Annual Performance Report
Fiscal Year 2020

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A Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to present the Social Security Administration's *Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2020,* which details our accomplishments over the past fiscal year.

My top priority remained improving public service, particularly by reducing wait times at the National 800 Number, field offices, and hearings offices; modernizing our disability policies and our information technology (IT); and increasing our digital and automated service options.

Despite the challenges we faced due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we continued to make progress in priority areas. We improved National 800 Number wait times and reduced busy signals, reduced the backlogs in our processing centers, and accelerated our IT modernization plans to make service more customer-centric. Most notably, we moved closer to our goal of eliminating the disability hearings backlog in fiscal year 2021. The hearings backlog is now at its lowest level in 18 years.

Based on internal evaluations, I affirm that the performance data in this report is complete, reliable, and accurate.

Respectfully,

Andrew Saul

Baltimore, Maryland
January 19, 2021

Our Mission

Deliver quality Social Security services to the public.

Our Programs

Few government agencies touch the lives of as many people as we do. We administer three programs under the Social Security Act, as amended:

- **Old-Age and Survivors Insurance:** Established in 1935, the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) program provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their family members. In fiscal year (FY) 2020, we paid OASI benefits to over 55 million beneficiaries on average each month, and paid about $944 billion to OASI beneficiaries through the fiscal year.

- **Disability Insurance:** Established in 1956, the Disability Insurance (DI) program provides benefits for workers who become disabled and their families. In FY 2020, we paid DI benefits to nearly 10 million beneficiaries on average each month, and paid approximately $145 billion to DI beneficiaries through the fiscal year.

- **Supplemental Security Income:** Established in 1972, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program provides financial support to aged, blind, and disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. In FY 2020, we paid SSI benefits to nearly 8 million recipients on average each month (approximately 2.7 million of whom concurrently receive OASI or DI benefits), and we paid over $55 billion in SSI Federal benefits and State supplementary payments through the fiscal year.

In addition, we support national programs administered by other Federal and State agencies, as required by law, such as Medicare, *Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, Coal Act*, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps), *Help America Vote Act*, State Children's Health Insurance Program, E-Verify, Medicaid, and Federal Benefits for Veterans.

We administer our programs in accordance with law and regulations. We have implemented enterprise risk management processes to improve the effectiveness of our organization and program administration. Our goals are informed by strategic opportunities as well as our assessment of program evaluations and identified risks.

Our Organization

Approximately 62,000 Federal employees and 15,000 State employees serve the public from a network of more than 1,500 offices across the country and around the world. Most of our employees directly serve the public or provide support to employees who do. We normally serve over 40 million visitors each year in our field offices nationwide. However, we saw a reduced number of people in the office due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are handling most work online or over the telephone, with limited in-person service for critical needs by appointment only.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected our operations and service to the public. Our highest priority during this difficult and unprecedented time has been to provide mission-critical services while ensuring the health and safety of the public and our employees. We took immediate actions to shift to a virtual work environment. The pandemic pressed us to accelerate our planning and implementation of alternative electronic and virtual services, as well as the expanded use of data exchanges to obtain evidence.

Our National 800 Number handled over 34 million calls. Callers can conduct various business transactions by speaking directly with a customer service representative or through our 24-hour automated services, which include requesting benefit verification letters, ordering replacement Medicare cards, and obtaining claim status updates. In March 2020, we moved our physical telephone service center operations to a virtual environment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we published local office telephone numbers. Thus, our field office employees handled significantly more phone calls while maintaining a low busy rate.

Our processing centers (PC) handle complex Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability claims as well as benefit payment issues. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we initially focused on high priority workloads such as getting people paid and on our beneficiary rolls. We also suspended workload actions that would have an unfavorable outcome for our beneficiaries.

State agency disability determination services (DDS) make disability determinations for initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews (CDR). Disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected pending initial disability claims cases, which increased significantly in FY 2020. Many of the DDSs were not telework-ready at the beginning of the pandemic. We quickly worked with our DDS partners in each of the 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia—which were under different guidelines for stay-at-home orders and re-opening—to maintain continuity of our operations, yet the pandemic caused some issues beyond our control. The pandemic hindered our ability to schedule consultative exams and obtain timely medical evidence, which reduced the number of disability decisions we issued. While we continue to take actions to mitigate the increase in pending claims, it will take a sustained, multi-year effort to work down the backlog of initial disability claims.

Administrative law judges (ALJ) in our hearings offices and administrative appeals judges in our Appeals Council decide appealed cases. In response to the pandemic, we transitioned to holding only voluntary telephone hearings, allowing us to continue to hear cases remotely. We continued to make progress toward our goal of eliminating the disability hearings backlog. The hearings backlog is now at its lowest level in 18 years.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to meet many of our service goals—improving National 800 Number wait times and reducing busy signals, reducing the backlogs in our processing centers, and accelerating our IT modernization plans to make service more customer-centric.

While the COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges, it has also illuminated opportunities and driven creative solutions to provide alternate service options to the public, lessening the need for people to visit a local office. We have quickly made paper processes electronic and added online service options. We are rolling out the Microsoft (MS) Teams platform to remotely conduct video hearings, allowing applicants and their representatives to participate from any private location where they have access to a camera-enabled smart phone, tablet, or computer.

For more information about our organization and its functions, visit our organizational structure webpage at www.ssa.gov/org.

Agency Plans and Performance

This Annual Performance Report addresses the goals, strategic objectives, and strategies in our *Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2018–2022* as required by the Government Performance and Results (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010. We evaluate our progress by the performance measures and targets for each strategic objective.

Cross-Agency Priority Goals

Per the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requirement to address Cross-Agency Priority Goals in the agency strategic plan, the annual performance plan, and the annual performance report, please refer to www.performance.gov for the agency's contributions to those goals and progress, where applicable.

Agency Priority Goals

As required by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, we established three agency priority goals (APG) for FY 2020:

1. Improve customer service in the hearings process by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing decision.
2. Improve the integrity of the Supplemental Security Income program by focusing our efforts on reducing overpayments.
3. Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number.

The APGs are 24-month goals reflecting the priorities of our executive leadership, as well as those of the Administration. To access our APGs visit www.performance.gov.

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver Services Effectively

We must be able to deliver our services effectively whether it is in-person, on the telephone, or online. As we interact with the public every day, our employees experience firsthand the impact of our programs. We understand that doing our work well matters. We also know that advancements in technology provide opportunities to do business differently, and often more efficiently and conveniently.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Improve Service Delivery

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Deputy Commissioner for Hearings Operations

Key Initiatives

Reduce the Hearings Backlog

Noteworthy Progress

Our performance toward reducing our hearings backlog is making noteworthy progress.

Eliminating the hearings backlog and reducing the time it takes to get a hearing decision remains one of our most critical priorities. Our CARES plan is a multi-pronged approach to eliminate the hearings backlog through increased decisional capacity, business process efficiencies, and IT innovations. With our CARES plan, the special hearings backlog funding we received, and our dedicated employees, we are significantly reducing the average wait for a hearing decision. We expect to eliminate the hearings backlog in FY 2021.

In FY 2020, we shifted to conducting only voluntary telephone hearings because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have experienced a higher than normal number of hearing postponements due to this change. Despite these challenges, we reduced the number of claimants waiting for an ALJ decision. At the close of FY 2020, we decided nearly 92 percent of aged cases, which are cases that began the fiscal year 270 days or older, with 19,807 cases remaining.

Near the end of the fiscal year, we began rolling out the MS Teams software that will allow us to hold video hearings anywhere applicants and their representatives can privately access a camera-enabled smart phone, tablet, or computer. This technology will provide another convenient and safe option to hold a hearing.

Reducing Hearings Processing Times

Average Processing Time for Hearings (in days)

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Actual	545	605	595	506	386
Target	540	605	605	515	380
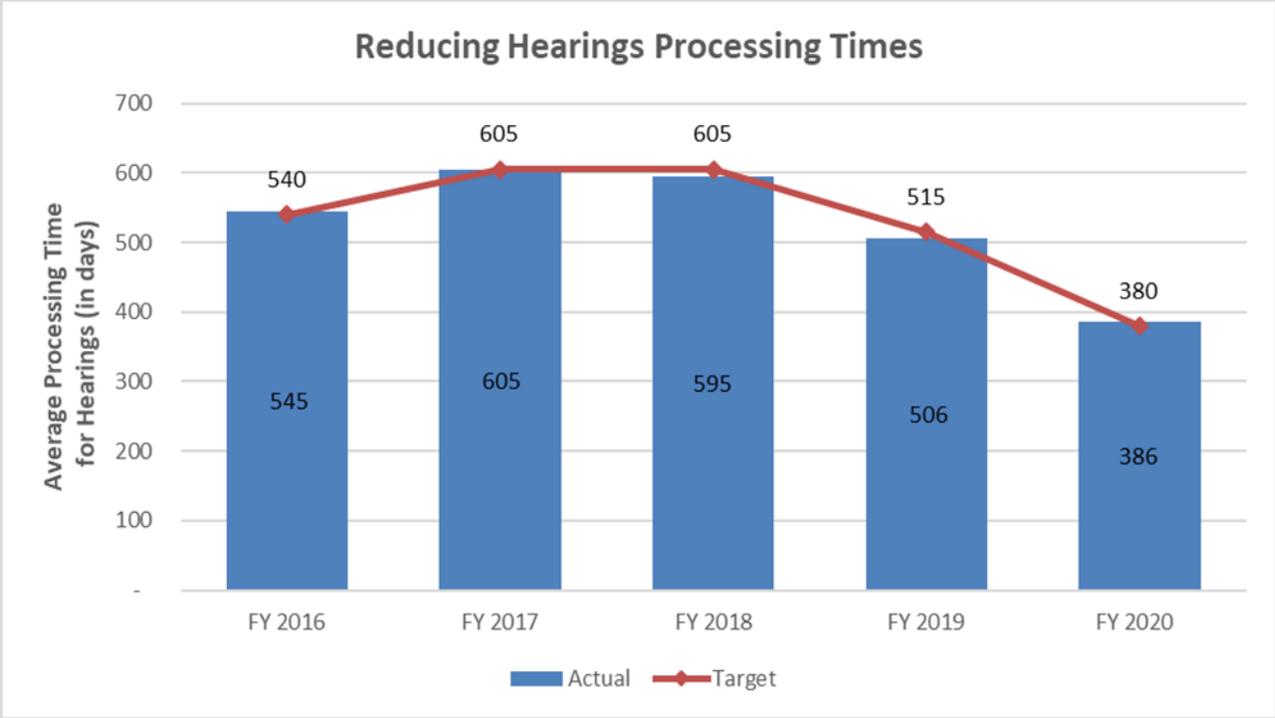
Figure 1. The average number of days a person waits for a decision by an ALJ for cases closed in each fiscal year from 2016 to 2020.

Reducing Hearings Pending

Number of Hearings Pending

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Actual	1,122,000	1,056,000	858,000	575,000	418,000
Target	1,087,000	1,071,000	900,000	591,000	352,000
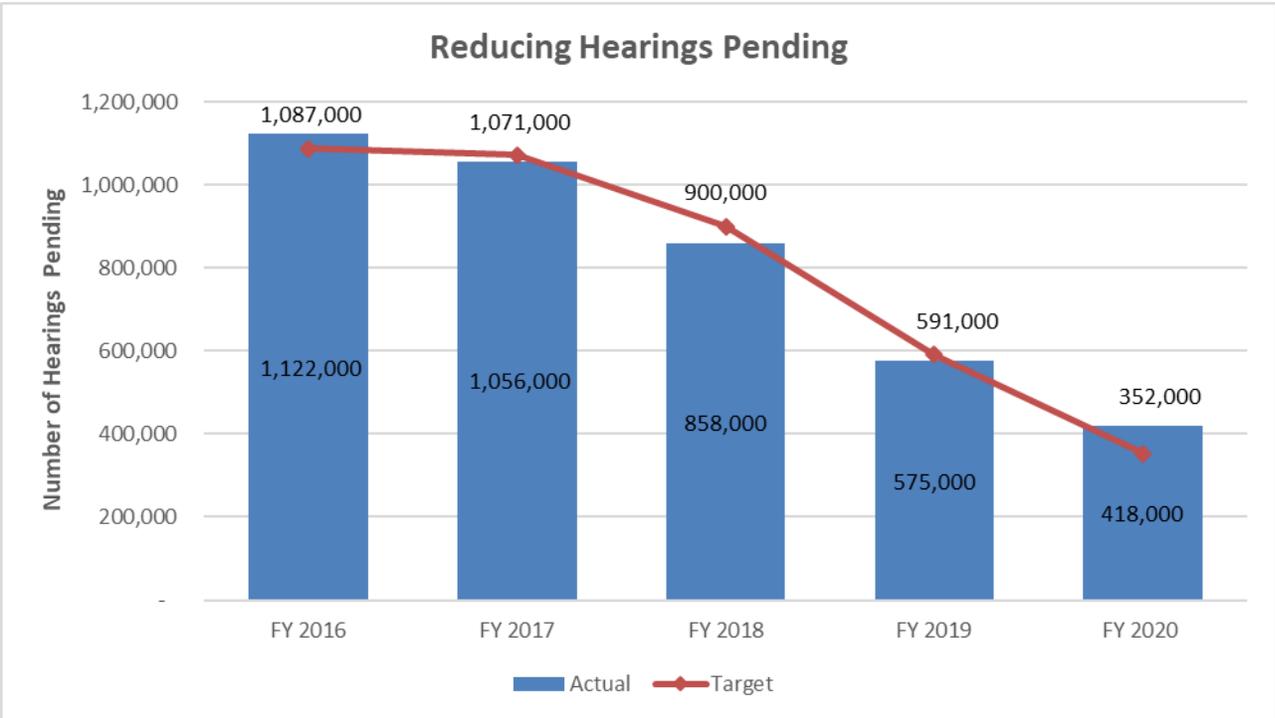
Figure 2. The number of hearings pending in the Office of Hearings Operations at the end of each fiscal year from 2016 to 2020.

