

Disability and Retirement Workload Plan

A. FUNDING TABLE:

Agency funding listed by program, project, and activity categories, as possible. Funds returned to the program or any offsetting collections received as a result of carrying out recovery actions are to be specifically identified.

Funding Table by Fiscal Year (Dollars in Millions)		
	FY 2009 (Actual)	FY 2010 (Estimate)
Total Obligations	\$147.1	\$352.9*
Labor costs of Federal employees and additional overtime	\$113	\$258.9
Labor costs of state employees and additional overtime (including indirect costs)	\$21.4	\$70
Video-Teleconferencing equipment, additional bandwidth to support the hearings process and workstations needed to accommodate new federal employees	\$12.7	\$0
Health Information Technology	\$0	\$24
* These planning estimates may change as specifics regarding health information technology spending are further developed.		

B. OBJECTIVES:

A general Recovery Act description of the program’s Recovery Act objectives and relationships with corresponding goals and objectives through on-going agency programs/activities. Expected public benefits should demonstrate cost-effectiveness and be clearly stated in concise, clear and plain language targeted to an audience with no in-depth knowledge of the program. To the extent possible, Recovery Act goals should be expressed in the same terms as programs’ goals in departmental Government Performance Results Act strategic plans.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) of 2009 provided SSA with an additional \$500 million to help address our increasing disability and retirement workloads caused by the combination of the economic downturn and the leading edge of the baby boomer retirement wave. SSA is using Recovery Act resources to fund additional workyears, both regular and overtime. These additional workyears improve our ability to complete additional requests for hearings, continue to reduce the number of pending hearings, and help address our increasing disability and retirement workloads.

General Policy on SSA use of Recovery Act funds:

- The American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) Act of 2009 provided SSA \$500 million to process disability and retirement workloads, cover related IT costs and make investments in health information technology.
- Individuals working in our workload components perform a wide variety of functions in addition to completing retirement and disability claims and hearings workloads. SSA's systems do not track work completed by individuals, but instead associate an overall level-of-effort (termed workyears) with the volumes of work completed.
- Once an employee is trained they become part of the overall SSA workforce, and their level-of-effort is indistinguishable from any other employee.
- SSA will manage and account for ARRA spending using workyears. However, we have attributed a portion of the employees the Agency hired in FY 2009 to the Recovery Act.
- SSA will report the cost of doing additional disability and retirement claims and hearings workloads based on the cost of the level of effort associated with the workload.

The Recovery Act resources, because they enhance our ability to handle core mission workloads, directly support all four of our strategic 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.

[Our strategic plan is at http://www.ssa.gov/asp/index.htm.](http://www.ssa.gov/asp/index.htm)

C. ACTIVITIES:

Kinds and scope of activities to be performed (e.g. construction, provision of services, conduct of research and development, assistance to governmental units or individuals, etc.)

SSA believes it is a moral imperative to provide quality, timely services to the public. It is a challenge to meet this objective because of the significant growth in our workloads, due in part to the economic downturn and the beginning of the baby boomer retirement wave. The money Congress invested in SSA will allow us to better serve the American public during this time of economic crisis. In fiscal year (FY) 2009 we completed over 317,000 retirement claims, over 53,000 initial disability claims, and over 28,500 hearings with the Recovery Act funding. In FY 2010, we plan to complete 856,000 retirement claims, 228,000 initial disability claims, and 61,000 hearings with Recovery Act funding.

Although we manage by workyears (see general policy description in Section B), we have attributed a portion of the employees the Agency hired in FY 2009 to the Recovery Act. Specifically:

- Our disability and retirement operations hired 1,530 new employees in local field offices, teleservice centers, and processing centers and 300 new employees in the State Disability Determination Service centers;
- Hearings offices hired 550 support staff as well as 35 additional administrative law judges. This staff was spread across the country to provide relief to those offices most in need; and
- We also invested approximately \$13 million in information technology that directly supports our workload completion.

For FY 2010, the Recovery Act funding will enable us to sustain higher staff and overtime levels. As a result, the Recovery Act resources will help facilitate workload completion in terms of case preparation and decision-making as well as the completion of additional claims. We intend to spend \$24 million to contract with the health care community to provide us with electronic health records to improve the speed and accuracy of our disability determination process.

As mentioned, Recovery Act funding will allow for additional overtime resources in FY 2009 and FY 2010.

