The issuance of new and replacement cards must be prompt and efficient. SSA's percentage of applicants notified of their SSNs within the timeframes identified below has remained very high over the last several years. Requests for SSNs are processed timely, without sacrificing the integrity of the numbers issued. SSA has assigned just over \$400 million SSNs since the program began in 1936.

SSN Cards Issued



	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ % of applicants that can be notified orally of their SSN within 24 hours of completing an application	91.2%	92.2%	94.4%	98.9%	96.5%
◦ % of SSN cards issued within 5 days of completing an application	97.0%	96.9%	98.2%	99.7%	99.0%
◦ Average processing time (days)	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.3
◦ % of SSNs issued accurately*	99.8%	99.6%	99.9%	99.8%	NA

* Represents performance for January to December.

Workload Data

	FY 1995	FY1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ Workyears	2,560	2,577	2,811	2,902	2,692
◦ Production Per Workyear	6,575	6,187	5,539	5,584	6,063
◦ Unit Costs (Current Dollars)	\$12.67	\$13.81	\$14.92	\$14.17	\$13.89

Earnings Process

Reports of earnings must be filed annually by every employer who is liable for Social Security and Medicare taxes. Employers may submit wage reports to SSA on paper or on electronic or magnetic media. To ensure completeness of earnings data, wage items are matched yearly against employer tax data reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Record corrections may be initiated by an employer, IRS, SSA or an employee. Individuals may request statements of their earnings records and corrections to those records by contacting SSA in person, by phone or through the mail or the Internet.

Data shown below as FY 1999 performance relates to the processing of tax year 1998 data. SSA annually estimates the number of annual wage reports (AWRs) and the amount of self-employment income that will be posted for a particular tax year. These estimates are used to monitor current year processing. Once all wage and self-employment income information is processed, these measures are recalculated using actual data.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ % of reported earnings posted accurately to individuals' earnings record	98.7%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%
◦ % of AWRs posted within:					
– 6 mos. following close of tax year	83.9%	86.2%	86.9%	83.0%	83.9%*
– 9 mos. following close of tax year	97.4%	97.3%	97.8%	98.5%	95.3%*
◦ Number of months to post 98.5 percent of AWRs for tax year	10.1	10.3	9.8	9	9.5*
◦ % of self-employment income posted within:					
– 9 mos. following close of tax year	84.9%	61.4%	80.4%	89.5%	93.3%*
– 12 mos. following close of tax year	98.1%	99.7%	99.5%	99.8%	NA

* Estimates

Workload Data

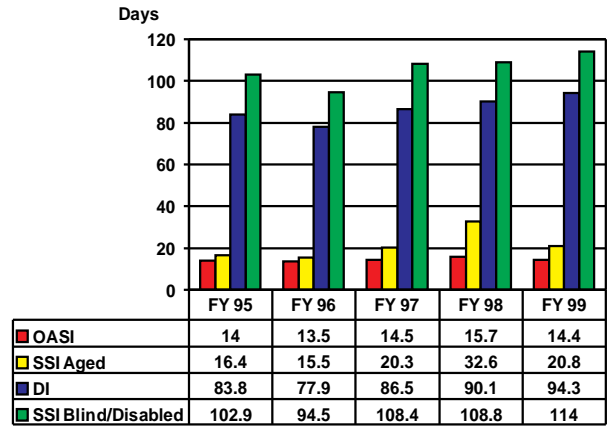
	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ Earnings Processed	235,314,733	239,958,058	249,123,545	266,011,984	249,867,974
– Workyears	1,595	1,540	1,303	1,223	1,007
– Production Per Workyear	147,515	155,842	191,210	217,440	248,131
– Unit Costs (Current Dollars)	\$0.58	\$0.49	\$0.42	\$0.36	\$0.29

Claims Process

To become entitled to benefits under any of the programs that SSA administers, an individual must file an application and submit proof of eligibility. Those who are dissatisfied with SSA's decisions may request further review. The claims process comprises the actions that SSA takes to determine an individual's eligibility for benefits, beginning with the individual's initial contact through payment effectuation or administrative appeal.

The process for determining eligibility for benefits involves certain basic functions that are consistent across each of the programs that SSA administers: outreach and information, intake, evidence collection, determination of eligibility, notification of award or denial and initial payment. However, eligibility requirements vary considerably by program and type of benefit.