Improve 800 Number Services

Focus Area for Improvement

We are highlighting the 800 Number Services as a focus area for improvement.

Millions of our customers depend on our National 800 Number technicians to answer important questions; therefore, we are focused on improving the timeliness of our National 800 Number average speed of answer (ASA)[1] and average busy rate.[2] We will continue to improve service and reduce wait times through targeted hiring, reassessing training methods, and advancing automated services through our Next Generation Telephony Project.

In early FY 2020, we implemented new training that allowed new hires to handle targeted calls earlier. We handled over 34 million calls with an ASA of 16 minutes.

Reinstate the Reconsideration Process

As of March 1, 2020, we restored the reconsideration step in California, Colorado, Louisiana, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Michigan, Missouri, and Alaska, returning all 10 prototype States to a uniform administrative review process.

Reduce the Processing Center Backlog

Focus Area for Improvement

We are highlighting our PC backlog as a focus area for improvement.

Our PCs handle the most complex benefit-payment decisions, in addition to issuing benefit payments after appeals decisions, determining and collecting debt, and correcting records.

In FY 2020, we reduced our PC pending to about 3.75 million actions. The reduction in pending cases was attributable to several factors, including increased staffing and overtime, automation enhancements, targeted training, and the deferral of certain workloads that could result in overpayments and pursuit of debt collection.

In FY 2020, we initiated a program debt write off project to analyze debt we determined to be delinquent and uncollectible for potential termination of collection. Phase I of the project was implemented in September and October 2020, terminating a total of approximately 980,000 uncollectible debts and removing almost 390,000 actions from PC pending. FY 2020 results

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[1] The Average Speed of Answer is the average amount of time callers wait in queue to be answered by an agent. Wait time begins when the call is placed in queue and ends when the agent answers.

[2] The Agent Busy Rate is the percentage of calls routed for live agent service that encounter a busy call back message.

include termination of approximately 189,000 debts and removal of approximately 145,000 actions from the PC pending, totaling nearly $1.9 billion. By terminating collection activity on uncollectible debts, we will better reflect current receivables on our financial statements as well as remove these actions from the PC pending backlog. However, while we are terminating active collection efforts, the debt will remain on the individual's agency record for future collection, where appropriate and applicable. If eligible, we will refer these delinquent debts to the Treasury Offset Program for external collection action.

Expand Video Service Delivery

Video service delivery (VSD) allows us to balance our workloads, reduce wait times, and provide a face-to-face service option for individuals living in rural areas. We offer VSD in over 800 convenient locations across the country such as hospitals, libraries, community centers, American Indian tribal centers, homeless shelters, and other government agencies.

In FY 2020, we expanded VSD services to 124 sites prior to the pandemic. We also executed a national agreement with Indian Health Services to serve the American Indian and Alaskan Native population. Additionally, we worked with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Envision Centers to expand video services to our mutual clientele. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed further expansion due to changing construction schedules and delayed equipment deliveries.

We accelerated our plans to implement MS Teams a year earlier than planned to support key in-person or video workloads affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.[3] MS Teams allows our employees to communicate with the public remotely. We began rolling out MS Teams for video hearings and representative payee monitoring.

Online Options for New Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Replacement Cards

The number one reason individuals visit our field offices is to replace an SSN card. Each year we process over 8 million applications for SSN replacement cards in our field offices. We are pursuing other service options so that members of the public do not need to visit an office for this service. For example, adult U.S. citizens who meet certain criteria, may apply for a replacement card using our Internet Social Security Number Replacement Card (iSSNRC) online application, which can be accessed with a *my* Social Security account. We have a data exchange agreement with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators to verify the identity of

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[3] Microsoft Teams, also referred to simply as MS Teams, is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration. In most cases, non-SSA external users of Teams do not need additional downloaded software—they can access it using an existing device and internet connection.

iSSNRC applicants online by matching State driver's license data. In FY 2020, we expanded iSSNRC to 5 additional States, making the iSSNRC option available in 45 States and the District of Columbia, and processed over 2 million replacement cards online.
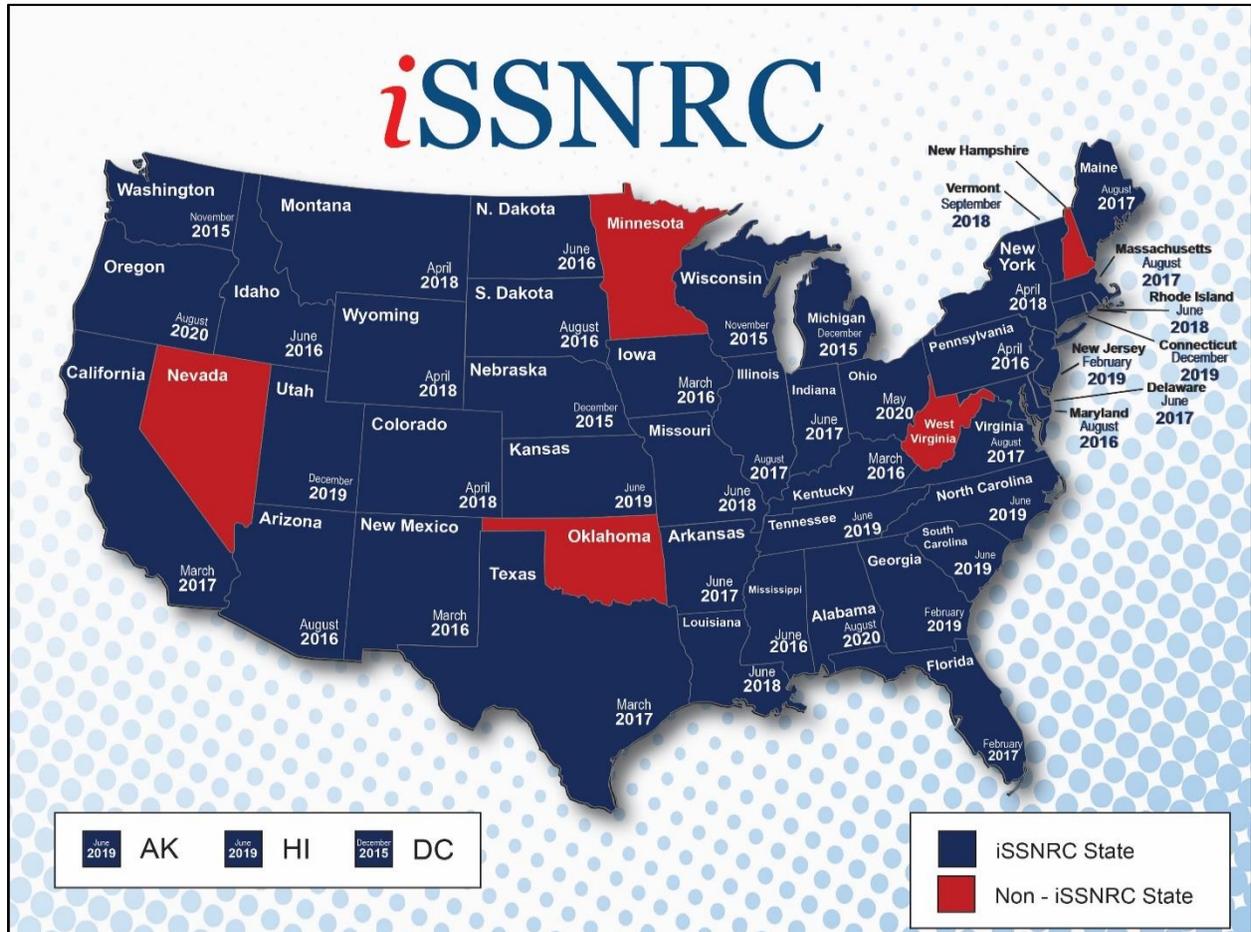
Figure 3. Forty-five States and the District of Columbia have the iSSNRC option available. Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and West Virginia do not yet have the iSSNRC option.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 1.1a: Improve customer service in the hearings process by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing decision (APG)

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	Decide 99% of the cases that begin the fiscal year 430 days old or older	Decide 97% of the cases that begin the fiscal year 430 days old or older	Complete 97% of cases that begin the fiscal year 430 days old or older (~374,000 cases)	Complete 95% of cases that begin the fiscal year 350 days old or older (~355,000 cases)	Decide 98% of cases that begin the fiscal year 270 days old or older (~235,000 cases)
Target Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	Not Met
Performance	98%	96%	98%	98%	92%
FY 2020 Performance Results	In FY 2020, we decided 92 percent of our total aged cases with 19,807 cases remaining. While we did not meet our aged case goal due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to make significant progress in reducing our hearings backlog. We reduced our hearings pending to 418,313—a reduction of 157,108 cases from FY 2019. We reduced our annual average processing time by 4 months, from 506 days in FY 2019 to 386 days in FY 2020.				

Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of aged cases completed.

Performance Measure 1.1b: Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number (APG)

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	16 minutes	16 minutes	25 minutes	13 minutes	17 minutes
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Met
Performance	14 minutes	13 minutes	24 minutes	20 minutes	16 minutes
FY 2020 Performance Results	Our performance was about one minute faster than the FY 2020 goal of 17 minutes, and a 20 percent improvement from FY 2019 performance of 20.4 minutes.				

Data Definition: The target represents the average amount of time it takes to answer a call once it routes to an agent for service.

Performance Measure 1.1c: Reinstate Reconsideration to implement a national uniform disability process at step 2 of the appeal stage

Fiscal Year	2019	2020
Target	Reinstate Reconsideration in 6 prototype States	Reinstate Reconsideration in 4 prototype States
Target Met	Met	Met
Performance	Reconsideration Reinstated in 6 prototype states	Reconsideration Reinstated in the final 4 prototype States
FY 2020 Performance Results	We successfully reinstated reconsideration in the Alabama, Michigan, Missouri and Alaska DDSs, completing our efforts to restore a national uniform administrative review process.	

Data Definition: The target represents the number of States that will reinstate the reconsideration process, no longer allowing disability appeals directly to an administrative law judge.

Performance Measure 1.1d: Improve customer service by reducing the number of actions pending at the processing centers

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	3.3 million	2.9 million	5.5 million
Target Met	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Met	Not Met	Met
Performance	4.6 million	3.7 million	3.2 million	4.5 million	3.75 million
FY 2020 Performance Results	Focusing on high priority workloads, along with increased staffing, training, automated enhancements and other factors, we reduced the pending to 3.75 million actions, a decrease of 750,000 compared to FY 2019.				

Data Definition: The target represents the total number of pending actions in all of the processing centers at the end of the fiscal year.

Strategic Objective 1.2: Expand Service Delivery Options

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Operations

Key Initiatives

Enhance the Online Experience

In FY 2020, visits to our website increased about 60 percent during the COVID-19 pandemic, with almost 1 million hits per day. We continue to explore ways to enhance the customer service experience by providing convenient, user-friendly, and secure online self-service options. Transforming our digital services is the next step to improve our service to the public. Now that many of our applications are online, we are determining what services we should add, and how we can make our existing electronic services easier to use. We are also exploring customer-centered work processes that offer more self-service options and reduce wait times. We awarded contracts for the ssa.gov website redesign, and conducted internal stakeholder interviews for

design input. Additionally, we completed a content audit for the full website and improved navigation to retirement information on our website. We also updated our website to include a COVID-19 resources and frequently asked questions page.

Enhance *my* Social Security

my Social Security is our online portal that provides a convenient, safe option for people to conduct business with us or view their Social Security records. *my* Social Security offers a broad range of services including changing an address or direct deposit information, getting personal retirement benefit estimates, and requesting a replacement Social Security Number card. *my* Social Security's user-friendly design allows access from various devices. Since we implemented *my* Social Security, we have registered nearly 53 million users. In FY 2020, we registered more than 7 million new users compared to 6.9 million new users in FY 2019.

