AGENCY PRIORITIES AS WE MOVE FORWARD

OUR NEW DIRECTION

This *Performance and Accountability Report* focuses on our many accomplishments in FY 2008 in working towards our established goals. FY 2008 was a pivotal year during which we formulated our strategy to address the challenges and priorities we will face over the next 5 years. On September 24, 2008, our Commissioner issued his first strategic plan – *Agency Strategic Plan for 2008 – 2013*. This plan is the agency's roadmap to address the major challenges ahead. It charts our course to maintain a high level of performance on core workloads and improving our service to the public. It lays out our four goals:

- Eliminate our hearings backlog and prevent its recurrence;
- Improve the speed and quality of our disability process;
- Improve our retiree and other core services; and
- Preserve the public's trust in our programs.

The success of our strategic plan depends on two key foundational elements – our employees and information technology. With 80 million baby boomers filing for benefits over the next 20 years, our ability to provide our core services will be stressed. Significant investment in our employees and new technology will be critical to achieve our ambitious goals.

Below we discuss the major priorities facing the agency and the corresponding current and future actions we plan in response to these challenges.

Eliminate Our Hearings Backlog and Prevent Its Recurrence

Eliminating the disability hearings backlog is not only our highest priority, it is a moral imperative. Many individuals face extraordinarily long wait times for the outcome of their appeals. Long waits cause extreme hardships for disabled individuals and their families as they cope with the loss of income and medical insurance. At the end of FY 2008, over 760,000 individuals were waiting for a hearing. Despite progress in the past year, on average an individual waits over 500 days to receive a decision. The backlog growth in this decade resulted primarily from limited overall agency resource constraints, combined with an increased demand for services as baby boomers reach their most disability-prone years. We have taken a number of important steps to better manage this workload. We implemented several initiatives to increase our capacity to hear and decide cases and to improve our workload management practices. Below we summarize our progress on these initiatives as well as describe initiatives we will be implementing.

Increase Our Capacity to Hear and Decide Cases

Eliminate Hearings Pending 900 or More Days: In FY 2007, we eliminated 99 percent of the hearing requests that would have been pending 1,000 days or more. In FY 2008, we concentrated on processing the 135,160 hearing requests that were or would be pending for 900 or more days by the end of the fiscal year. We processed 134,879 of these cases, 99.8 percent, and only 281 remained at the end of FY 2008. We continue to reduce the age of this pending workload incrementally, and we will target cases pending over 850 days in FY 2009.

Increase Number of Administrative Law Judges (ALJs): A key element in eliminating our hearings backlog is hiring additional ALJs to increase our capacity to hear and decide cases. With the additional funding that Congress appropriated in FY 2008, we hired 190 additional ALJs. These new ALJs experience a learning curve of about 9 months, and we anticipate they will reach full productivity in early FY 2009. We also hired additional hearing office support staff, which performs many critical functions in the hearings process. Additionally, for the first time, we established individual annual expectations for ALJs, asking each ALJ to issue 500 to 700 hearing decisions each year. By FY 2010, we will have increased the size of our ALJ cadre to 1,250, an increase of 15 percent from our FY 2007 low of 1,082 ALJs.

Open National Hearing Centers: In early 2008, we opened our first fully electronic National Hearing Center in Falls Church, VA. The National Hearing Center allows us to capitalize on new technologies, such as electronic disability folders and video hearings. It also gives us flexibility to better address our hearings backlog and swiftly target assistance to heavily backlogged areas across the country. We will open new National Hearing Centers in Albuquerque, NM and Chicago, IL in FY 2009.

Provide Additional Video Hearing Equipment: ALJs often travel to remote locations to conduct hearings. Using video hearing technology minimizes travel to hearing sites for ALJs, but most especially for individuals and their representatives. For example, in remote areas, this secure technology enables individuals to attend video hearings rather than travel long distances to hearing sites. Additionally, video hearings reduce administrative costs and increase our capacity to process hearings. In FY 2008, we accelerated our installation of video hearing equipment. We are looking to further expand our use of video capabilities by testing desktop video units. These units are essentially small flat screen televisions that enable ALJs to conduct hearings in their offices. We are currently evaluating the results of our testing and anticipate further expansion of this technology in FY 2009 and beyond.