D. CHARACTERISTICS:

Types of financial awards to be used (with estimated amount of funding for each), targeted type of recipients, beneficiaries and estimated dollar amounts of total Recovery Act funding for Federal in-house activity, non-federal recipients and methodology for award selection.

We have used the majority of SSA's Recovery Act funding for Federal in-house activities. We are paying for employee salaries and using overtime to provide service to individuals filing for disability and retirement benefits. We have invested approximately \$13 million in information technology that directly supports completion of our workload. SSA used fully competed existing contract vehicles to acquire the majority of the video-conferencing services, additional bandwidth, and personal computers required to accommodate new employees.

Although we manage by workyears (see general policy description in Section B), we attributed a portion of the employees the Agency hired in FY 2009 to the Recovery Act. Specifically:

- Our disability and retirement operations hired 1,530 new employees in local field offices, teleservice centers, and processing centers and 300 new employees in the State disability determination service centers (DDSs); and
- Hearings offices hired 550 support staff as well as 35 additional administrative law judges. We spread this staff across the country to provide relief to those offices most in need.

For FY 2010, the Recovery Act funding will enable us to sustain higher staff and overtime levels. As a result, the Recovery Act resources will help facilitate workload completion in terms of case preparation and decision-making as well as the completion of additional claims. We intend to spend \$24 million to contract with the health care community to provide us with electronic health records to improve the speed and accuracy of our disability determination process.

As mentioned, Recovery Act funding will allow for additional overtime resources in FY 2009 and FY 2010.

E. DELIVERY SCHEDULE:

Schedule with milestones for major phases of the program’s activities (e.g. the procurement phase, planning phase, project execution phase, etc., or comparable) with planned delivery date(s).

FY 2009 Actual	
April - September FY 2009 Actual \$147,100,000	Although we manage by workyears (see general policy description in Section B), we have attributed a portion of the employees the Agency hired in FY 2009 to the Recovery Act. With Recovery Act funds, SSA hired 2,115 Federal employees and 300 State Disability Determination Service employees. Additional overtime was also funded with recovery Act funds and approximately \$13 million was spent on video-teleconferencing equipment and additional bandwidth to support the hearings process, as well as workstations needed to accommodate the new federal employees.
FY 2010 Estimate	
October - March First 6 months \$145,700,000	Pay SSA and DDS labor costs associated with completing critical workloads. Entered into Health Information Technology contracts.
April - June 3rd Quarter \$103,600,000	Pay SSA and DDS labor costs associated with completing critical workloads.
July - September 4th Quarter \$103,600,000	Pay SSA and DDS labor costs associated with completing critical workloads.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMPLIANCE:

Description of the status of compliance with *National Environmental Policy Act*, *National Historic Preservation Act*, and related statutes.

We will use the Recovery Act funding for SSA and DDS labor costs which have no identifiable issues with the *National Environmental Policy Act*, the *National Historic Preservation Act*, or related statutes.

G. SAVINGS OR COSTS:

Expected increases or reductions in future operational costs (e.g., savings due to energy efficient facilities or increased operational costs as a result of having more buildings to manage and maintain).

SSA is using Recovery Act funding to sustain increased staffing levels and fund additional overtime. The Recovery Act funding for these activities does not extend beyond FY 2010. Full funding of the FY 2011 President's Budget will allow us to continue to fund these employees in FY 2011.

H. MEASURES:

Expected quantifiable outcomes consistent with the intent and requirements of the legislation and the risk management requirements of Section 3.5, with each outcome supported by a corresponding quantifiable output(s) (in terms of incremental change against present level of performance of related agency programs or projects/activities specified in the plan) – agencies must specify the length of the period between measurements (e.g., monthly, quarterly), the measurement methodology, and how the results will be made readily accessible to the public. The measures currently used to report programs' performance in relationship to these goals (consistent with Administration policy) should be retained. In addition to reducing burden on grant recipients and contractors, use of existing measures will allow the public to see the marginal performance impact of Recovery Act investments.

SSA developed the following measures to assess the impact of the Recovery Act funding provided to complete disability and retirement workloads:

1. Number of Initial Disability Claims Completed

FY 2009 Target: 50,000

FY 2010 Target: 228,000

Data definition: The number of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income initial disability claims completed in the Disability Determination Services and other agency components in the current fiscal year up to the budgeted number.