In FY 2020, we added service options to *my* Social Security to improve the user experience. We enhanced our representative payee portal to allow individual representative payees to view and print benefit verification letters for beneficiaries they represent. They can also view, print, or request a mailed copy of a replacement 1099 or 1042S tax form on behalf of their beneficiaries.
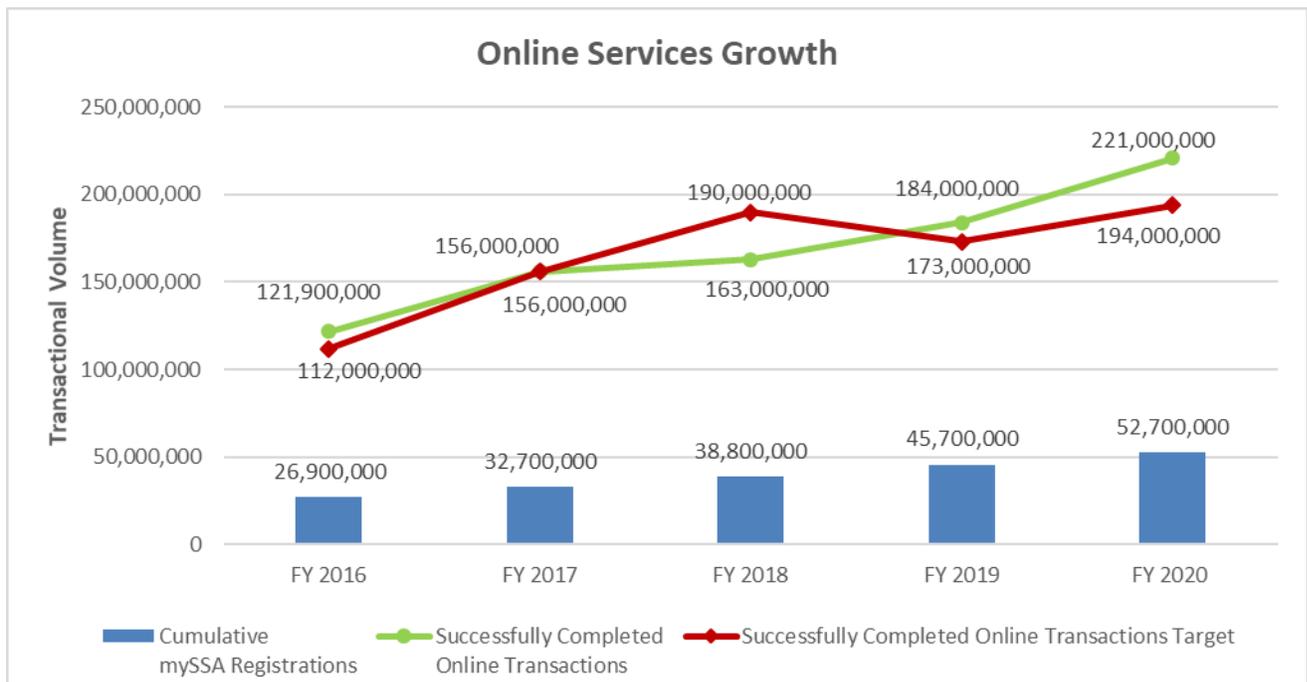
Figure 4. The cumulative number of *my* Social Security registrations, successfully completed online transactions targets and successfully completed online transactions from FYs 2016 to 2020.

Enhance Online Appeals

We are improving the iAppeals online application process for people who are appealing an agency decision for non-medical issues such as overpayments or Medicare premium rates. Our

enhancements will integrate iAppeals Medical and iAppeals Non-Medical into a single application behind the *my* Social Security portal.

In FY 2020, we successfully supported the use of iAppeals in the States where we reinstated reconsideration.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 1.2a: Redesign our website to enhance the user's online experience

Fiscal Year	2020
Target	Implement a redesigned ssa.gov web template and home page
Target Met	Not Met
Performance	We completed the content audit for the full informational site, completed the new information architecture and design, and completed the retirement path updates.
FY 2020 Performance Results	We awarded the web redesign contract later than expected. We published the *beta* site, including a new web template, navigation and home page, on November 30, 2020.

Data Definition: The target represents implementation of a redesigned *beta* ssa.gov web template and home page.

Performance Measure 1.2b: Maintain customer satisfaction with our online services above Verint ForeSee's Threshold of Excellence (80)

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	Satisfaction rating of 84.5 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 85.0 for online services
Target Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
Performance	Satisfaction rating of 84.9 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 85.5 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 83.5 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 83.1 for online services	Satisfaction rating of 84.5 for online services
FY 2020 Performance Results	While our overall satisfaction rating improved from FY 2019, we did not meet our target. To help improve our scores, we continue to hold Satisfaction Insight Review meetings with internal stakeholders and Verint Foresee representatives. In these meetings, we discuss findings and ways that we can increase customer satisfaction with our products.				

Data Definition: The target represents the combined fiscal year average customer satisfaction rating for the following eight online services: Business Services Online, iClaim Disability, Medicare Extra Help, iClaim RIB, iAppeals, *my* Social Security, Retirement Estimator, and SSA Main Page.

Performance Measure 1.2c: Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	112.0 million	156.0 million	Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 35 million over the prior year (~190 million)	Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 10 million over the prior year (~173 million)	Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions by 10 million over the prior year (~194 million)
Target Met	Met	Met	Not Met	Met	Met
Performance	121.9 million[4]	156.0 million	163 million	184 million	221 million
FY 2020 Performance Results	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more people visited ssa.gov and used our online services, which resulted in nearly 221 million transactions.				

Data Definition: The target represents the total the number of online transactions successfully completed. (Note: This is the fiscal year total of transactions completed on ssa.gov (e.g., address changes, claims filed, replacement SSN cards))

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[4] Most fiscal years are 52 weeks; however, FY 2016 included 53 weeks. This data is based on 53 weeks of performance.

Strategic Goal 2: Improve the Way We Do Business

Improving the way we do business is imperative to delivering services effectively to the public. We must continuously evaluate our policies and business processes using data and modern methods to ensure we meet service demands and reinforce efficient and effective service. Recognizing that our current technology infrastructure and existing business systems would not allow us to serve the public the way we want or the way they expect us to, we developed a plan to modernize our IT systems. This multi-year modernization effort is fundamental to our overall ability to improve service to the public.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Streamline Policies and Processes

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy

Key Initiatives

Expand Access to Electronic Medical Evidence

We depend on healthcare providers to provide the medical records we need to determine whether a claimant is disabled. Expanding the use of electronic medical evidence makes it easier for medical providers to submit evidence, allows disability adjudicators to efficiently navigate the record to identify pertinent information, and provides opportunities to use data analytics to improve the disability process.

In FY 2020, we received 51.74 percent of medical evidence electronically.

Increase the Number of People with Disabilities Who Return to Work

Many beneficiaries who are disabled want to work and may attain self-sufficiency with adequate support. The Ticket to Work program and the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) cost reimbursement program help beneficiaries transition to employment and reduce reliance on disability benefits. We continue to improve our outreach to beneficiaries about employment support programs. Ongoing mailings, marketing efforts, monthly webinars, and an interactive presence on social media have led thousands of beneficiaries to connect with employment networks and State VR agencies to get the services they need to return to work.

In FY 2020, we continued employment outreach to beneficiaries through ongoing mailings, marketing efforts, webinars, and social media. To maximize participation rates and earnings outcomes, we continued to test and apply changes to our Ticket to Work program notices. Learn more about Ticket to Work success stories on our website (our website (choosework.ssa.gov/success-stories/index.html).

Develop an Occupational Information System

We often need information about work to make a disability determination, but the types of jobs in the workforce and job requirements change over time. Our Occupational Information System partnership with the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) enables us to collect occupational information for use in our disability adjudication process to make consistent, better-informed disability decisions. BLS collects the occupational information on a five-year cycle using the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS).

In FY 2020, we continued to collaborate with BLS to collect the second year of occupational data under a new sample design that captures requirements for a broader range of occupations in the national economy.

Update the Listing of Impairments

The Listing of Impairments describes disabling impairments for each of the major body systems. We continue to make significant progress in updating these listings to reflect advances in medical knowledge, and we plan to implement a three to five-year review cycle.

In FY 2020, we completed the final rule for the musculoskeletal body system.

Modernize the Social Security Statement

To improve customer service and the public's understanding of our programs, we are modernizing the online Social Security Statement available through the *my* Social Security portal. The modernized online Statement will not only provide the users with their earnings records, Social Security and Medicare taxes paid, and future benefit estimates, it will also provide access to retirement planning tools, calculators, supplemental fact sheets, and other applicable information in a central location. We will customize the information based on the user's age and earnings history, providing a more relevant experience. It will assist individuals with retirement planning and learning about benefit eligibility.

In FY 2020, we continued adding new features and integrating the *my* Social Security online Statement with additional benefit estimation tools through the Benefit Entitlement Center (BEC)[5].

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[5] The BEC is a self-service solution within the *my* Social Security portal that allows customers to file an application, appeal a decision, and manage benefits.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 2.1a: Improve the disability determination process by increasing the percentage of medical evidence received electronically

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	45%	50%	55%
Target Met	Met	Met	Not Met
Performance	48%	51%	51.74%
FY 2020 Performance Results	Several factors impacted our ability to accomplish our FY 2020 target. Major drivers include: increase in faxed (non-electronic medical evidence) submissions by 7.26 percent after three consecutive years of decreases; increase in health IT by only 11 percent as compared to consecutive-year increases of 46 percent or greater; and setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Health IT partners redirecting resources).		

Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of medical records received electronically through Electronic Records Express (ERE), ERE Web Services, Bulk Transfer, and Health IT.

Performance Measure 2.1b: Increase the percentage of beneficiaries whose successful work outcomes within three years of assignment resulted in a payment to an Employment Network (EN) or State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency

Fiscal Year	2020
Target	7.1%
Target Met	Met
Performance	8.8%
FY 2020 Performance Results	We exceeded our target as 8.8 percent of all beneficiaries who assigned their Ticket to an EN or State VR agency in the last three years also generated a payment to an EN or State VR agency.

Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of beneficiaries who assign a Ticket to Work to an EN or State VR agency within the last three years, who also generated a payment in the current fiscal year.

Performance Measure 2.1c: Update the Listing of Impairments

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	Publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to revise three body systems in the Listing of Impairments	Publish a final rule to revise the musculoskeletal disorders system, and a proposed rule for the cardiovascular, digestive, and skin body systems	Publish a final rule for the musculoskeletal body system and a proposed rule for the cardiovascular disorders body system
Target Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
Performance	The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is in process, with a publication goal of early to mid FY 2019	The proposed rule for the digestive and skin disorders body systems was published in the Federal Register on 7/25/2019	We published the final rule for the musculoskeletal body system in the *Federal Register* on 12/03/2020
FY 2020 Performance Results	We completed the final rule for the musculoskeletal body system in FY 2020, and published it on December 3, 2020. The proposed rule for evaluating cardiovascular disorders is in process.		

Data Definition: The target represents the number of proposed and final rules we will submit to OMB for review and approval to publish in the Federal Register.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Accelerate Information Technology Modernization

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Systems

Key Initiatives

Information Technology Modernization

Three years ago, we began a multi-year *IT Modernization Plan* (www.ssa.gov/open/materials/IT-Modernization-Plan.pdf), supported by $370 million in dedicated appropriations from Congress. It is important that we continually review our modernization plan to ensure it is flexible to keep up with rapid technology changes and future customer needs. Therefore, we have updated our plan, building on our progress in addressing foundational modernization needs and incorporating input from public and private technology experts, our frontline employees, and the public we serve.

Our *IT Modernization Plan, 2020 Update* (www.ssa.gov/open/materials/IT-Modernization-Plan-2020-Update.pdf) emphasizes our focus on service modernization, which includes building additional online services; improving and expanding automated services available through our National 800 Number; and providing additional self-service and expedited services in our field offices.

In FY 2020, we quickly pivoted during the COVID-19 pandemic to minimize service disruptions by ensuring our network supported maximum remote work for our employees. We provided

creative solutions to maintain continuity of service in a remote environment and improved our overall digital service delivery channels.

Strengthen Our Information Security Program and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure

Maintaining the public's trust in our ability to protect sensitive data housed in our systems requires continuous monitoring of threats and continual improvement and strengthening of our cybersecurity program. We emphasize the importance of information security through ongoing operational refinement and maturation of security components in accordance with government regulations.

In FY 2020, we refined and adapted how we detect and prevent cyber threats and enhanced our efforts to attract and retain cybersecurity professionals. We automated our detection and response processes to identify threats, mitigate vulnerabilities, and limit the impact of potential cyberattacks. We also improved our capacity to prevent, detect, respond to, and defend against cyber threats.