Initial Claims Processing Times



	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ % of OASI applications completed before the first regular payment is due or within 14 days from the effective date of filing, if later	83.0%	84.3%	82.9%	82.6%	84.3%
◦ % of initial SSI Aged claims either paid or denied within 14 days of the filing date	65.4%	66.4%	59.5%	54.2%	63.5%
◦ % 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%

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. The increase in accuracy for FY 1997 was due primarily to a reduction in dollar errors involving earnings records, computations and application issues.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ Initial payment accuracy rate:					
- OASI	94.7%	93.7%	95.6%	97.1%*	NA
- SSI	93.7%	93.4%	92.5%	NA	NA

* Preliminary

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 redetermination 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 changes in the SSI index of dollar accuracy rate from one year to the next are not statistically significant; however, the decline in accuracy over the past 5 years is statistically significant.

° % of lifetime dollars from a claims award or redetermination that are paid correctly:	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– OASI	99.8%	99.7%	99.8%	99.8%*	NA
– SSI	94.8%	93.4%	93.0%	NA	NA
– Awards	94.6%	93.6%	90.4%	NA	NA
– Redeterminations	95.0%	93.2%	94.3%	NA	NA

* Preliminary

Workload Data

° Workload Receipts					
– OASI	3,140,331	3,044,834	3,112,022	2,992,786	3,041,782
– DI	1,783,757	1,670,897	1,529,513	1,487,545	1,505,689
– SSI Aged	181,629	165,169	128,492	138,570	149,716
– SSI Blind/Disabled	<u>1,918,162</u>	<u>1,757,791</u>	<u>1,496,408</u>	<u>1,444,351</u>	<u>1,480,536</u>
– Total	7,023,879	6,638,691	6,266,435	6,063,252	6,177,723
– Year-to-Year Change	-3.6%	-5.5%	-5.6%	-3.2%	1.9%
° Workloads Processed					
– OASI	3,162,881	3,058,745	3,129,238	3,020,268	3,076,937
– DI	1,881,802	1,711,281	1,662,353	1,536,900	1,513,780
– SSI Aged	181,329	161,649	125,680	135,442	148,382
– SSI Blind/Disabled	<u>2,016,790</u>	<u>1,759,870</u>	<u>1,498,520</u>	<u>1,429,247</u>	<u>1,440,689</u>
– Total	7,242,802	6,691,545	6,415,791	6,121,857	6,179,788
– Year-to-Year Change	-1.5%	-7.6%	-4.1%	-4.6%	0.6%
° End-of-Year Pending					
– OASI	57,751	59,410	56,844	55,505	38,531
– DI	269,938	260,769	167,081	259,018	291,104
– SSI Aged	3,471	6,349	8,138	8,469	9,101
– SSI Blind/Disabled	<u>377,965</u>	<u>372,022</u>	<u>367,625</u>	<u>328,260</u>	<u>365,281</u>
– Total	709,125	698,550	599,688	651,252	704,017

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ End-of-Year Pendings as a % of Current Year's Dispositions					
– OASI	1.8%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.3%
– DI	14.3%	15.2%	10.1%	16.9%	19.2%
– SSI Aged	1.9%	3.9%	6.5%	6.3%	6.1%
– SSI Disabled	18.7%	21.1%	24.5%	23.0%	25.4%
◦ Workyears	20,717	19,436	19,560	17,263	16,714
◦ Production Per Workyear	350	344	328	355	370
◦ Unit Cost (Current Dollars)					
– OASI	\$222.53	\$217.10	\$221.11	\$196.01	\$189.88
– DI	581.28	591.73	598.02	583.17	605.60
– SSI Aged	274.28	295.49	341.79	294.09	266.83
– SSI Disabled	496.78	502.15	570.26	522.11	522.58
– Overall Average	393.40	389.77	402.68	371.51	371.12

Disability Determination Services (DDS)

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.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ % of accurate disability determinations by State agencies (DI and SSI combined):					
– Overall Decisional Average	96.6%	96.9%	96.5%	96.2%	96.5%
– Allowances	97.9%	98.0%	97.7%	97.8%	98.0%
– Denials	95.9%	96.4%	95.9%	95.3%	95.7%

