

OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

OUR MISSION

Deliver Social Security services that meet the changing needs of the public

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AMERICA

The programs we administer provide a financial safety net for millions of Americans, and many people consider them the most successful large-scale Federal programs in our Nation's history. In fact, 9 out of 10 individuals age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits. During fiscal year (FY) 2014, we paid more than \$894 billion to more than 63 million beneficiaries.

OLD-AGE, SURVIVORS, AND DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORS INSURANCE PROGRAM

Today, most people plan their retirement based on the date they will receive their Social Security benefits. The Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program (what most people think of as their Social Security benefit), created in 1935, provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their families. Working and paying Social Security taxes earns workers credits toward Social Security benefits. Most people need 40 credits, or 10 years of covered work, to qualify for retirement benefits.

A person qualifies for full retirement benefits between the ages of 65 and 67, depending on the year he or she was born. Reduced retirement benefits are payable as early as age 62. Certain members of retired workers' families may also receive benefits. Spouses (including divorced spouses), minor children, and children who became disabled before age 22 may also be eligible for benefits.

Social Security also provides income for families of workers who die. Survivor's benefits were added in 1939, and benefits for disabled widows and widowers were added in 1968. Widows, widowers (and divorced widows and widowers), dependent parents, and children may be eligible for survivor's benefits. In fact, 98 of every 100 children could get benefits if a working parent dies. Social Security pays more benefits to children than any other Federal program.

DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

Social Security Disability Insurance provides benefits to people who cannot work because they have a medical condition expected to last at least one year or result in death. People who have worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes and certain members of their families can qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. The disability program began in 1956 as a benefit for disabled workers between the ages of 50 and full retirement. The program expanded in 1960 to include disabled workers of all ages.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM

Supplemental Security Income (SSI), established in 1972, is a Federal program designed to provide a monthly payment to people who are aged, blind, or disabled with limited income and resources. Adults and children under the age of 18 can receive payments based on disability or blindness.

General tax revenue, not workers' Social Security taxes, funds the SSI program.

HOW SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITED AMERICA IN FISCAL YEAR 2014

- On average each month, about 63.4 million individuals received Social Security or Federal SSI benefits. A combined total of about \$894 billion was paid in Social Security and Federal SSI benefits;
- About 88 percent of the American population age 65 and over received Social Security benefits;
- Among elderly Social Security beneficiaries, 52 percent of married couples and 74 percent of unmarried individuals relied on Social Security for 50 percent or more of their income;
- About 96 percent of persons age 20-49 who worked in covered employment had survivors protection for their young children and a surviving spouse caring for the children; and
- On average each month, more than 1.3 million blind or disabled children under age 18 received Federal SSI payments.

HOW WE SERVED AMERICA IN FISCAL YEAR 2014

- Issued 16 million new and replacement Social Security cards;
- Performed over 1.8 billion automated Social Security number verifications;
- Posted over 253 million earnings items to workers' records;
- Handled more than 37 million calls on our National 800 Number;
- Assisted 40.8 million visitors in field offices;
- Registered 6.13 million users for *my Social Security*, a personalized online account;
- Received approximately 5 million retirement, survivor, and Medicare applications;
- Completed over 2.8 million initial disability claims;
- Completed 757,198 reconsideration disability claims;
- Provided support services for 316,363 beneficiaries trying to return to work or improve their earnings through the Ticket to Work program;
- Completed over 2.6 million SSI non-disability redeterminations;
- Completed 525,875 full medical continuing disability reviews;
- Completed 247,215 work continuing disability reviews;
- Completed over 2.8 million overpayment actions;
- Completed 162,280 Appeals Council requests for review; and
- Completed 680,963 requests for hearings.

OUR ORGANIZATION

Serving the American public requires a vast network of facilities, technology, and skilled staff. Every day, more than 75,000 Federal and State employees provide service to our customers. Nationwide, we have a network of about 1,400 offices, including regional offices, field offices, Social Security card centers, teleservice centers, processing centers, hearing offices (including satellite offices and National Hearing Centers), the Appeals Council, and our headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. Internationally, we deliver services in U.S. embassies in hundreds of countries.

Customers receive in-person service mainly at our field offices and Social Security card centers. Our teleservice centers primarily handle calls to our National 800 Number. Employees in our processing centers typically handle Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability payments. These employees also provide a wide range of other services, including handling telephone calls to our National 800 Number.

We maintain strong partnerships with State agencies and depend on their employees in 54 State and territorial disability determination services sites to make disability determinations. Administrative law judges in our hearing offices and the administrative appeals judges in our Appeals Council decide appeals of Social Security and SSI issues. For more information about our components and their functions, visit our [organizational structure webpage \(www.socialsecurity.gov/org\)](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/org).