Data source: *National Disability Determination Services System and Disability Operational Data Store*

Methodology:

Overtime:

The Recovery Act funded overtime workyears used for each month is determined based on the ratio of available Recovery Act funded overtime workyears to the total available overtime workyears. We apply the resulting ratio to the overtime workyears used for each month to determine the number of Recovery Act overtime workyears used during that month. We use the resulting workyears in determining the amount of work completed attributable to the Recovery Act funds.

Regular Time:

Recovery Act productive workyears for each targeted workload are multiplied by the corresponding production per workyear to calculate the number of Recovery Act completed counts. SSA does not associate any additional work to the Recovery Act funds until new hire training is completed.

Frequency reported: Monthly

Status: Completed over 53,000 initial disability claims in FY 2009

2. Number of Retirement Claims Completed

FY 2009 Target: 243,000

FY 2010 Target: 856,000

Data definition: The number of retirement and survivors claims completed in the current fiscal year up to the budgeted number.

Data source: *Work Measurement Transitional Database*

Methodology:

Overtime:

We determine the Recovery Act funded overtime workyears used each month based on the ratio of available Recovery Act funded overtime workyears to the total available overtime workyears. We apply the resulting ratio to the overtime workyears used for each month to determine the number of Recovery Act overtime workyears used during that month. We use the resulting workyears to determine the amount of work completed attributable to the Recovery Act funds.

Regular Time:

Recovery Act productive workyears for each targeted workload are multiplied by the corresponding production per workyear to calculate the number of Recovery Act completed counts. SSA does not associate any additional work to the Recovery Act funds until new hire training is completed.

Frequency reported: Monthly

Status: Completed over 317,000 retirement claims in FY 2009

3. Number of Hearings Completed

FY 2009 Target: 37,000

FY 2010 Target: 61,000

Data definition: The number of hearing requests completed in the current fiscal year up to the number budgeted.

Data source: *Case Processing and Management System*

Methodology

Overtime:

We determine the Recovery Act funded overtime workyears used for each month based on the ratio of available Recovery Act funded overtime workyears to the total available overtime workyears. We apply the resulting ratio to the overtime workyears used for each month to determine the number of Recovery Act overtime workyears used during that month. We use the resulting workyears to determine the amount of work completed attributable to the Recovery Act funds.

Regular Time:

Recovery Act productive workyears for each targeted workload are multiplied by the corresponding production per workyear to calculate the number of Recovery Act completed counts. SSA does not associate any additional work to the Recovery Act funds until new hire training is completed.

Frequency reported: Monthly

Status: We completed over 28,000 hearings in FY 2009 with Recovery Act funds. (Note: We exceeded our overall hearings completed goal by 13,000, but we funded more of the hearings by our regular appropriation than by the Recovery Act funds in FY 2009).

4. Number of Staff Hired

FY 2009 Target: 2,115 SSA and 300 State Disability Determination Service employees hired

Data definition: Number of new employees hired as a result of Recovery Act funding in SSA and the State Disability Determination Service centers

Data source: The FPPS DataMart for SSA hires and the FD-15 Disability Determination Service Staffing and Workload Analysis Report for State Disability Determination Service hires

Frequency Reported: Monthly until all hiring was completed

Status: We hired 2,115 SSA and 300 State Disability Determination Service employees in FY 2009.

The first three measures are very similar to performance measures contained in our *Annual Performance Plan for FY 2011 and Revised Final Annual Performance Plan for FY 2010*. SSA has developed a methodology for estimating the extent we complete current workloads with the additional Recovery Act funding received. The fourth measure tracked the exact number of staff hired.

SSA will report actual performance for these measures on a monthly basis through our periodic reports posted on [SSA's Recovery Act website http://www.ssa.gov/recovery/](http://www.ssa.gov/recovery/).

I. MONITORING/EVALUATION:

Description of the agency process for periodic review of program's progress to identify areas of high risk, high and low performance, and any plans for longer term impact evaluation.

As we build on existing processes to implement the activities in this plan, we utilize established review and evaluation programs to assess risks and ensure effective implementation of adequate controls. Three of the major monitoring programs are the Financial Management System (FMS) Review Program, the Management Control Review (MCR) Program, and the internal control testing required by OMB Circular A-123, Appendix A. The FMS Review Program identifies risks to SSA's programmatic and financial systems and tests the controls in place to mitigate these risks. The MCR Program ensures SSA's front line operations comply with SSA's operational, security and administrative policies. The OMB Circular A-123, Appendix A program ensures the controls supporting our financial reporting processes are working properly. All three of these review programs will provide periodic recommendations and evaluations that determine how to improve controls and the agency's Senior Accountable Official will monitor these programs to ensure we take corrective action.