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.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ Performance accuracy initial disability determinations:					
– Overall Average	94.2%	94.5%	94.0%	93.7%	94.3%
– Allowances	96.0%	96.5%	95.9%	96.1%	96.5%
– Denials	93.4%	93.6%	93.1%	92.3%	93.0%
◦ Performance accuracy reconsideration disability determinations:					
– Overall Average	91.7%	92.7%	92.3%	91.6%	92.3%
– Allowances	96.2%	95.6%	94.0%	95.6%	96.0%
– Denials	91.0%	92.3%	92.0%	90.9%	91.6%

The following table reflects the 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 following the period covered by the report) divided by the number of cases reviewed. Net accuracy of initial disability determinations has remained fairly stable over the past 4 years.

“Net accuracy of initial disability determinations” differs from the “percent of accurate disability determinations” in two ways. While both measures describe decisional correctness, counting as deficient only those deficiencies which, when corrected, result in a change of decision, (1) the percent of accurate disability determinations is a one time calculation performed at the end of the fiscal year; and (2) as a recurring function, net accuracy counts as deficient those deficiencies not corrected within the 90 day period following the close of the review period.

◦ Net accuracy of initial disability determinations	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– Overall Average	96.6%	96.7%	96.5%	96.2%*	NA
– Allowances	97.8%	97.9%	97.6%	97.9%	NA
– Denials	96.1%	96.1%	95.9%	95.3%	NA

* Net accuracy is calculated approximately 3 months following the end of the fiscal year.

SSA is mandated by statute to review at least 50 percent of the favorable disability insurance determinations made by State DDSs. These reviews of initial and reconsideration allowances are conducted prior to effectuation of the DDS determination. We also perform preeffectuation reviews of DDS determinations of continuing eligibility. SSA uses a profiling system to select cases for review. This helps to ensure the cost-effectiveness of preeffectuation reviews, and satisfies the legislative requirement that the cases reviewed are those that are most likely to be incorrect.

◦ Preeffectuation Reviews	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– % of accurate decisions to allow or continue benefits by State DDSs	98.0%	97.7%	96.4%	96.4%	96.4%
– Number of cases reviewed	271,363	238,751	249,321	241,611	254,134
– Number of cases returned to DDS due to error or inadequate documentation	5,498	5,536	9,013	8,729	9,082

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	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– % of accurate decisions to allow or continue benefits by State DDSs	96.0%	96.2%	95.8%	96.1%	96.1%
– Number of cases reviewed	26,536	27,150	42,402	42,303	43,863
– Number of cases returned to DDS due to error or inadequate documentation	1,078	1,030	1,801	1,638	1,705

Workload Data

◦ Workload Receipts					
– Initial Disability Cases	2,488,878	2,439,658	2,076,201	2,037,160	2,049,349
– Total Cases	3,647,337	3,714,060	3,805,920	3,848,878	3,786,564

◦ Workload Processed	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– Initial Disability Cases	2,611,622	2,360,034	2,187,263	2,024,524	2,013,089
– Total Cases	3,786,535	3,601,856	3,804,111	3,792,151	3,774,209
◦ End-of-Year Pendings					
– Initial Disability Cases	430,805	510,454	399,392	416,378	457,823
– Total Cases	590,045	702,316	703,696	760,026	772,381
◦ Production Per Workyear	281	278	269	265	258

Due Process Operations

The following measure focuses on the reconsiderations of initial claims (which constitute the majority of all reconsideration actions). The Agency's vision for redesigning the disability process encompasses the timely processing of reconsiderations. Once fully implemented, the accurate and more efficient processing of initial claims should result in a decrease in the number of initial claims reversed as a result of filing 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; with FY 1999 representing the lowest percentage to date. The decrease in the timely processing of reconsiderations for FY 1998 and 1999 is consistent with the overall decline in the Agency's performance for processing initial claims timely.