Improve Our Workload Management Practices Throughout The Hearings Process

Realign Our Hearing Service Areas: Each hearing office has a designated geographic service area. Cases for individuals who file appeals are assigned to the office servicing the area where they live. As a result, over time, some offices have more appeals pending than others, which results in significant case load and processing time disparities between offices. To address this, we realigned some of our hearing offices' service areas in FY 2008 and plan to add new hearing offices in locations where we cannot efficiently handle the pending caseload through other means. We continue to analyze workload distributions to determine if further adjustments are needed.

Increase Automation: Technology is instrumental to improving the hearings process. Automation enhancements will make the process more efficient and increase productivity. We are developing the following initiatives to automate select tasks and functions in the hearings process:

> *ePulling:* ePulling is an initiative to sort documents using customized software. We began piloting the software in the Tupelo, MS hearing office and have expanded the pilot to the Mobile, AL; St. Louis, MO; Minneapolis, MN; and Richmond, VA hearing offices, as well as to the National Hearing Center in Falls Church, VA. Initial feedback is positive. In FY 2009, we will continue to pilot the software and plan for nationwide incremental rollout.
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> *eScheduling:* In FY 2008, we began the planning and analysis for developing a means to electronically schedule hearings. We conducted market research to identify vendors who could assist us in implementing eScheduling. We also have developed our business requirements and plan to develop the software and begin testing it in pilot hearing offices in FY 2009.
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> *Electronic Records Express Website:* Medical providers, attorneys, and other third parties may submit medical records to us in an electronic format via a secure *Electronic Records Express* website. We are enhancing the website to permit registered representatives, such as attorneys and representative payees, to securely view and download the contents of electronic folders. We began testing an enhanced

Electronic Records Express website in FY 2008 and will continue to test and refine this website as we gain more experience with it.

Centralized Printing and Mailing: We implemented centralized high-speed, high-volume printing for the millions of notices that hearing offices mail annually. We began limited testing in four hearing offices and we expanded this process to 31 additional hearing offices before rolling it out nationwide in FY 2008. From February through September 2008, we sent 324,335 notices via centralized printing and mailing and expect the volume to increase significantly in FY 2009.

Establish Standardized Electronic Hearings Business Processes: The purpose of this initiative is to develop the most efficient and effective electronic processes which would then become the standard for all hearing offices. These processes will ensure we handle requests for hearings consistently within each office; reduce operating expenses; incorporate future technological advancements; reduce the time individuals wait to receive hearing decisions; improve the timeliness of our case-related activities; ensure the legal sufficiency of our decisions; and help us determine the ideal ratio of staff needed to support an Administrative Law Judge. In FY 2008, a review team visited numerous hearing offices to identify best practices and to solicit from the staff any concerns about and suggestions on the electronic processing of hearing requests. We drafted a proposed business process that outlines the most effective, efficient, and consistent case processing methods. We also piloted the draft business process in two hearing offices - one in Downey, CA and the other in Grand Rapids, MI. We are obtaining input from all hearings stakeholders, and based on their feedback, we will revise the proposed business process as necessary. In FY 2009, we plan to pilot the revised process in each of our ten regions.

Improve The Speed and Quality of Our Disability Process

We are responsible for the Nation's two primary federal disability programs: Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income. The number of individuals filing for disability benefits has increased significantly over the last 5 years. Furthermore, we expect the number to grow even more rapidly as more baby boomers reach their most disability-prone years. To address growing disability workloads, we must increase productivity without sacrificing quality. We have and will continue to evaluate our disability process and make necessary changes to streamline and update the program. Below we discuss our efforts to advance this goal.

Fast-Track Cases That Obviously Meet Our Disability Standards

Expand Quick Disability Determinations (QDD): We developed computer software that identifies cases where the disability determination is highly likely to be favorable and can be processed quickly. The software evaluates the disability alleged as well as treatment information to determine if the medical evidence is readily available and if the individual has a clearly substantiated disabling condition. If the claim meets these criteria, it is identified as a QDD case. Many QDD cases involve low birth-weight babies, cancer, and end-stage renal disease. In FY 2008, we phased in QDD nationwide and processed more than 44,000 QDD claims with an average processing time of 8 days. We continue to review the QDD selection criteria to enhance our computer software and maximize our capacity to accurately identify these cases.