Modernize Disability Case Processing

We are improving disability case processing through our enterprise-wide efforts to develop and implement modern, national claims processing systems that will seamlessly interact with each other from initial claim filing through a final appeal decision. We are working to bring decision support tools using Artificial Intelligence technologies, machine learning, and predictive analytics to many aspects of the disability determination process to improve decisional accuracy and policy compliance.

We are replacing aging systems and providing more efficient and consistent case processing, improving our customer's experience, and reducing administrative costs. We are working to integrate the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS2), Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System, and the Quality Review Case Processing Systems across our offices and State DDSs.

In FY 2020, we continued to increase DCPS2 functionality as planned, and we completed the deployment of DCPS2 to 14 additional DDSs, bringing the total number to 45 of 52 DDSs. Additionally, six DDSs completed the transition and fully utilize DCPS2 to process claims (Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Wyoming).

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 2.2a: Modernize databases, replacing and retiring outdated technology and designs

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	Replace two legacy databases with modern design databases	Replace two legacy databases	Replace three legacy databases
Target Met	Met	Met	Met
Performance	Replaced two legacy systems	Replaced two legacy databases	Replaced three legacy databases
FY 2020 Performance Results	We successfully retired the Appointed Representative MI database, the Special Disability Workload MI database, and the eWork MI database. The Enterprise Data Warehouse running on the Amazon Web Services Cloud houses the data content for all three.		

Data Definition: The target represents the number of legacy databases we replace or retire to reduce infrastructure costs and our mainframe footprint by migrating these databases to the cloud hosted Enterprise Data Warehouse for Management Information and Business Information data.

Performance Measure 2.2b: Continue to modernize the IT Infrastructure

Fiscal Year	2019	2020
Target	Extend the on premise cloud capability by offering Platform-as-a-Service[6]	Migrate 100% of agency e-mail to the cloud platform
Target Met	Met	Met
Performance	Extended cloud capability	100% of e-mail migrated to the cloud
FY 2020 Performance Results	We migrated 100 percent of all targeted mailboxes to O365/Exchange online.	

Data Definition: The target represents modernization and transition from an agency-hosted e-mail system to adoption of Microsoft 365 Business—a productivity cloud offering best-in-class Office applications provides employees improved access to new services, reduces technical administration, and conforms to Federal guidance.

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[6] Platform-as-a-Service is a category of cloud computing service, which allows the agency to develop, run, and manage applications without the complexity of building and maintaining the infrastructure typically associated with developing and launching an application.

Performance Measure 2.2c: Modernize our customer communications infrastructure

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	Implement a modernized notice infrastructure to enable multiple notice delivery options	Deliver OASDI Cost of Living Adjustment Notices online via *my* Social Security	Establish the capability to direct agency correspondence through either USPS mail or *my* Social Security Message Center, based on communications delivery preferences of *my* Social Security customers
Target Met	Met	Met	Met
Performance	Modernized notice infrastructure implemented	Delivered over 14.8 million online OASDI Cost of Living Adjustment notices	Over 3 million *my* Social Security customers have opted out of printed notices
FY 2020 Performance Results	Over 3 million *my* Social Security customers have opted out of printed notices sent via USPS to receive available notices only via Message Center.		

Data Definition: The target represents our progress towards offering *my* Social Security customers additional notice delivery options.

Performance Measure 2.2d: Expand Self-Service for Claims Status Inquiries

Fiscal Year	2020
Target	Implement event based emails to SSA customers
Target Met	Met
Performance	Implemented event based emails
FY 2020 Performance Results	Implemented event based emails to 100 percent of authenticated iClaim filers.

Data Definition: The target represents our goal to implement new functionality that allows our customers to receive proactive, consistent, and informative claims status updates.

Performance Measure 2.2e: Provide uninterrupted access to our systems during scheduled times of operations

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	99.50% availability	99.90% availability	99.90% availability	99.90% availability	99.90% availability
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Not Met
Performance	99.91% availability	99.96% availability	99.95% availability	99.95% availability	99.84% availability
FY 2020 Performance Results	In FY 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we rapidly enabled our personnel with maximum telework capability. We quickly supported over 85,000 remote users versus our previous peak of just over 17,000 users. We remotely managed all of our customer service channels (online, telephone, network and with partner agencies), and implemented innovative solutions to meet agency personnel and public service needs. Our transition to remote operations challenged our service continuity, resulting in system availability percentages slightly under our target.				

Data Definition: The target represents the average percentage of availability of our systems infrastructure.

Performance Measure 2.2f: Maintain effective cybersecurity and privacy programs

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment[7]	Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment	Achieve an overall score of "managing risk" on the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Management Assessment
Target Met	Met	Met	TBD
Performance	Managing Risk score achieved	Managing Risk score achieved	TBD
FY 2020 Performance Results	Final FY 2020 results will be available at the end of January 2021.		

Data Definition: The target represents our annual overall risk score from the Federal Cybersecurity Risk Assessment.

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[7] Presidential Executive Order 13800, *Strengthening the Cybersecurity of Federal Networks and Critical Infrastructure*, and OMB Memorandum M-17-25 require Federal agencies and departments to implement risk management measures, and require OMB to evaluate Federal agencies on how they are managing their cybersecurity risk. Risk ratings are based on capabilities defined in the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. Potential risk ratings range from (1) High Risk, to (2) At Risk, or (3) Managing Risk.

Strategic Goal 3: Ensure Stewardship

We take the stewardship of our programs seriously, and we will continue to demonstrate a commitment to sound management practices. To ensure stewardship and the efficient administration of our programs, we will focus our efforts in three major areas: improving program integrity; enhancing our fraud prevention and detection activities; and improving workforce performance and increasing accountability.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Improve Program Integrity

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Analytics, Review, and Oversight

Focus Area for Improvement

We are highlighting this objective as a focus area for improvement, primarily due to our continued challenges with improving payment accuracy in the SSI program. While we strive to improve our efforts to reduce improper payments, outcomes must be significant to affect our error rate. Each tenth of a percentage point in payment accuracy represents about $56.5 million in SSI program outlays and each tenth of a percentage point in payment accuracy represents about $1,009 million in OASDI program outlays.

In mid-March, we suspended workload actions that would have an unfavorable outcome for our beneficiaries, such as processing adverse actions and collecting certain overpayment debts, to protect benefits during a critical time in the COVID-19 pandemic. While our FY 2020 payment accuracy results will not be available until summer 2021, we are at risk of not achieving our SSI overpayment accuracy target of 94 percent.

Key Initiatives

Promote Timely Wage Reporting

Changes in a person's work and wages are a leading cause of improper payments in the DI and SSI programs. Currently, we use a number of sources to verify wage amounts, including pay stubs submitted by recipients, annual earnings data from the Internal Revenue Service, and payroll information from The Work Number. However, verifying wages is a manual process, and we continue to rely on beneficiaries to self-report wages.

In FY 2017, we implemented an online tool, myWageReport (myWR), which allows DI beneficiaries to report earnings electronically on computers, mobile devices, and smartphones through *my* Social Security. In FY 2018, we expanded myWR to allow SSI recipients, their representative payees, or their deemors (i.e., an ineligible spouse or parent living with the

recipient) to report earnings electronically.[8] In FY 2020, users successfully submitted nearly 132,000 myWR transactions, a 33 percent increase over FY 2019 (99,000 transactions).

In FY 2020, we completed our analysis of online wage reporting submission failures and implemented a systems enhancement to reduce unsuccessful transmissions. We also implemented refresher myWR training for our employees, which improved DI beneficiary and SSI recipient wage reporting opportunities.

Modernize our Debt Management System

Currently, we use numerous systems to record, track, and manage our OASDI and SSI overpayments. We have begun a multi-year initiative to develop a streamlined, modernized enterprise Debt Management System (DMS) to enable us to more effectively and efficiently post, track, collect, and report our overpayment activity.

In FY 2020, we implemented enhancements for the modernized DMS and developed a new program debt write-off process to remove delinquent and unproductive debts from our pending work in the PCs.

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[8] Over the years, we created automated methods to improve wage reporting for SSI recipients. We implemented a telephone wage reporting system that allows recipients to call in their wages and a downloadable wage reporting application for smartphone users.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 3.1a: Improve the integrity of the Supplemental Security Income program by focusing our efforts on reducing overpayments (APG)

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	95.0% (O/P)	94.0% (O/P)	94.0% (O/P)	94.0% (O/P)	94.0% (O/P)
Target Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	TBD
Performance	92.40% (O/P)	92.70% (O/P)	91.77% (O/P)	91.87% (O/P)	TBD
FY 2020 Performance Results	FY 2020 data will be available in summer 2021.				

Data Definition: The target represents our annual overpayment accuracy rate findings from our stewardship review of non-medical aspects of the SSI program. (The overpayment (O/P) accuracy rate is the percentage of all dollars paid that are free of O/P errors.)[9]
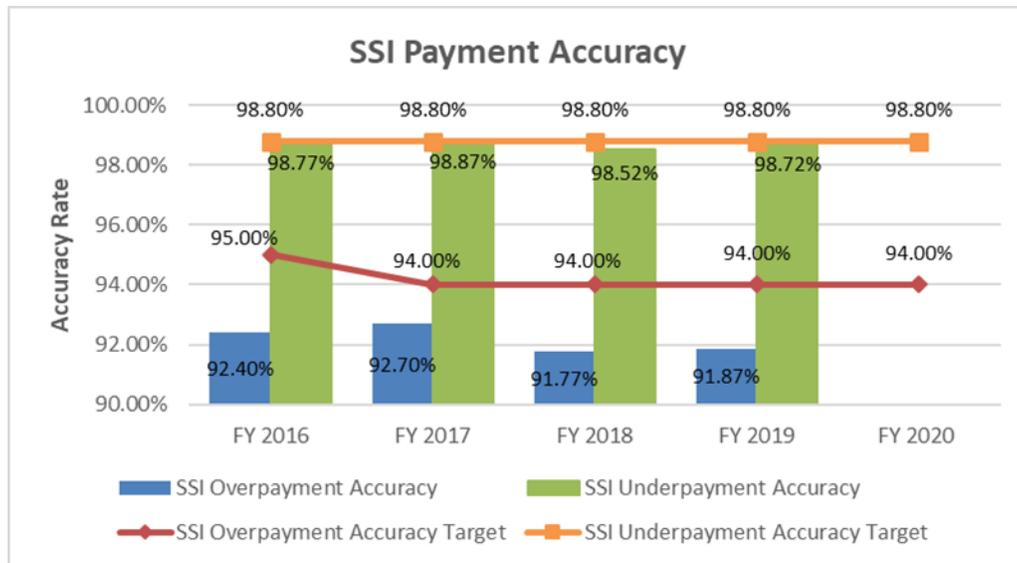
Figure 5. The SSI overpayment and underpayment accuracy rates and targets from FYs 2016 to 2020.

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[9] "Ensure Stewardship" is a Strategic Goal in our *Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years* (FY) *2018–2022* (www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/asp). Each year, we report improper payment findings, both overpayments and underpayments, from our stewardship reviews of the non-medical aspects of the OASI, DI, and SSI programs.

Performance Measure 3.1b: Maintain a high payment accuracy rate by reducing overpayments, in the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	99.8% (O/P)	99.8% (O/P)	99.8% (O/P)	99.8% (O/P)	99.8% (O/P)
Target Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	TBD
Performance	99.79% (O/P)	99.36% (O/P)	99.77% (O/P)	99.80% (O/P)	TBD
FY 2020 Performance Results	FY 2020 data will be available in summer 2021.				

Data Definition: The target represents the annual overpayment (O/P) accuracy rate findings from our stewardship reviews of the non-medical aspects of the OASDI program.[10]
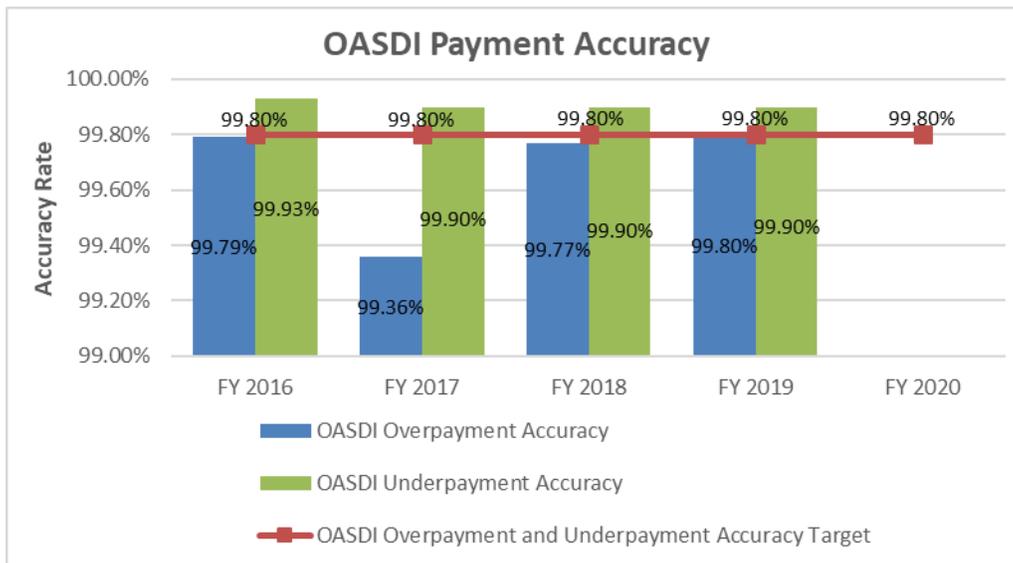

Figure 6. The OASDI overpayment and underpayment accuracy rates and targets from FYs 2016 to 2020.