◦ % of requests for reconsideration of denied disability claims completed within 60 days of filing	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
	53.8%	57.9%	53.2%	50.9%	46.2%

Average processing time continued to improve throughout FY 1999, averaging 316 days for the fiscal year, just three days short of the goal of 313 days. Average processing time for SSA cases only (i.e., excluding Medicare cases) was 301 days. With the projected efficiencies tied to implementation of the Hearings Process Improvement Plan in 37 hearings offices in January 2000, and the projected continued decline in total pending and pending per Administrative Law Judge, we project an average processing time of 257 days for FY 2000. The processing times for FY 1997 - 1999 include Adjudication Officer (AO) cases. The AO project ceased at the close of FY 1999.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999*
◦ Hearings processing time (days)	357	392	397	341	316

* The performance indicator for processing time was changed in FY 1999. It now measures average processing time for all cases. Previous years' measures represented September processing time only.

In FY 1999 the processing time for the appeals workload increased to an average of 458 days. The average processing time was 28 days higher than in FY 1998. Additional resources have been directed to the appeals workload. The Appeals Council has hired additional adjudicators to process claims and has implemented streamlining procedures on an ongoing basis. A workgroup has been appointed to investigate other approaches to manage the workload. The initiatives implemented have had a positive impact and have slowed the rate of growth of the pending level. However, increased productivity over the past two years was still not enough to counterbalance increased receipts and the corresponding greater percentage of aged cases within the total pending. As a result, the processing time increased.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ Appeals processing time (days)	149	276	340	430	458

This is the sixth 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, one percent of reviews was processed within 90 days. This figure remained constant throughout the year. Heavy receipts continued and, as a result, both the overall pending and the number of aged cases increased. The Council implemented numerous case streamlining initiatives throughout the year. However, this effort was not enough to reduce the pending level. As a result, the number of reviews processed within 90 days remained at one percent.

◦ % of reviews with decisions made and notices sent within 90 days after filing	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
	24.5%	3.5%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

Workload Data

The Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) processed 596,999 hearings dispositions in FY 1999. With receipts of 524,644, OHA ended the fiscal year with a pending hearings workload of 311,958, a reduction of 72,355 cases during FY 1999, marking the fourth straight year that dispositions have outpaced receipts. Since the end of FY 1995, the hearings pending workload has been reduced by 235,732 cases, from 547,690 to 311,958.

◦ Workload Receipts	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– Hearings	588,596	544,036	547,612	519,179	524,644
– Appeals	84,472	111,776	128,970	129,033	135,379
◦ Workloads Processed					
– Reconsiderations	1,176,754	1,065,348	1,052,732	1,054,512	981,347
– Hearings	526,743	580,832	574,795	618,578	596,999
– Appeals	66,129	69,377	104,876	119,271	109,691
◦ End-of-Year Pendencies					
– Hearings	547,690	510,895	483,712	384,313	311,958
– Appeals	45,063	93,511	117,605	127,367	153,056
◦ End-of-Year Pendencies as % of Current Year's Dispositions					
– Hearings	104.0%	88.0%	84.2%	62.1%	52.3%
– Appeals	68.1%	134.8%	112.1%	106.8%	139.5%
◦ Workyears	11,739	12,375	12,773	13,218	12,951
◦ Production per Workyear (total)	151	139	136	136	145
◦ Unit Costs (Current Dollars)					
– Reconsiderations	\$363.83	\$376.59	\$404.06	\$388.68	\$405.42
– Hearings	1,321.13	1,322.01	1,364.78	1,400.93	1,401.91
– Appeals	731.64	638.86	480.92	459.63	514.01
– Overall Average	715.86	763.77	781.77	793.69	813.37

Postentitlement Process

Once individuals become entitled to Social Security or SSI benefits, any changes in their circumstances that affect the amount or continuation of payment must be reflected in SSA's records. The postentitlement process encompasses the actions that SSA takes, after an OASDI or SSI claim is processed to an initial award, to ensure continuing eligibility, and timely and correct payment of benefits. Examples of these actions include change of address, benefit recomputations, overpayments and reviews of disability beneficiaries to determine their continuing eligibility for benefits. The performance accuracy of these continuing disability reviews (CDR) is displayed below.

◦ CDR performance accuracy	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– Overall Average	95.6%	95.9%	94.7%	94.8%	95.3%
– Continuances	96.1%	96.2%	95.1%	95.7%	95.8%
– Cessations	94.1%	94.7%	94.0%	91.5%	93.3%

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 last five years and exceeds the SSA performance indicator goal.