Implement Compassionate Allowances: Compassionate Allowances are a way of quickly identifying diseases and other medical conditions that clearly meet our definition of disability, including acute leukemia, pancreatic cancer, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (more frequently referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease). We will allow many of these claims based on confirmation of the diagnosis alone. We held two public hearings on Compassionate Allowances over the last year. The first was on rare diseases and the second was on cancers. We have scheduled a third public hearing on brain injuries for November 2008. Based on the results of these hearings, we will determine the best course of action to implement Compassionate Allowances. We plan to roll out this initiative in three phases. The first was scheduled in October 2008, with phases two and three occurring in 2009.

Make It Easier and Faster to File for Disability Benefits Online

Rollout *Disability Direct*: Over the next 10 years, it is projected that initial disability claims will grow by 10 percent. To address this workload growth, we will implement *Disability Direct*, a new initiative that will make it more convenient for individuals and their representatives to file for disability benefits from the comfort and convenience of their home or office. It will also help fulfill the public's rapidly growing expectation for convenient, effective, and secure electronic service delivery options. There are three main components to *Disability Direct*:

- A simplified online application process for individuals filing for disability benefits. This new application will eliminate or simplify questions on the current application and include links, prompts, and other tools to assist users;
- A comprehensive online package of services for representatives who help individuals file for disability benefits; and
- A direct information exchange between Social Security and medical service providers or third parties who provide information on behalf of individuals filing for disability benefits.

We anticipate rolling out components of *Disability Direct* in FY 2009.

Regularly Update Our Disability Policy and Procedures

Update the *Listings of Impairments*: The *Listings* (http://ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/listing-impairments.htm) describe for each major body system the impairments considered severe enough to prevent an individual from working, or for children, impairments that cause marked and severe functional limitations. We have started the process of updating the *Listings* on a regular basis and have a schedule to ensure we update all of them at least once every 5 years. In FY 2008, we published final regulations for 2 of the 14 body systems. We expect to have final regulations on all major body systems in 2009.

Develop an Occupational Information System: We need information about work that exists throughout the Nation to determine whether impairments prevent individuals from doing not only their past work but any other work in the national economy. We currently use the Department of Labor's *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT) to identify and describe work performed in the United States. However, the Department of Labor has not updated the DOT since 1991 and has no plans to do so. We are exploring tools to update, on an interim basis, the type of information currently in the DOT. In addition, we are developing a long-term strategy to replace the DOT with updated definitions and objective measures of the requirements of work.

Simplify Work Incentive Programs: One of our highest priorities is to assist and support disabled individuals who want to return to work. To help them reach their employment goals, we administer a variety of work incentives and employment support programs, as well as conduct demonstration projects. We also maintain a page on our website devoted solely to return-to-work planning and assistance (see http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/eng/planning-assistance.htm).

We recently issued final rules designed to improve this program based on our experience and input from interested parties. Although individuals with disabilities will have greater flexibility in obtaining the services they need to achieve their employment goals, we are concerned that these improvements will fall short of Congressional expectations. We will monitor the results of this recent regulation and, as necessary, revisit the statute to ensure we achieve the goals Congress intended.

We will also continue to conduct research and demonstration projects to study ways to improve our services, tie objective medical data to functionality, and address the varied needs of individuals with disabilities. We will also collaborate with Congress to reauthorize our critically important demonstration authority. We provide detailed discussions for all of our demonstration projects at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/demos.htm.

Develop and Implement a Disability Determination Services Common Case Processing System: We share responsibility with our 54 state and territorial partners, the Disability Determination Services, to determine eligibility for disability benefits. Since each has its own unique disability case processing system, virtually any time we make a change that affects the Disability Determination Services' systems we must modify each of the 54 customized systems individually. After a year of consultation and research with the Disability Determination Services, we plan, with their continued support, to develop and implement a common Disability Case Processing System. This common system will: unify case processing systems; provide a robust application to support timely national implementation of process and policy changes; and position us to leverage the changes in Health Information Technology. It will also incorporate additional functionality, such as decision support tools, improved quality checks, high availability, and improved management information.