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[10] "Ensure Stewardship" is a Strategic Goal in our *Agency Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years* (FY) *2018–2022* (www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/asp). Each year, we report improper payment findings, both overpayments and underpayments, from our stewardship reviews of the non-medical aspects of the OASI, DI, and SSI programs.

Performance Measure 3.1c: Ensure the quality of our decisions by achieving the State disability determination services decisional accuracy[11] rate for initial disability decisions

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	97% decisional accuracy	97% decisional accuracy
Target Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	TBD
Performance	98% net accuracy	97% net accuracy	98% net accuracy	97% decisional accuracy	TBD
FY 2020 Performance Results	Beginning April 2020, we suspended sampling to calculate decisional accuracy due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed in the fourth quarter. FY 2020 data will be available at the end of January 2021.				

Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of correctly decided cases compared to all sampled cases.

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[11] Decisional accuracy reflects all DDS medical determinations in which the determination was policy compliant at the time of the quality review and the initial determination did not change after obtaining additional documentation because of a quality review. Net accuracy is the percentage of correct initial State disability determinations and is based on the net error rate (i.e., the number of corrected deficient cases with changed disability decisions), plus the number of deficient cases not corrected within 90 days from the end of the period covered by the report, divided by the number.

Performance Measure 3.1d: Modernize our Debt Management System

Fiscal Year	2019	2020
Target	Implement online debt collection for benefit overpayments	Develop functionality to send an email confirmation as part of our online remittance application
Target Met	Not Met	Not Met
Performance	Developed the initial release of an online remittance application, which provides individuals with the ability to access a payment portal and make payments via the Department of the Treasury's Pay.gov website	We delayed the implementation of the online remittance (iPaySSA) application while we reassessed potential risks
FY 2020 Performance Results	We no longer intend to implement iPaySSA. Instead, we are directing our efforts to providing the public with modern electronic service options, including the ability to securely repay overpayments online, through the development of our modern Debt Management Product.	

Data Definition: The target represents our goal to develop a streamlined modernized enterprise DMS that enables us to more effectively and efficiently post, track, collect, and report our overpayment activity. As part of our progress towards implementation, we will develop functionality for an optional email confirmation.

Strategic Objective 3.2: Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Analytics, Review, and Oversight

Key Initiatives

Expand Our Cooperative Disability Investigations Program

With the Office of the Inspector General, we jointly operate cooperative disability investigations (CDI) units with State DDSs, and State and local law enforcement. Generally, these units investigate suspected fraud before the agency awards benefits and during the CDR process.

In FY 2020, we added four CDI units in Cheyenne, WY; Las Vegas, NV; Manchester, NH; and Omaha, NE. We currently have 49 CDI units covering 44 States, the District of Columbia, and 5 U.S. territories.
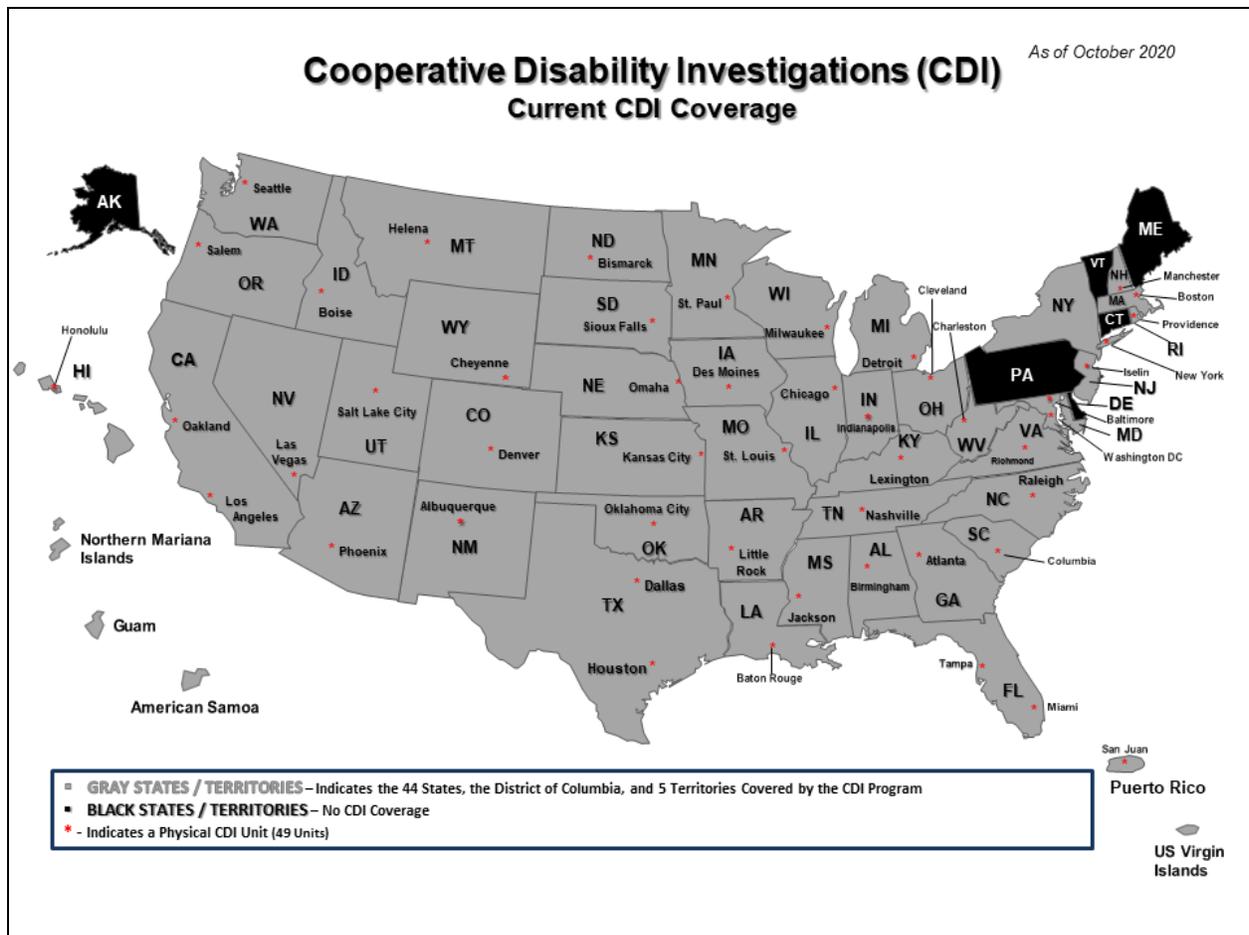
Figure 7. The CDI unit coverage through FY 2020.

Enhanced Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities

We are focusing on a holistic analytical approach to our fraud risk management and prioritizing our anti-fraud efforts consistent with the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 and the Government Accountability Office Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in the Federal Programs.

We continue to expand the use of data analytics and predictive modeling to enhance fraud prevention and detection in our programs. With these models, we can better identify suspicious and evolving patterns of activities in our workloads, allowing us to proactively detect and prevent fraud before issuing payments.

Between FY 2018 and FY 2020, we completed fraud risk assessments in key areas including disability, electronic services, and the representative payee program. The completed assessments were consistent with the Enterprise Fraud Risk Management (EFRM) strategy, established in FY 2019. We also developed strategies to mitigate specific risks identified in those assessments, improving our ability to proactively detect and prevent fraud.

In FY 2020, we initiated a risk assessment to identify fraud risks related to the SSI program. We deployed an updated fraud allegation referral process that provides employees a modern, streamlined interface to report fraud and improve our ability to analyze allegation data.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 3.2a: Expand our CDI coverage

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Add three CDI units	Add three CDI units	Add two to four CDI units
Target Met	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Met	Met	Met
Performance	Added two CDI unit	Added one CDI unit	Added three CDI units	Added three CDI units	Added four CDI units
FY 2020 Performance Results	We opened 4 new CDI units in Nebraska, New Hampshire, Nevada, and Wyoming.				

Data Definition: The target represents the number of additional CDI units needed to cover the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Performance Measure 3.2b: Mature the Enterprise Fraud Risk Management Program

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	Operationalize the Anti-Fraud Enterprise Solution (AFES) and implement eServices analytics	Complete eServices risk assessment, develop disability fraud risk profile, implement anti-fraud disability analytics	Complete the eServices fraud risk profile, the administrative issues fraud risk profile, and the representative payee fraud risk assessments
Target Met	Not Met	Met	Met
Performance	We have not fully implemented the AFES, but we deployed our first disability fraud analytic model and improved our eServices analytics and fraud detection	We completed the eServices risk assessment, developed the disability fraud risk profile, and implemented disability analytics	We completed the eServices fraud risk profile, the administrative issues fraud risk profile, and the representative payee fraud risk assessment
FY 2020 Performance Results	We met our target to complete the eServices and administrative issues fraud risk profiles and the representative payee fraud risk assessment.		

Data Definition: The target represents our EFRM strategy to systematically assess fraud risks and determine whether any specific risks require additional actions to further reduce the likelihood or impact of that risk.

Strategic Objective 3.3: Improve Workforce Performance and Increase Accountability

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources

Key Initiatives

Strengthen the Performance Management Process

The electronic 7B (e7B) application provides the ability to complete and track employee performance management documents and required acknowledgement statements (e.g., systems access and handling of personally identifiable information) that were previously maintained in paper form. The application also provides employees and management the ability to electronically deliver and sign these documents, and enhances management and employee accountability.

We have also established a program to provide supervisors with the tools to address employee performance. The program consists of manager and employee relations specialist cohorts, which meet regularly to discuss actual cases with associated challenges and issues to better equip managers to address potential and current performance and conduct matters. This program is highly interactive, includes case scenarios to identify solutions, and covers the full scope of performance and conduct issues.

In FY 2020, we maintained 97 percent of the required signed employee acknowledgements in our e7B system.

Execute Talent Management and Succession Planning

Our goal is to continue to increase the proficiency of our leadership cadre and pipeline to enhance their readiness to fill potential gaps in leadership and critical positions.

In FY 2020, we announced selectees for the National Leadership Development Program (NLDP), and conducted a 3-week virtual orientation program for Tracks 1 (GS 15) and 2 (GS 12–14) participants.

Invest in Training and Support for Managers

We are responsible for providing the training and technology necessary for managers and employees to carry out their work to provide the level of service the public expects and deserves. Our goal is that within 90 days of a promotion, new supervisors will receive training to develop and improve their leadership skills and competencies.

In FY 2020, we enrolled 100 percent of new supervisors within 90 days of their appointment date. We also began developing Leadership Fundamentals, a multiyear curriculum that provides sequential training for managers within the first three years of their supervisory role.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 3.3a: Strengthen manager accountability for effective performance management

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	90% of performance-related documents completed and tracked electronically through our e7B system	93% of performance-related documents completed and tracked electronically through our e7B system	95% of required signed employee acknowledgements maintained in our e7B system
Target Met	Met	Met	Met
Performance	92%	94%	97%
FY 2020 Performance Results	We exceeded our target by maintaining 97 percent of required signed employee acknowledgements in our e7B system.		

Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of required employee acknowledgements that are completed and tracked electronically through our e7B system.

Performance Measure 3.3b: Enhance the leadership pipeline through a modernized national leadership development program

Fiscal Year	2018	2019	2020
Target	Review readiness of at least 95% of career executives	Launch a redesigned national leadership development program	Identify competency baselines in national leadership development program (NLDP) participants
Target Met	Met	Met	Met
Performance	99%	Launch Complete	Competencies Identified
FY 2020 Performance Results	We announced Track 1 and Track 2 NLDP selections and completed baseline competency assessments.		

Data Definition: The target represents the release of an NLDP, which includes developing program graduates by increasing their baseline competency and reducing competency gaps.

Performance Measure 3.3c: Ensure new supervisors receive timely training to improve their leadership skills and competencies

Fiscal Year	2019	2020
Target	At least 90% of new supervisors enroll in supervisor training within 90 days and complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment	At least 95% of new supervisors enroll in supervisor training within 90 days and complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment
Target Met	Not Met	Met
Performance	84% of supervisors enrolled within 90 days	100% of supervisors enrolled within 90 days and 98% completed training within one year.
FY 2020 Performance Results	We enrolled 100 percent of supervisors in training within 90 days of their appointment date. Ninety-eight percent of new supervisors completed training within one year of their appointment date.	