◦ % of benefit payment outlays paid during a FY that are free of error	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
OASI Dollar Accuracy					
– Overpayments	99.9%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	NA
– Underpayments	99.9%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	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 below 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 are free of error	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
SSI Dollar Accuracy					
– Overpayments	95.7%	94.5%	94.7%	93.5%	NA
– Underpayments	98.6%	98.8%	98.8%	98.8%	NA

Workload Data

◦ Workloads Processed	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– OASI	62,792,654	64,324,391	65,677,579	64,970,602	58,571,017
– DI	11,348,819	12,353,466	13,095,777	14,101,384	13,139,294
– SSI	<u>21,408,956</u>	<u>22,590,307</u>	<u>22,175,293</u>	<u>21,783,670</u>	<u>20,192,328</u>
– Total	95,550,429	99,268,164	100,948,649	100,855,656	91,902,639
◦ Workyears	18,240	18,449	20,289	20,175	20,420
◦ Production Per Workyear (total)	5,238	5,381	4,976	4,999	4,501

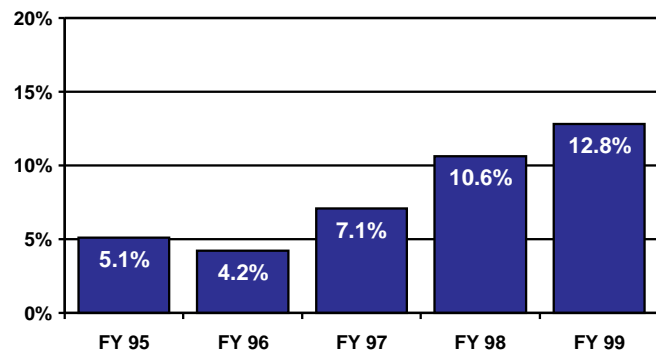
	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ Redeterminations Conducted	1,597,453	1,762,967	1,772,818	1,852,842	2,122,279
◦ Unit Costs (Current Dollars)					
– OASI	\$9.92	\$9.73	\$9.99	\$9.55	\$10.14
– DI	28.15	30.20	34.80	37.20	37.13
– SSI	30.14	31.90	38.12	40.41	50.15
– Overall Average					
– Per Work Unit	16.68	17.32	19.39	20.08	22.79
– Per Beneficiary	32.26	34.16	38.91	40.05	41.17

Informing the Public

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 leaflets, newsletters, booklets and other informational materials about its programs, policies and procedures so that the public can be fully informed about the Social Security programs. SSA also produces informational materials in audio, video and computer media. SSA publishes over 70 consumer leaflets, 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. Most of these publications are also available instantly to the public on SSA's website.

Percent of Covered Workers Receiving Social Security Statements*



* Formerly PEBES Statements

Workload Data

Legislation requires SSA to issue annual Social Security Statements (formerly PEBES) to all eligible individuals who attain age 60 during FYs 1996 through 1999 and to eligible individuals age 25 or over beginning in FY 2000. The statements are printed and mailed for SSA by a contractor. As earnings corrections and other workloads are generated from the annual statement 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.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
◦ Earnings Statements*					
– Total Number Issued	10,773,169	9,047,589	15,702,739	24,109,695	30,140,944
– Workyears	235	251	357	267	252
– Unit Costs (Current Dollars)	\$1.82	\$2.17	\$1.85	\$0.90	\$0.65

* Totals include both Social Security Statements (formerly PEBES) and other earnings statements.

Face-to-Face Service

SSA has a long tradition of providing face-to-face service for customers in its field offices. SSA has 1,343 field offices nationwide which provide a full array of services for customers, from answering general questions about programs to making complex eligibility determinations. Providing prompt, courteous service in our field offices is crucial to becoming an Agency that truly provides “World-Class Service”. An indicator of this type of service is the length of time visitors spend in field offices waiting for service. The chart below displays the results of the waiting times in SSA’s field offices.