Adapt Our Systems to Health Information Technology: In partnership with other agencies, health care providers, and insurers, we will collaborate to create a standardized electronic format for all participants to store and transmit medical records. We will also collaborate to establish uniform diagnostic codes and medical report formats that will allow us to not only identify disabling conditions more quickly and automatically, but also to search our vast database of medical records to track trends in disability cases and design more objective methods to identify disabling conditions.

In FY 2008, as an initial step into the Health Information Technology initiative, we began testing an automated process to request and receive medical data from a Boston hospital. Under this process, when an individual who is being treated at that hospital applies for disability benefits, our system will automatically send out a medical records request to the hospital. Almost immediately, the hospital will electronically transmit back to us the individual's medical records. Our early receipt of this evidence will speed up our process and permit us to start evaluating the alleged disability right away. This collaboration also will test decision support tools that interpret medical data and recommend actions for the decision-maker's consideration.

Improve Our Retiree and Other Core Services

The public expects secure, convenient, and easy-to-use electronic services as they become more comfortable conducting business electronically, both via the Internet and telephone. With millions of baby boomers becoming eligible for Social Security benefits over the next 20 years, we need to further enhance and expand service options to handle the unprecedented growth in demand for our traditional services. One of our priorities is to increase our electronic services by making optimal use of technology. With more electronic services we can increase the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of our operations as well as provide the public with more service choices. To achieve the goal of complementing our traditional services, we will focus on the following objectives.

Dramatically Increase Baby Boomers' Use of Our Online Retirement Services

Introduce *Ready Retirement*: *Ready Retirement*, a transformational initiative that we will introduce in FY 2009, will fully streamline the processing of retirement applications and enhance customer service using technology by:

- Simplifying the filing process for retirement benefits;
- Shortening online filing time by half an hour (from an average of 45 minutes to only 15 minutes);
- Asking only those essential questions to which we do not have the answers in one of our systems or databases; and
- Using prompts, streaming video and other techniques to make the online experience easier, faster, and more user-friendly.

We streamlined policy requirements to simplify the verification process such as having individuals submit evidence of age or citizenship unless their allegations and the information in our records differ. This eliminates the need for most individuals to visit their local field offices to provide a copy of their birth certificate. We also eliminated the need for documentation of any marriages that are not material to individuals' entitlement.

Provide Internet Tools to Plan for Retirement: Individuals need the ability to obtain convenient and accurate retirement information via the Internet. In July 2008, we launched our new online *Retirement Estimator*. This secure and interactive tool not only provides immediate, highly accurate, and personalized benefit estimates online, it also allows users to compare different retirement options. The *Retirement Estimator* is an invaluable tool to help the public plan and save for their retirement. We will continue to refine and enhance our *Retirement Estimator* based on feedback from users.

Provide Individuals with Accurate, Clear, Up-To-Date Information

Improve Notices: In FY 2008, we established a notice improvement office to assess and improve our notices. Notice correspondence is our most common form of service delivery. As such, it is critical that notices are clear, concise, and easily understood so individuals do not need to call or visit us to clarify the information in the notice. Since we issue 350 million notices annually, this initiative will remain a priority for us over the long term.

Provide Claim Status via the Internet: We will develop a means for individuals to follow the progress of their applications using the Internet. This service should significantly reduce the two million calls we receive annually from individuals requesting the status of their claims.

Explore Online Access to Social Security Information: We will explore the feasibility of providing individuals with secure online access to their personal Social Security information. This would enable individuals to access earnings history, direct deposit data, Social Security benefit payment history, and Medicare entitlement and premium information directly from our records. We will work closely with our privacy and authentication experts as we explore the feasibility of this online feature.

Improve Our Telephone Service

To meet future demands for telephone service, we need to replace our aging field office telephone equipment with more advanced technology. We will accomplish this by implementing Voice over Internet Protocol, more commonly referred to as VoIP. This technology provides both callers and our employees more choices when conducting business by telephone. It will support our website visitors by providing a "click-to-talk" option to enable individuals to interact with our telephone agents while conducting business with us online. VoIP will also help us manage our phone workloads. For example, if an office experiences a spike in call volumes, we will be able to redirect calls to a second site. We have already begun transitioning the first field office locations to VoIP and expect to complete the rollout to all offices by 2012. We also plan to replace our National 800 Number infrastructure with VoIP in 2010.