Data Definition: The target represents the percentage of new supervisors enrolled in supervisor training within the first 90 days and complete training within one year of the effective date of their supervisory appointment.

Strategic Objective 3.4: Improve Organizational Effectiveness and Reduce Costs

Lead: Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management and Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy

Key Initiatives

Reduce Our Real Property Footprint

We are reducing our real property footprint as we renovate existing buildings and renew lease agreements. Beginning in FY 2020 through FY 2024, our five-year goal is to reduce our agency footprint by 1,005,000 useable square feet (USF). We continue to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on space.

In FY 2020, we achieved an 89,406 USF reduction.

Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners

We provide SSN verifications and exchange birth, death, prisoner, and benefit payment information, as permitted under law, with Federal, State, and private partners. Our data exchanges improve organizational effectiveness and reduce costs by providing reliable data to determine benefits and improve administrative processes, which in turn saves costs and reduces improper payments.

In FY 2020, we worked with the Department of Homeland Security to expand our data exchange to include U.S. citizens and non-citizens foreign travel data in the Arrival and Departure Information System.

Develop a New Electronic Consent Based Social Security Number Verification Service

We are committed to safeguarding SSNs from fraud. We continue our stewardship efforts to reduce fraud through modernizing digital services and expanding public-private partnerships. The electronic Consent Based Social Security Number Verification (eCBSV) service is a fee-based SSN service that allows permitted entities to verify if an individual's SSN, name, and date of birth combination matches our records consistent with the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act.

In FY 2020, we implemented eCBSV to 100 percent of the permitted entities (8) that were ready to begin production and continued development for the expanded rollout for additional permitted entities.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure 3.4a: Reduce our real property footprint

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	Achieve a 190,000 USF reduction	Achieve a 15,000 USF reduction	Achieve a 55,000 USF reduction	Achieve a 25,000 USF reduction	Achieve a 19,500 USF reduction
Target Met	Not Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
Performance	Achieved a 174,755 USF reduction	Achieved a 83,375 USF reduction	Achieved a 182,040 USF reduction	Achieved a 39,205 USF reduction	Achieved a 89,406 USF reduction
FY 2020 Performance Results	We achieved this reduction through lease consolidation initiatives in Seattle, WA, Chicago, IL, and Independence, MO, which enabled us to return space to the General Services Administration.				

Data Definition: The target represents the actual space occupied. Usable square footage does not include common areas of a building such as lobbies, restrooms, stairwells, storage rooms, and shared hallways.

Performance Measure 3.4b: Implement the Electronic Consent Based Social Security Number Verification Service

Fiscal Year	2020
Target	Implement eCBSV services for 10 permitted entities selected and enrolled during the initial enrollment period
Target Met	Not Met
Performance	Implemented eCBSV services for 8 permitted entities
FY 2020 Performance Results	Implemented eCBSV to the 8 permitted entities that were ready to begin production, and continued development for the expanded rollout for additional permitted entities.

Data Definition: The target represents the enrollment of a permitted entity (i.e., financial institution or service provider, subsidiary, affiliate, agent, subcontractor, or assignee) as defined by section 509 of the Gramm Leach Bliley Act, governing the treatment of nonpublic personal information about consumers by financial institutions, that applied in the July 2019 initial enrollment period.

Budgeted Workload Measure Results

In addition to the performance measures and targets we develop to demonstrate our incremental efforts to achieve our strategic goals, we have a number of budgeted workload performance measures that represent how much of our core workloads we will complete each year and how efficiently and effectively we complete this work. While budgeted workload measures support our strategic goals and objectives, the targets and outcomes are directly affected by our funding level each year. Thus, we present our budgeted workload measures separately in the following table.

Retirement and survivor claims completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	5,586,000	5,782,000 (4,196,566 received)	5,801,000	6,009,000	6,222,000
Performance	5,602,312	5,619,831	5,862,065	6,020,702	6,120,255

Initial disability claims receipts

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	2,807,000	2,499,000	2,476,000	2,295,000	2,399,000
Performance	2,637,755	2,442,592	2,353,970	2,345,615	2,212,858

Initial disability claims completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	2,695,000 (2,637,755 received)	2,455,000	2,300,000	2,295,000	2,289,000
Performance	2,688,977	2,455,000	2,306,570	2,310,057	2,037,356

Initial disability claims pending

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	733,000	612,000	699,000	565,000	704,000
Performance	567,644	522,869	565,013	593,944	763,747

Average processing time for initial disability claims

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	113 days	113 days	111 days	113 days	125 days
Performance	110 days	111 days	111 days	120 days	131 days

Disability reconsiderations receipts

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	540,000	635,000	664,000
Performance	647,910	582,935	552,755	566,462	567,800

Disability reconsiderations completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	702,000 (647,910 received)	581,000	518,000	597,000	554,000
Performance	666,948	595,588	541,806	544,148	552,601

Disability reconsiderations pending

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	136,000	130,000	129,000	153,000	244,000[12]
Performance	120,829	105,022	115,028	133,503	143,781

Average processing time for disability reconsiderations[13]

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	Not Applicable	105 days	102 days	105 days	118 days
Performance	103 days	101 days	103 days	109 days	122 days

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[12] The increase in pending is a result of the phased-in reinstatement of the reconsideration process in the 10 prototype States.

[13] Average processing time does not include the special processing of iAppeals claims that involve a specific universe of online appeals that claimants abandoned prior to completion.

Hearings receipts

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	746,000	632,000	582,000	511,000	464,000
Performance	712,853	620,164	567,911	510,901	428,810

Hearings completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	703,000	683,000	738,000	779,000	688,000
Performance	652,241	685,657	765,554	793,863	585,918

Hearings pending

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	1,087,000	1,071,000	900,000	591,000	352,000
Performance	1,121,519	1,056,026	858,383	575,421	418,313

Annual average processing time for hearings decisions[14]

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	540 days	605 days	605 days	515 days	380 days
Performance	545 days	605 days	595 days	506 days	386 days

National 800 Number calls handled

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	34,000,000	35,000,000	33,000,000	36,000,000	36,000,000
Performance	37,231,564	36,053,988	31,910,965	33,496,515	34,480,132

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[14] Average processing time for hearings is an annual figure. The average processing time for cases closed in September 2020 was 355 days.

National 800 Number average speed of answer[15]

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	16 minutes	16 minutes	25 minutes	13 minutes	17 minutes
Performance	14 minutes	13 minutes	24 minutes	20 minutes	16 minutes

National 800 Number agent busy rate

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	9.5%	12.0%	16%	9%	12%
Performance	8.9%	10.2%	14.7%	14.1%	7.4%

Periodic continuing disability reviews completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	1,950,000	1,970,000	1,990,000	1,803,000	1,803,000
Performance	2,107,139	2,257,140	2,286,326	1,939,167	1,492,926

Full medical continuing disability reviews

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	850,000	850,000	890,000	703,000	703,000
Performance	853,754	874,411	896,508	713,156	463,264

Supplemental Security Income non-medical redeterminations completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	2,522,000	2,562,000	2,900,000	2,822,000	2,150,000
Performance	2,530,446	2,589,638	2,913,443	2,666,287	2,153,109

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[15] To more clearly communicate our National 800 Number performance, we are now reporting the standard unit of measure in minutes instead of seconds.

Social Security numbers completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	16,000,000	16,000,000	17,000,000	17,000,000	18,000,000
Performance	17,336,833	17,400,585	17,082,844	17,646,561	12,906,716

Annual earnings items completed

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	264,000,000	273,000,000	281,000,000	285,000,000	288,000,000
Performance	272,999,400	279,381,782	284,306,239	288,089,658	288,748,604

Social Security Statements issued[16]

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	38,000,000	10,000,000	14,000,000	15,000,000	14,000,000
Performance	47,507,890	13,724,897	14,971,689	11,347,689	19,285,438

Disability determination services production per workyear

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	307	301	302	302	304
Performance	306	306	310	303	255

Office of Hearings Operations production per workyear

Fiscal Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	88	94	103	105	106
Performance	94	96	98	111	93

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[16] The Social Security Statements Issued measure includes paper statements only; it does not include electronic statements issued. We send paper statements to individuals aged 60 and over. In FY 2020, *my* Social Security users accessed Social Security Statements 64 million times.

Major Management and Performance Challenges

As we strive to improve our performance, we face a variety of challenges. Each year, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) identifies our top management and performance challenges. In addition, our leadership also identifies challenges, which often overlap with the OIG report. A listing of acronyms for the responsible officials is in Appendix D, Summary of Key Management Officials' Responsibilities.

Challenges Identified by the Office of the Inspector General

In FY 2020, OIG identified six top management issues for our agency.

1) SSA's Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Pandemic

Components: DCARO, DCBFM, DCHO, DCHR, DCO, DCRDP, DCS, and OIG

Challenge: On March 13, 2020, the President declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national emergency. The Office of Management and Budget encouraged all Federal agencies to maximize telework to ensure employees' safety while serving the public and conducting mission-critical functions. This was a daunting challenge for an agency that, before the pandemic, served over 40 million customers a year in its field offices.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Improve 800 Number Services;
- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Online Options for New Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Replacement Cards;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Strengthen Our Information Security and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-Enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure; and
- Enhanced Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities.

2) Improve Administration of the Disability Programs

Components: DCO, DCHO, DCRDP, DCS, DCHR, DCARO, and DCBFM

Challenge: SSA continues to face challenges with pending disability hearings and related processing times, and the COVID-19 pandemic renewed challenges with pending disability claims and CDRs. Continued focus is necessary to simplify work incentive regulations and create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to work.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Reduce the Hearings Backlog;

- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Expand Access to Electronic Medical Evidence;
- Increase the Number of People with Disabilities Who Return to Work;
- Develop an Occupational Information System;
- Update the Listing of Impairments; and
- Modernize Disability Case Processing.

3) Improve the Prevention, Detection, and Recovery of Improper Payments

Components: DCRDP, DCBFM, DCO, DCHO, DCS, OCACT, DCCOMM, OGC, DCARO, and OIG

Challenge: SSA is responsible for issuing approximately $1 trillion in benefit payments annually. Given the amounts involved, even the slightest error in the overall payment process can result in millions of dollars in over or underpayments.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Promote Timely Wage Reporting;
- Modernize our Debt Management System;
- Expand our Cooperative Disability Investigations Program;
- Enhanced Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities; and
- Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners.

4) Improve Service Delivery

Components: DCO, DCHO, DCBFM, DCRDP, DCHR, and DCS

Challenge: SSA faces growing workloads as experienced employees are expected to retire while it pursues its mission to deliver quality service to the public.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Reduce the Hearings Backlog;
- Improve 800 Number Services;
- Reduce the Processing Center Backlog;
- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Online Options for New Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Replacement Cards;
- Enhance the Online Experience;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Enhance Online Appeals;
- Update the Listing of Impairments;
- Modernize the Social Security Statement;

- Strengthen the Performance Management Process; and
- Execute Talent Management and Succession Planning.

5) Protect the Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability of The Social Security Administration's Information Systems and Data

Component: DCS, DCARO, and DCO

Challenge: SSA must ensure its information systems are secure and sensitive data are protected.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Strengthen Our Information Security and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-Enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure;
- Expand our Cooperative Disability Investigations (CDI) Program;
- Enhanced Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities; and
- Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners.

6) Modernize Information Technology

Component: DCS

Challenge: SSA must modernize its IT to accomplish its mission despite budget and resource constraints.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Online Options for New Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Replacement Cards;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Enhance Online Appeals;
- Information Technology Modernization;
- Strengthen Our Information Security and Privacy Programs and Modernize Our Cybersecurity and Privacy-Enhanced Risk Management Infrastructure; and
- Modernize Disability Case Processing.

Additional Challenges Identified by Our Leadership

Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Components: DCO, DCARO, DCRDP, DCBFM, DCS, and OIG

Fraud, waste, and abuse erode the public's trust in our ability to efficiently and effectively provide vital services. Prevention is critical to conserving valuable resources and meeting our mission to meet the changing needs of the public.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expand Our Cooperative Disability Investigations Programs;
- Enhanced Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities;
- Reduce Our Real Property Footprint; and
- Expand Strategic Partnerships with External Partners.

Have Enough Employees with the Right Skills in the Right Place at the Right Time

Component: DCHR

Employee turnover challenges our ability to retain and develop empowered, knowledgeable, compassionate, and engaged employees. Having employees with the right skills in the right place at the right time is critical to our mission.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Strengthen the Performance Management Process;
- Execute Talent Management and Succession Planning; and
- Invest in Training and Support for Managers.