◦ National field office waiting times	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
– Wait time to first contact (in minutes)	12.7	12.5	11.4	12.5	12.9
◦ Visitors with appointments					
– Average wait time (in minutes)	6.8	5.8	5.6	5.8	6.6
– % seen within 10 minutes	83.8%	84.8%	84.9%	87.4%	84.6%
– % seen within 15 minutes	88.6%	91.6%	90.3%	92.5%	89.9%
◦ Visitors without appointments					
– Average wait time (in minutes)	25.2	25.4	23.9	25.8	25.6
– % seen within 30 minutes	72.7%	70.0%	72.7%	71.9%	71.6%
– % seen within 60 minutes	90.3%	91.0%	91.6%	89.9%	90.4%

Results of SSA’s FY 1999 Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey show that customers continued to give high ratings for the service provided by SSA staff in their local offices over the course of the last year. Customers were especially satisfied with the level of SSA employee job knowledge, an aspect they also identified as one of the most important elements of SSA’s service. Ratings of office waiting time, comfort and privacy continue to be much lower than other aspects of in-office service, with the privacy rating reflecting a statistically significant decline.

The table below displays the various aspects of field office service rated in the survey and compares them with the results from the FY 1998 Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. In FY 2000, the Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey will be discontinued. Aspects of in-office service will be measured instead through the Office Visitor Interaction Tracking Survey, which will capture customer impressions shortly after the contact.

Local Office Visit		
Percent “Satisfied”*		
Aspect of Service:	FY 1999	FY 1998
Office Location	87%	88%
Office Hours	89%	89%
Signs/Instructions	87%	NA
Office Comfort	78%	76%
Office Privacy	65%**	73%
Waiting Time	69%	71%
Helpfulness	85%	83%
Courtesy	87%	87%
Job Knowledge	88%**	83%
Clear Explanations	84%	82%

* For FY 1998, satisfied equals a rating of “very satisfied” or “satisfied.” For FY 1999, satisfied equals the combined ratings of “excellent,” “very good” or “good.”

** Statistically significant change from previous year.

800 Number Telephone Service

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, Social Security Statements (formerly Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statements), verification of monthly benefit amounts, Medicare information and a replacement Medicare card, 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. Following are two methods of measuring the access rate.

°		FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
	% of individuals who successfully access the National 800 number within 5 minutes of their initial call	73.5%	83.0%	96.2%	95.3%	95.8%
	% of individuals who successfully reach the National 800 number the first time they call	NA	NA	92.7%	91.1%	92.9%

The Agency goals for the above two access rate measures are 95 percent 5-minute access rate and 90 percent for the first time access rate. As shown, the Agency exceeded both goals in FY 1999 and also improved on its performance from FY 1998.

SSA conducts an ongoing evaluation of the national 800 number service. National 800 number accuracy rates are derived from the remote monitoring of calls handled by teleservice representatives and program service center SPIKE employees (individuals in Program Service Centers who answer 800 number calls during high volume periods).

The payment accuracy rates represent 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 only on calls with the potential to affect payment of or eligibility to benefits. The service accuracy rate represents the percentage of calls free of teleservice failures in service delivery which do not have a reasonable potential to improperly affect payment or eligibility to benefits. Service errors involve situations which can: 1) result in inconvenience to the public; 2) cause additional SSA workloads; or 3) result in situations where information is released from SSA records or reports which affect SSA records are accepted before obtaining all identifying information required by SSA.

The following shows that after remaining relatively stable, payment accuracy increased for the 6 months period ending March 1999. The higher payment accuracy rates were attributed to employee performance. Except for an increase in service accuracy in FY 1997, national 800 number service accuracy rates have generally remained in the lower 80 percent range. FY 1999 data represents the 6 month period ending March 31, 1999.

°		FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
	Portion of National 800 number calls handled accurately					
–	% of responses leading to correct payments (payment accuracy - all calls)	96.8%	96.7%	97.1%	97.0%	97.4%
–	% of responses leading to correct payments (payment accuracy - payment affecting calls)	94.2%	94.4%	95.2%	94.7%	95.4%

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
% of responses which did not result in inconvenience to the caller or cause additional SSA workloads (service accuracy)	82.0%	80.8%	84.3%	81.7%	81.0%

Callers continue to express satisfaction with SSA's 800 number service in the FY 1999 800 Number Customer Surveys. Both staff courtesy and overall service on the day of the call to the 800 number received high ratings. Note that the scale for the staff courtesy rating was changed this year from a 4-point scale distinguishing service as basically courteous or discourteous, to the 6-point "excellent" scale that is the Agency standard for rating world-class service. This scale change accounts for what would appear to be a decline in the staff courtesy rating. The service satisfaction rating utilized the "excellent" scale in both FYs 1998 and 1999. The following data are based on customer survey results for the months of February.