Improve Service for Individuals Who Visit Field Offices

Pilot Visitor Intake Process Touch Screen Kiosks: We will pilot the use of kiosks in field office reception areas to provide a modern, fast, and user-friendly way for the public to register the reason for their visit so we can direct them to the appropriate representative while protecting their privacy. The kiosks will incorporate touch screen technology similar to airport kiosks that many airline travelers use.

Test Social Security TV: We are testing an internal TV system in the reception areas of 17 field offices. The high-definition TVs, using up-to-date graphics, broadcast Social Security, local weather, and traffic information to individuals in our reception areas. While visitors wait, they can watch the TV providing them with general Social Security information, as well as specific information on documents/proofs needed to obtain an original or replacement Social Security card. We can modify programs to adapt to specific locations, types of service, and language needs. We conducted surveys to gather input from visitors and managers in the pilot field offices and expect to have the results compiled by the end of 2008. In FY 2009, we will improve messages and the visual displays, and based on survey results, we will decide whether to expand this service to additional field offices.

Use of Personal Computers in Reception Areas: We are testing the placement of personal computers in 15 field office reception areas. Visitors will use the computers to connect to our website, and with our support, use our online services to complete their business. We plan to expand this pilot to 42 additional sites to gain additional insight into this service before making a decision on further expansion.

Improve Field Office Reception Areas: Survey results show that the public wants a comfortable and pleasant reception area. To address this, we are making adjustments in field office reception areas, such as new layouts, seating, privacy, signage, and other small, but important, enhancements to make visiting a field office a better experience.

Expand Video Conferencing: We will continue to expand the use of video conferencing to serve individuals in rural areas. Video conferencing offers individuals a convenient, secure, and low cost option for obtaining a full range of services equivalent to face-to-face services. In FY 2008, we tested video conferencing in the Denver Region. In FY 2009, we will pilot video conferencing in 21 sites nationwide. Video conferencing will allow us to serve individuals efficiently while saving costs.

Process Our Social Security Number Workloads More Effectively and Efficiently

Strengthen Our Modernized Enumeration System: We refer to the process of assigning and issuing Social Security Numbers as enumeration. We are in the process of a major overhaul of our system that will allow us to handle increased enumeration workloads more efficiently. Our plans include assessing the feasibility of building an online application for individuals to request replacement Social Security cards. We are also looking at opportunities to use telephone and video alternatives for assigning and issuing Social Security Numbers.

Open Social Security Card Centers: Social Security Card Centers are facilities with trained, specialized staff who handle only Social Security Number-related business. In March 2008, we opened our sixth card center. The card center is located in Orlando, FL. Residents in designated zip codes must go to this card center to transact all Social Security Number-related business. We are opening another Social Security Card Center in November 2008 in Sacramento, CA, and plan to open an additional four centers in 2009.

Encourage Use of the Social Security Number Verification Service: The Social Security Number Verification Service allows employers to determine, almost instantaneously, if the reported name and Social Security Number of an employee matches our records. The service, however, does not verify work eligibility. We will continue to encourage employers to use this free, Internet-based service which will help minimize fraud, reduce Social Security Number misuse and identity theft, and ensure the accuracy of earnings records.

Support E-Verify: E-Verify is a voluntary program administered by the Department of Homeland Security that allows participating employers to verify electronically the employment eligibility of newly hired employees. When FY 2008 ended, more than 88,000 employers participated in E-Verify. We support the E-Verify program and continue to work with the Department of Homeland Security to improve the operation of the current system in order to make it more efficient for employers. For more information about E-Verify, see www.dhs.gov/E-Verify.

Expand Enumeration-at-Entry: Enumeration-at-Entry allows certain non-citizens who enter the United States to apply for a Social Security Number with the Department of State at the same time that they apply for a visa. We are working with the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security to expand this process so more non-citizens may take advantage of this service.