Although SSA developed mechanisms to separately track the spending of Recovery Act dollars, we complete these workloads in the same manner as other disability and retirement workloads. Therefore, SSA can leverage the risk assessments and control testing programs discussed above to ensure we account for these funds appropriately.

SSA also monitors the overall progress in achieving the objectives of this program plan through the oversight and leadership of our Senior Accountable Official. The Senior Accountable Official works with the SSA executives who have the lead responsibility for the planning and execution of the program plan. We have set up an infrastructure of periodic status meetings at both the executive and staff levels to discuss the status of implementation efforts to date and future issues that may arise. We monitor the progress in achieving the performance targets discussed above (*Section H. Measures*) in these status meetings.

J. TRANSPARENCY:

Description of agency program plans to organize program cost and performance information available at applicable recipient levels.

We use the Recovery Act funding primarily for labor costs and therefore, recipient level data is not applicable.

K. ACCOUNTABILITY:

Description of agency program plans for holding managers accountable for achieving Recovery Act program goals and improvement actions identified.

SSA has taken many steps to hold executives and staff accountable for achieving the goals of this project. First, SSA's Executive Internal Control Committee (EIC) oversees Recovery Act performance across SSA. The Deputy Commissioner of Social Security chairs the EIC, which also includes the Inspector General and Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance and Management (DCBFM). Most other Deputy Commissioners also participate in EIC meetings. This level of oversight provides a strong message throughout SSA that accomplishment of Recovery Act objectives is a top priority.

The DCBFM serves as SSA's Senior Accountable Official. We modified the performance expectations of our Senior Accountable Official to specifically address the monitoring of this initiative as well as all of SSA's responsibilities under the Recovery Act. In addition, SSA's components such as our Office of Operations; Office of Disability Adjudication and Review; Office of Systems; Office of Communications; and Office of Budget, Finance and Management have taken measures such as ongoing status meetings to make sure they fulfill their responsibilities under the Recovery Act. Management within these organizations monitor progress in meeting their organizations' responsibilities associated with successful implementation of the Recovery Act. They will reallocate resources as needed as issues arise.

These same components serve on oversight groups at both the executive and staff level to assist SSA in properly coordinating our efforts across components to execute the requirements of the Recovery Act as well as the requirements of OMB Memorandum M-09-15, *Updated Implementing Guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*.

The Commissioner named a Special Advisor for Health IT to provide leadership and oversight for all of SSA's Health IT initiatives, including those funded through the Recovery Act. The Special Advisor established an executive group, which meets bi-monthly, to consult on external and strategic issues; a program group, which meets bi-weekly, to provide governance for cross-component Health IT initiatives; and a procurement group to oversee Health IT acquisitions funded through the Recovery Act. The Inspector General is a non-voting member of the executive group and consultations with the Office of the Inspector General on the program governance and procurement will take place regularly.

Finally, all of our front-line employees are accountable through their Performance and Communications System (PACS) plans and appraisals. PACS allows all of SSA's employees to understand their expectations and how their job directly aligns with the agency's core mission.

L. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION:

A list and description of statutory and regulatory requirements, or other known matters, which may impede effective implementation of Recovery Act activities and proposed solutions to resolve by a certain date.

One potential barrier to effective implementation that exists would be if SSA's front line employees choose not to use the overtime funded by the Recovery Act. To mitigate the risk of this happening, SSA will monitor overtime usage through our regional and area offices and redistribute overtime if necessary.

Another barrier we have encountered is DDS employee furloughs that continue to be a problem in many DDSs across the country. Many States have responded to fiscal crisis by furloughing employees whose salaries and benefits we fully fund. We have tried to educate State officials over the last year and a half about the unnecessary and harmful effects of furloughing DDS employees. We succeeded in gaining exemptions or partial exemptions in several States; however, 16 States have implemented furloughs that affect DDS employees. To mitigate the impact of the furloughs, we are maximizing the use of overtime; increasing adjudicatory capacity; and providing Federal assistance with State medical reviews.

M. FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS:

A description of agency plans to spend funds effectively to comply with energy efficiency and green building requirements and to demonstrate Federal leadership in sustainability, energy efficiency and reducing the agency's environmental impact.

We are using the funding for labor costs. These funds do not relate to Federal infrastructure investments.