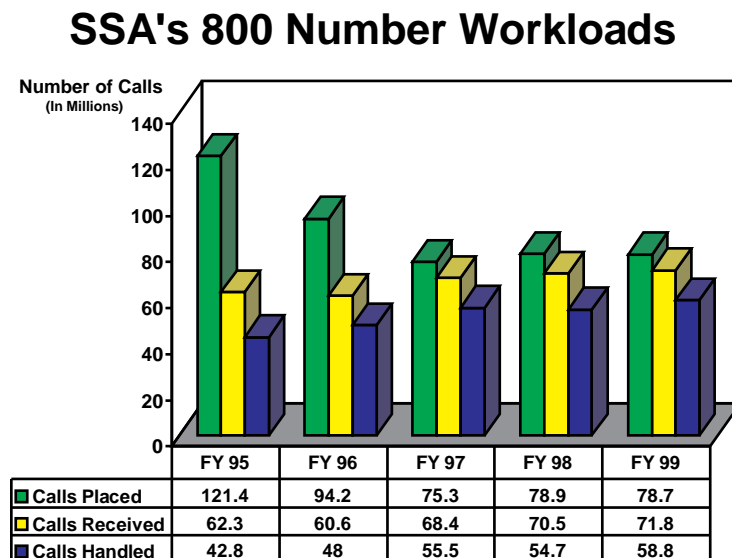
	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
Staff Courtesy	97%	97%	98%	97%	90%*
Service Satisfaction	90%	91%	89%	83%**	84%

* The scale for rating courtesy changed to the Agency's new "world-class" 6-point scale in FY 1999; 90 percent of customers rated courtesy as "Excellent," "Very Good" or "Good."

** The 6-point "world-class service" scale was adopted for rating overall service satisfaction in FY 1998.

Workload Data

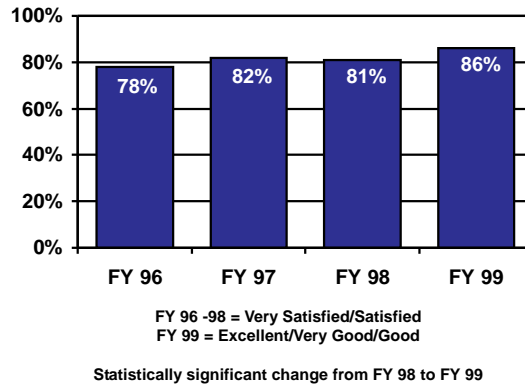
Calls placed shown below represent the actual number of calls placed to the 800 number including busy signals. Calls received consists of all callers that get through and either conduct business or hang up while on hold. Calls served represent all callers that conduct business with SSA. There was an increase in the number of calls received and calls served in FY 1999 compared to FY 1998. The number of calls placed declined because some busy signals were eliminated.



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. In various surveys over the years, customers have identified the clarity of written communications as one of the most important aspects of SSA's service, confirming the Agency's focus on notice improvements. And, SSA's efforts in recent years to improve the quality of its notices is reflected in a gradual increase in customers' ratings of the clarity of the mail they receive, as depicted in the chart below. The 5-percentage point increase from FY 1998 to FY 1999 was statistically significant.

**Satisfaction with the Clarity
of SSA Mail**



Internet

The public also can quickly and conveniently access most general program information, frequently requested forms and other information of interest through SSA's Internet website, ssa.gov. SSA now delivers over 1 million forms per year over the Internet. In addition, the public can use the Internet to request Social Security Statements to be mailed to them. SSA processed over 500,000 electronic statement requests in FY 1999. SSA's initial Survey of Social Security Online Customers showed that a high percentage of customers are satisfied with the information and services received from the website.

	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999
° % of online customers who rated SSA's website as "good," "very good" or "excellent."*	NA	NA	NA	NA	81%

* Internet customer satisfaction was first measured in 1999.