Implement Use of Auto Cards: Changes in alien and citizenship status frequently require a replacement Social Security card with a different legend or name. When the Department of Homeland Security notifies us of these changes, we will automatically and securely update our records and send a replacement card directly to the individual. We are part of an interagency workgroup to begin the planning and analysis for using Auto Cards in three specific situations: 1) when a non-U.S. citizen is first authorized to work; 2) when a non-U.S. citizen changes status to a legal permanent resident; and 3) when an individual becomes a naturalized citizen.

Preserve the Public's Trust in Our Programs

Individuals who contribute to the Social Security Trust Funds through payroll deductions and self-employment taxes, or pay income taxes, must be confident we manage their tax dollars wisely. Likewise, those receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income must be sure we pay their benefits timely and accurately. As stewards, we are obligated to maintain the confidentiality and security of all information entrusted to our care. Taxpayers and members of the public want assurances that we are carrying out these obligations and that we run our operations efficiently and wisely. We have earned the public's trust, and we intend to do everything we can to keep it. The following sections outline our plans to retain public trust in the integrity of our programs.

Curb Improper Payments

With timely and adequate funding, we will increase our program integrity workloads. We will conduct more continuing disability reviews and Supplemental Security Income non-disability redeterminations. These reviews, which are very cost effective, allow us to detect and prevent improper payments and determine if factors affecting eligibility or monthly benefit amounts have changed. For example, our experience shows that continuing disability reviews and redeterminations produce program savings far in excess of administrative costs, because every $1 spent on these reviews produces a $10 return.

Ensure Privacy and Security of Personal Information

To continue safeguarding the privacy of the personally identifiable information maintained in our records, we will improve our encryption practices for data moving outside our facilities and networks, strictly control access to systems containing such information, and train employees and contractors and hold them accountable for safeguarding this information. We will also conduct rigorous annual security reviews of systems and programs and ensure our data exchange activities adhere to *National Institute of Standards and Technology* requirements.

Maintain Accurate Earnings Records

Each year, we process and post nearly 270 million reports of earnings to individuals' records. However, our aging earnings system will be unable to keep up with increasing volumes. To address this, we will redesign our earnings system to provide greater flexibility along with the improved accuracy and timeliness necessary to process this ever-growing workload. The *Earnings – The Next Generation* initiative will improve the speed and accuracy of wage reporting, improve our internal handling of wage reports, and significantly reduce both internal and external paper processing. We will also continue to issue annual *Social Security Statements* to eligible individuals age 25 and older so they may review their earnings record for accuracy and completeness.

Simplify and Streamline How We Do Our Work

While we continue to improve productivity year after year, productivity improvements alone cannot overcome the workload challenges we face. Our processes, policies, and regulatory and statutory requirements are oftentimes complicated and difficult to explain to the public, and years of legislation and litigation have made our requirements even more complex. We will establish a broad-based effort to analyze our workloads, simplify how we do our work, ensure consistency in our service, and improve our process flow and speed. We will also work with Congress and all stakeholders to simplify our statutory and regulatory requirements.

Protect Our Programs from Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

Social Security programs are a tempting target for fraud and abuse because of the value of monthly payments and the additional benefits of entitlement to such programs as Medicaid, Medicare, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Cases of fraud receive wide publicity and can diminish the public's confidence in our programs. A strong fraud detection and prevention program is critical to deterring those contemplating fraudulent activities and to demonstrating that we take fraud seriously. Through an ongoing partnership with our Office of the Inspector General, we have worked to reduce the instances of fraud and have vigorously pursued the prosecution of individuals and groups who commit fraud.

Also in partnership with our Office of the Inspector General, we will continue to expand our Cooperative Disability Investigations program, one of our most successful anti-fraud initiatives. Our Cooperative Disability Investigation units, located in 17 states, investigate allegations of fraud and abuse related to the disability program. As funding allows, we will continue to expand these units.

Use "Green" Solutions to Improve Our Environment

We have a responsibility to conduct business in an efficient, economical, and environmentally sound manner. "Going green" benefits the environment and saves taxpayer dollars by minimizing waste and reducing energy consumption. For years, we have implemented projects benefiting the environment such as recycling and powering our vehicles with alternative fuels. We will continue our tradition of "going green" in ways such as reduced petroleum and water consumption, and we will build or renovate our facilities in accordance with environmentally sustainable strategies.

THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT AGENDA

The *President's Management Agenda* is the President's strategy for improving the management and performance of the federal government with a focus on results. The Agenda contains five government-wide initiatives. The Office of Management and Budget releases a quarterly scorecard that rates agencies' progress and overall status on these five initiatives using a color-coded grading scale: ●Green for success, ●Yellow for mixed results, and ●Red for unsatisfactory. Our FY 2008 Fourth Quarter Scorecard results are shown below:

● Progress	Strategic Management of Human Capital	Status ●
Recruit, develop, and retain a skilled, knowledgeable, diverse, and high-performing workforce that is achieving desired results aligned to the agency's mission and strategic objectives.		
● Progress	Commercial Services Management	Status ●
Improve the performance of commercial activities, either through competition or through appropriate business process reengineering, including initiatives to create high performing organizations.		
● Progress	Performance Improvement Initiative	Status ●
Improve the performance and management of the federal government by linking performance to budget decisions and improve performance tracking and management. The ultimate goal is better control of resources and greater accountability over results.		
● Progress	Expanded Electronic Government	Status ●
Expand the federal government's use of electronic technologies (such as e-procurements, e-grants, and e-regulation) so that Americans can receive high-quality government service.		
● Progress	Improved Financial Performance	Status ●
Maintain world-class financial services that support strategic decision-making, mission performance, and improved accountability to the American people.		

The *President's Management Agenda* also contains agency-specific program initiatives. We are a designated agency for the following two initiatives. Using the same color-coded grading scale as the government-wide initiatives, our FY 2008 Fourth Quarter scores were as follows:

● Progress		Status ●
Measure improper payments on an annual basis, develop improvement targets and corrective actions, and track results annually to ensure corrective actions are effective.		
● Progress	Health Information Quality and Transparency	Status ●
Participate in the development of health industry standards for electronic medical records and develop partnerships with federal and private industry providers to promote use.		

The Health Information Quality and Transparency is a new program initiative for us, with our first scores published in the FY 2008 Fourth Quarter scorecard.

For more information on the *President's Management Agenda* and our complete scorecard, please go to www.whitehouse.gov/results/agenda.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT RATING TOOL

The *Program Assessment Rating Tool* (PART) is a diagnostic tool that the Office of Management and Budget uses to examine different aspects of program performance to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a given federal program. The Office of Management and Budget assessed the Social Security Disability Insurance program in 2003, the Supplemental Security Income program in 2004 and in 2007, and the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program in 2006. These assessments are online at ExpectMore.gov.

The findings from these program assessments are consistent with many of the priorities we identified as requiring attention. We continue to work with the Office of Management and Budget to ensure that plans are developed, implemented, and updated to improve program performance and address the following PART findings:

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM:

- Simplify the process to improve the accuracy and speed of deciding if an individual is disabled;
- Test several demonstration projects and remove barriers to assist individuals receiving disability benefits in returning to work; and
- Publish rules to update the way age is considered in making disability determinations and consider other rule changes.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM:

- Simplify the process to improve the accuracy and speed of deciding if an individual is disabled;
- Offer individuals with disabilities a wide range of employment opportunities; and
- Address payment accuracy issues by developing proposals to simplify the program's eligibility rules.

OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORS INSURANCE PROGRAM:

- Educate the public on the solvency issues facing the program and work with the Administration and Congress on legislative reform proposals necessary to achieve long-term solvency;
- Update the tactical plan for electronic services to include information technology and non-information technology projects that will be developed and implemented in subsequent fiscal years; and
- Develop new automated techniques to detect and correct errors in name/Social Security Number matching.

Our *Strategic Plan*, *Annual Performance Plan*, and budget requests all address the assessment findings. We provide performance measures and targets that we and the Office of Management and Budget use to evaluate the effectiveness of the Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, and Old-Age Survivors Insurance programs. In FY 2008, we had 15 PART performance measures. Ten of these were also *Government Performance and Results Act* performance measures which we indicate as such in the *Performance Summary of Goals and Results* on page 16 and in the *Performance Section* beginning on page 44. Five were PART-only performance measures which we discuss beginning on page 71 in the *Performance Section*.