Meet Future Service Delivery Needs

Components: DCO, DCHO, DCS, and DCRDP

The service delivery expectations of our customers are constantly evolving. We must improve our current services and develop new service delivery options to continue to meet customer needs.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expand Video Service Delivery;
- Online Options for New Social Security Numbers (SSN) and Replacement Cards;
- Enhance the Online Experience;
- Enhance *my* Social Security;
- Enhance Online Appeals; and
- Modernize the Social Security Statement.

Keep Pace in the Disability Program with Medicine, Technology, and the World of Work

Components: DCRDP, DCHO, DCO, and DCS

Medicine, technology, and the nature of work are constantly evolving. We must create an agile and responsive organization committed to keeping pace with those changes and maximizing efficiencies throughout the disability program.

Actions we are undertaking to address this challenge include:

- Expand Access to Electronic Medical Evidence;
- Develop an Occupational Information System;
- Update the Listing of Impairments; and
- Modernize Disability Case Processing.

Appendix A:
Program Evaluations

We routinely conduct studies and surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. Continuous evaluation of the collection of program data, research, and analyses assists us in identifying strengths and weaknesses in our programs. Information from the program evaluations assist us in developing strategies to address the major challenges we face and improve the day-to-day administration of our programs. We complete many of our evaluations annually, while others may be quarterly, biennial, triennially, or one-time efforts. We have included a summary of findings for the most current reports available at this time.

Annual Evaluation Plan (Annually)

As required by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, we developed a *FY 2022 Evaluation Plan* that describes our program evaluations to support our *FYs 2018–2022 Agency Strategic Plan* or to lay the foundation for our *FYs 2022–2026 Learning Agenda*. Our plan does not describe the entire set of evaluations that we will conduct in FY 2022; rather it describes the most significant program evaluations that we will complete during the year. The plan is available on our website www.ssa.gov/data.

Strategic Goal 1 – Deliver Effective Services

Verint ForeSee Experience Index E-Government Report (Quarterly)

The Verint ForeSee Experience Index E-Government report measures customer satisfaction with government websites. The FY 2020 second half report noted that five of our websites, "Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs," "*my* Social Security" "iClaims - Disability," "Retirement Estimator," and "Business Services Online" topped the E-Government Satisfaction Index.

Office Visitor Surveys (Biennially)

Our Office Visitor Survey measures customer satisfaction with our in-person service in field offices and hearing offices. We conducted the surveys annually until FY 2018. We now conduct the surveys biennially, with the most recent Office Visitor Survey occurring in FY 2020. Social Security card center visitor surveys are normally included; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they were suspended in FY 2020.

In FYs 2018 and 2020, all aspects of employee service (courtesy, job knowledge, and clarity of explanations) garnered very favorable ratings.

In FY 2020, the overall satisfaction among field office visitors was 93 percent—the same as the FY 2018 rating. Hearing office visitors' overall satisfaction rating was 93 percent, which is slightly higher than the FY 2018 rating of 92 percent.[17]

In FY 2020, the rate of Internet use among field office visitors was 52 percent and 62 percent by hearing office visitors. Almost half of field office respondents had already created *my* Social Security accounts, and 37 percent of the remainder said they were very likely or somewhat likely to create accounts for future use. Hearing office visitor responses were even more encouraging, with 57 percent FY 2020 having already created accounts, and a large proportion (58 percent) of the remainder saying they were likely to create accounts. Most field office and hearing office visitors who said they were unlikely to create accounts told us it was because they preferred to speak to a person rather than conduct their business online.

Prospective Client Survey (Biennially)

The Prospective Client Survey queries people between ages 50 and 64 to identify service expectations and preferences of the upcoming wave of retirees. The most recent survey was in FY 2019. The key survey findings included:

- Retirement planning – Eighty-one percent of survey respondents remembered getting a Social Security Statement within the past year.
- Conducting Business with the Agency – Eighty-six percent of respondents said they would conduct business by telephone, 87 percent would visit an office, and 79 percent would use the Internet.
- Service Channel Preferences – More respondents preferred agent phone service for correcting their earnings record (39 percent) and scheduling an appointment to discuss their application (42 percent) than any other channel. On the other hand, the largest group of respondents preferred the Internet for getting personal information from their Social Security records (51 percent), checking application status (50 percent), changing personal information on their Social Security records (50 percent), and replacing lost Social Security cards (43 percent). An office visit was the top choice (42 percent) only for completing an application for benefits.
- Important Features of Service – The majority of respondents considered the ability to complete their business in one call (86 percent) and the ability to complete their business in one office visit (86 percent) as very important features of service.

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[17] We conducted satisfaction surveys with field office and hearings office visitors before we closed offices in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Retirement Application Survey (Biennially)

The Retirement Application Survey measures customer satisfaction with the retirement application process and identifies service expectations and preferences for future service among recent retirees. In FY 2020, we found an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the retirement application process, with respondents rating their overall experience at 95 percent Excellent, Very Good, and Good. This rating reflects a slight increase from the FY 2018 satisfaction rating of 94 percent.

In FY 2020, almost half of the respondents—46 percent—noted they filed their applications for retirement benefits online, almost identical to the 45 percent in FY 2018. In-person filing dropped by one percentage point from 40 percent in FY 2018 to 39 percent in FY 2020. Telephone filing held steady at 15 percent in both years. Most respondents indicated they use the Internet, and 84 percent of those Internet users said they had already created *my* Social Security accounts. Among the remaining Internet users who had not yet created an account, half said they would be likely to create one. To identify perceived drawbacks of creating a *my* Social Security account, the survey asked Internet users who had not yet created accounts for the main reason why they might not be likely to do so. Almost half of the responders indicated they simply preferred to speak to a person when conducting Social Security business..

my Social Security Office Visitor Survey (Annually)

In FY 2020, we conducted the second office visitor survey with *my* Social Security account holders who visited field offices to obtain benefit verification letters (BEVE) or replacement Social Security cards. The purpose of the survey was to help us understand why some *my* Social Security account holders chose to visit field offices for service they could have requested online.

In FY 2020, most BEVE responders (74 percent) and eligible Social Security card responders (69 percent) were aware they could use their *my* Social Security accounts to get BEVEs or replacement Social Security cards. However, more than half (59 percent) of BEVE responders and almost half (48 percent) of eligible Social Security card responders did not try to use their accounts before going to the FOs. One of the main reasons responders chose not to use their accounts was that they preferred to receive service in person.

The majority of BEVE responders who were unsuccessful in using their *my* Social Security accounts were unable to access their accounts. The top reasons they could not gain access were that they could not remember their login information, or they were locked out of their accounts. Overall, account access was less of an issue for replacement card responders – nearly half were able to access their accounts, but were directed to go to an office, or, based on information on SSA.gov, they were ineligible for the service online.

Strategic Goal 2 – Improve the Way We Do Business

Evaluation of the Ticket to Work and Other Employment Support Programs (Continuously)

The Ticket to Work and Other Employment Support Programs evaluation examines employment patterns and outcomes of disabled beneficiaries, including those beneficiaries who use employment services such as the Ticket to Work, Partnership Plus, and Work Incentives Planning and Assistance programs. We completed an independent 10-year evaluation of the Ticket to Work (TTW) program in 2013, which produced seven reports. All reports are publically available at http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/research.htm#Ticket.

Overall, the TTW evaluation found that beneficiaries who use the program generally like it, and the program has increased the use of return to work services. In addition, those beneficiaries who participate in TTW have better outcomes than those who return to work without the help of SSA-financed employment services. However, we also found that the increase in service use and better outcomes by participants has not translated into net increases in the rate of benefit suspension or termination for work or an increase in the average number of months spent in suspension or termination for work. This finding suggests that TTW has primarily extended the types of services that were available under the previous program where services were offered only through State vocational rehabilitation agencies. To summarize, more beneficiaries are getting these services now, but the success rate has not measurably changed.

Since 2013, we have transitioned to evaluating TTW and other employment support programs through internal research, funding collaborative and external research through our Retirement and Disability Research Consortium, and other grant programs. We also provide public use administrative data on disability and employment through our public use Disability Analysis File, and National Beneficiary Survey file. Both of these files and their documentation are available through data.gov and our website at https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/research.htm. Our research has produced more than 60 papers, reports, statistical abstracts, and published articles on a broad range of return-to-work topics since 2015. We highlight two recent studies on the effectiveness of our employment support programs below.

A February 2017 article in the *Social Security Bulletin*, "Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance Beneficiaries with Intellectual Disability" described beneficiaries with intellectual disability (ID) and compared them to those without ID. The authors found those with ID are more likely to be interested in work, to use employment services, and to be working, but they also earn significantly less than other disability program beneficiaries. Their relatively low earnings, combined with low benefits, contribute to a higher overall rate of poverty particularly among those who receive only disability insurance benefits.

A November 2018 article in the *Social Security Bulletin*, "Social Security Administration Payments to State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies for Beneficiaries Who Work: Evidence from Linked Administrative Data" examined the extent to which DI and SSI beneficiaries who receive VR services from State VR Agencies go on to earn at a level high enough to forgo disability benefits. The analysis found that the cumulative value of cash benefits foregone due to work exceeded the cumulative value of VR payments more than tenfold, though it could not say what portion of the difference is due specifically to VR services.

Federal Information Security Modernization Act Report (Annually)

The Federal Information Security Modernization Act Report tells Congress whether our overall information technology security and privacy programs and practices comply with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014. In FY 2020, we made substantial improvements and progress in securing applications, expanding our use of the cloud, managing our assets and vulnerabilities, strengthening our network protections, leveraging automation to build effective incident response capabilities, improving our security training, expanding secure remote access in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of our cybersecurity program.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Risk Management Assessment (Quarterly)

OMB and DHS generate the DHS Risk Management Assessment as required by Executive Order 13800 and outlined in OMB Memoranda M-17-25 to provide an assessment of risk for each agency based on information submitted by agencies for the Federal Information Security Management Act CIO metrics, which leverage the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. The report is sorted into Security Domains, and organized by the NIST Framework functions of Identify, Protect and Detect, Respond, and Recover with a risk rating of High Risk, At Risk, or Managing Risk. The risk levels per Security Domain are then used to calculate the overall risk level for the NIST function area. We have improved several areas from "At Risk" to "Managing Risk," and we maintain an assessment of "Managing Risk" overall on the report.

Pre-Effectuation Review of Disability Determinations (Annually)

The Pre-Effectuation Review of Disability Determinations assesses the accuracy of DDS initial and reconsideration adult disability allowances as required in the Social Security Act. In FY 2018, we reviewed 340,666 DDS benefit allowances and 5,284 DDS continuances of medical continuing disability reviews. We estimate these reviews will result in a combined present value of net lifetime benefit reductions of about $487 million in benefits to the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and Disability Insurance Trust Fund. We also estimate a present value of net Federal lifetime savings of $56 million in SSI payments, $227 million to the Medicare trust funds, and a net increase of $9 million in the Federal share of Medicaid payments.

Safeguard Security Report (Annually)

We provide examples of our policies and procedures to demonstrate how we safeguard personally identifiable information and Federal tax information. We submit this report to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on an annual basis.

Safeguard Review (Triennially)

The Safeguard Review evaluates the use of Federal tax information and the measures we employ to protect this information. This review is an onsite evaluation completed in collaboration with the IRS.

The IRS completed its full Safeguard Review of our agency in the summer of 2016. The review concluded with a closing conference in September 2016 and produced findings pertaining to both physical and IT security. We received one critical finding from the review and addressed it in June 2017. We report the findings from this review on a semi-annual basis through submission of a corrective action plan to the IRS. The IRS Safeguard Review (Triennial), scheduled for June 2020, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, we are working with our IRS stakeholders to develop an approach for reviewing and testing the agency systems.

Strategic Goal 3 – Ensure Stewardship

Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds (Annually)

The Board of Trustees reports annually to Congress on the financial and actuarial status of the two Social Security trust funds. At the end of 2019, the OASDI program was providing benefit payments to about 64 million people, 48 million retired workers and dependents of retired workers, 6 million survivors of deceased workers, and 10 million disabled workers and dependents of disabled workers. During the year, an estimated 178 million people had earnings covered by Social Security and paid payroll taxes on those earnings. The total cost of the program in 2019 was $1,059 billion. Total income was $1,062 billion, which consisted of $981 billion in non-interest income and $81 billion in interest earnings.

Annual Report to Congress on Medical Continuing Disability Reviews (Annually)

A legislatively mandated report provides summary information on medical continuing disability reviews (CDR) conducted for a completed fiscal year. The report includes actuarial estimates of the net Federal lifetime benefit reductions in OASDI, SSI, Medicare, and Medicaid benefits resulting from the reviews conducted during that fiscal year. In FY 2016, we conducted 853,754 periodic CDRs. Based on these reviews, we made initial determinations to cease benefits in 214,011 cases. Our Office of the Chief Actuary estimates that, after all appeals, we will cease

paying benefits to 147,343 individuals and their eligible dependents. We estimate the present value of net future Federal benefit reductions to be $14.4 billion.

Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program (Annually)

We report annually to the President and Congress on the status of the SSI program and provide 25-year projections of program participation and costs. In January 2020, 7.9 million individuals received monthly SSI payments averaging $559, a decrease of 80,000 recipients from the 8 million recipients with an average payment of $549 in January 2019. By 2044, the end of the 25-year projection period, we estimate that the SSI recipient population will reach 8.4 million. The projected growth in the SSI program over the 25-year period is largely due to the overall growth in the U.S. population, though the growth in the SSI recipient population is projected to be somewhat slower than the growth in the U.S. population.

Enumeration Accuracy Report (Triennially)

We report the accuracy of original Social Security numbers (SSN) assigned during the fiscal year. In FY 2018, the enumeration accuracy rate was 100 percent. The enumeration accuracy rate for FY 2015 was also 100 percent. The next scheduled assessment is in FY 2021.

Evaluation of the Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation Predictive Model (Annually)

We continue to evaluate the results of a predictive model used to score work issue CDR cases to ensure that we prioritize and work first cases most likely to result in overpayments. Our tracking and evaluation each year indicate the need for improved coordination with the processing centers in reviewing cases based on the scores' priority order. While our Enforcement Operation issues various types of alerts, we showed progress on the challenging task of separating enforcement alert events that do not result in work reviews. Our prime objective for the future is aligning the Continuing Disability Review Enforcement Operation predictive model with the quarterly and monthly earning work review process.

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (Annually)

We assess employee perspectives of organizational performance across several major human capital areas: recruitment, development, performance culture, leadership, job satisfaction, and personal work experiences. The 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results indicate both strengths and opportunities for improvement. The most positive employee perceptions center on willingness to exert extra effort, knowledge of work importance, searching for ways to improve job performance, knowledge of how jobs support agency goals and priorities, and supervisor communication about performance. Opportunities for improvement include questions that reference the linkage between performance and pay raises, dealing with poor performers, performance-based recognition, merit-based promotions, and ability to get a better job within the organization. The FY 2020 FEVS results will be available in spring 2021.

Human Capital Evaluations (Annually)

We monitor and evaluate how well human capital policies and programs support our mission accomplishments. This evaluation is a critical step in assessing organizational performance and determining how to improve processes. Our Human Capital Evaluation System (HCES) also helps leadership assess the impact of human capital strategies designed to achieve agency goals.

The HCES is a mechanism to monitor and evaluate outcomes related to human capital management strategies, policies, programs, and activities. We leverage business intelligence, analytics, and data-based decision-making structures to support our evaluation strategy by tracking agency progress on all milestones and performance measures through our Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP), HRStat reviews, and Independent Audit Program, as well as an annual Human Capital Review with the Office of Personnel Management.

Our HCOP describes plans for executing the human capital elements stated within our Agency Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Report, and supports OMB's Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce, as described in Memorandum M-17-22. To ensure our sustained success at both the agency and component levels, we developed mature structures and processes to support executive oversight and accountability and detailed plans for implementation of our key focus areas and corresponding initiatives. We also established an ongoing evaluation process to identify challenges and make course corrections that ensured we achieved our target outcomes.

HRStat is a metric-based, analytical monitoring process that tracks human capital priorities and supports leadership data-driven decision making, as related to agency goals and performance outcome improvement strategies.

Independent Audit Program – We conduct a comprehensive Human Capital Framework (HCF) audit of all Servicing Personnel Offices (i.e., currently 10 regions [including consolidated/closed SPOs], Office of Central Operations, and headquarters) on a cyclical basis so that each site is reviewed at least every 5 years. We conduct audits virtually or onsite, if necessary. We conducted one audit in FY 2020 and postponed one audit due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Every audit includes a review of more than 50 agency- and OPM-defined outcomes across the following human resources functions: training, performance management, labor-management/employee relations, civil rights and equal opportunity, staffing (including delegated examining unit hiring and merit promotion), workers' compensation, security and suitability, work-life, and classification. We found no significant issues while conducting the FY 2020 audit. The overall number of required corrective actions is in alignment with other regions' Human Capital Framework audits. We consider the types of required corrective action, such as merit system violations, illegal appointments, and pay-setting errors, to be of greater concern than the number of errors, documentation errors, or processing timeliness.

Management Directive 715 Report (Annually)

We provide the status of our efforts to establish and maintain effective equal employment affirmation actions programs under Section 717 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and effective affirmation action programs under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

In 2020, the Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity (OCREO) improved or continued efforts toward achieving the status as a Model Equal Employment Opportunity agency. These initiatives include:

1) Continued efforts to identify and eliminate potential barriers to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) by completing analysis of detected triggers that indicate potential barriers. OCREO also worked with stakeholders in the various components to evaluate potential barriers, and provided updates to the Barrier Analysis Action Plan devised to identify and mitigate potential barriers.

2) Continued to provide senior executives with a comprehensive analysis of their components' workforce demographics as part of the "State of the Component Briefings" issued in the second quarter of FY 2020. The analysis included workforce trends and identified areas in need of improvement based on low representational rates, as compared to the civilian labor force.

3) Revised Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) policy to increase management participation in ADR by requiring managers to get Deputy Commissioner-level concurrence to decline ADR. The ADR process is a tool to promote voluntary settlements early and throughout the EEO process, and to resolve workplace disputes in a positive and constructive manner at the lowest level. The ADR policy has ensured accountability of managers in the ADR process. As a result, we have yielded positive results with participation rates of managers increasing from 84.9 percent in FY 2019 to 87.9 percent in FY 2020.

4) Collaborated with Office of Labor-Management and Employee Relations (OLMER) on the Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation Act policy by conducting an independent review of complaints in any discrimination finding. The purpose of the independent review was to determine whether disciplinary action was recommended against named management officials. This review also included significant settlements. The independent review is ongoing and conducted on an *ad hoc* basis when OCREO receives either a finding from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or a settlement agreement. OCREO submits such findings and settlement agreements to OLMER for review, along with the Report of Investigation for the case. OLMER analyzes whether to recommend disciplinary action and returns its recommendation to the component to consider taking action.

5) Continued to utilize eFile, which allows employees to initiate EEO complaints and to view the status of their cases electronically. This automated tool also allows OCREO to monitor and track the usage of EEO representative time for complainants and union representatives.

Targeted Denial Review (Annually)

We assess the accuracy of initial and reconsideration disability denials made by the DDS. In FY 2020, we analyzed 36,786 cases and cited 1,766 decisional errors and 4,624 documentation errors. We returned 6,390 cases to the adjudicating components for correction –a return rate of 17.4 percent.

Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Stewardship Review (Annually)

Our Stewardship Review measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits. In FY 2019, the overpayment (O/P) accuracy rate was 99.80 percent, based on O/Ps totaling a projected $2 billion. Payment accuracy for underpayments (U/P) was 99.95 percent based on unpaid dollars projected at $534 million. In FY 2018, the O/P accuracy rate was 99.77 percent, and the U/P accuracy rate was 99.95 percent. While the U/P accuracy rate remained the same for FYs 2018 and 2019, the change in the O/P accuracy rate was not statistically significant.

Supplemental Security Income Stewardship Review (Annually)

The SSI Stewardship Review measures the accuracy of payments to persons receiving SSI benefits by reviewing all non-medical factors of eligibility and payment. In FY 2019, the O/P accuracy rate was 91.87 percent based on overpaid dollars totaling a projected $4.6 billion. This rate represents an increase of 0.1 percentage points from the FY 2018 O/P accuracy rate of 91.77 percent. This change is not statistically significant. The U/P accuracy rate was 98.72 percent based on underpaid dollars totaling a projected $724 million. This increase from the FY 2018 U/P accuracy rate of 98.52 percent is not statistically significant.

Supplemental Security Income Transaction Accuracy Review (Annually)

The SSI Transaction Accuracy Review looks at non-medical aspects of eligibility to evaluate the adjudicative accuracy of SSI initial claims, redeterminations, and limited issues to ensure compliance with operational policy. In FY 2019, the sample of 4,128 cases provided meaningful information about the quality of the non-medical aspects of SSI initial claims, redeterminations, and limited issue transactions. The national case accuracy rates for FY 2019, defined as the percentage of cases free of either an O/P or a U/P, are 90.4 percent for O/P and 94.0 percent for U/P. In FY 2018, these rates were 92.1 percent and 93.9 percent, respectively.[18]

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[18] We identified a sampling error after we published the FY 2018 Title XVI Transaction Accuracy Report. The increase in the number of FY 2018 STAR sample cases (6,997 to 7,615) and the slight increase in the overpayment case accuracy rate (92.0 percent to 92.1 percent) and underpayment case accuracy rate (93.8 percent to 93.9 percent) was due to a system error that resulted in the omission of one sample month in the FY 2018 results.

The change in the FY 2019 O/P case accuracy rate from that of FY 2018 is statistically significant, but the FY 2019 U/P case accuracy rate change from the FY 2018 rate is not statistically significant.

Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Transaction Accuracy Review (Triennially)

We review non-medical factors of eligibility to evaluate recently processed retirement, survivors, and disability insurance claims to ensure compliance with operational policy. For FY 2017, the overall OASDI O/P case accuracy was 98.9 percent, and the overall OASDI U/P case accuracy was 97.2 percent. The case accuracy rates indicate that approximately 4 out of every 100 claims were incorrectly paid—about 1 out of 100 cases had O/Ps, and about 3 out of 100 cases had U/Ps.

Appendix B:
How We Ensure Our Data Integrity

We are committed to providing consistent, reliable, and valid data. We have internal controls to ensure that our data are quantifiable, verifiable, and secure. Our internal systems and controls include:

- Audit trails;
- Integrity reviews;
- Separation of duties;
- Restricted access to sensitive data;
- Reviews at all levels of management; and
- Validation and verification in our System Development Life Cycles.

These same controls support the Commissioner's Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act Assurance Statement.

Data Integrity Systems and Controls

We gather performance data using automated management information and other workload measurement systems. We evaluate the data in terms of four quality dimensions:

- Accuracy – Measures how well data adheres to specification (e.g., definitions, rules, and policies);
- Consistency – Measures consistency in internal and external reporting of data;
- Completeness – Measures missing occurrences or attributions of the data; and
- Timeliness – Measures the currency of the data (i.e., data are up to date and reporting occurs on time).

We conduct quality evaluations based on established internal methodologies. As we introduce new performance measures, we perform a comprehensive data assessment using the four quality dimensions. From the assessment results, we establish a baseline. After establishing the baseline, we automate continuous monitoring to sustain high-quality data. Continuous monitoring allows us to follow data trends and proactively remediate potential issues.

In our data quality program, we also derive several accuracy and public satisfaction measures from surveys and work samples. These measures provide confidence levels of 95 percent or higher.

As part of our fiduciary responsibility to the public, we use an audit trail system (ATS) to protect our records and taxpayer funds from improper use. The ATS collects and maintains detailed information about our internal and public transactions. We store the data from programmatic and select Internet applications, so we can review transactions for fraud and abuse.

Audit of Our FY 2020 Financial Statements

The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 requires the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) or an independent external auditor that it selects to audit our financial statements. OIG selected Grant Thornton LLP to conduct the FY 2020 audit.

The auditor found we fairly presented the basic financial statements, in all material respects, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America for Federal entities. This finding marks the 27th consecutive year that we received an unmodified audit opinion. The auditor also found that our agency maintained, in all material respects, effective internal control over our financial reporting.

The audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The audit did not find instances of noncompliance with laws, regulations, or other materials tested.

Appendix C:
Summary of Key Management Officials' Responsibilities

Commissioner of Social Security (COSS) is a Senate-confirmed position. The COSS manages all agency programs and staff.

Deputy Commissioner of Social Security (DCOSS) is a Senate-confirmed position, authorized to act on behalf of the COSS. Also serves as the Chief Operating Officer, responsible for improving agency management and performance.

Chief Actuary (OCACT) plans and directs program actuarial estimates and analyses for our programs and for any proposed changes in programs and trust funds. OCACT provides technical and consultative services to the COSS, the Board of Trustees of the Social Security Trust Funds, Congress, and their respective staffs.

General Counsel (GC) advises the COSS, DCOSS, and all subordinate organizational components (except the Inspector General) on legal matters. GC also oversees the implementation of privacy protections and ensures that all privacy requirements are met serving as the Senior Agency Official for Privacy.

Inspector General (IG) is a Senate-confirmed position that promotes economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in administering our programs and operations, and prevents and detects fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

Deputy Commissioner for Analytics, Review, and Oversight (DCARO) oversees the review of program quality and effectiveness and makes recommendations for program improvement utilizing feedback from the adjudication of cases, predictive modeling, and other advanced data analysis techniques. DCARO also serves as the Chief Data Officer; coordinates the agency's anti-fraud initiatives; responds to the recommendations of external monitoring authorities; and serves as the accountable official for improper payments.

Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management (DCBFM) directs our comprehensive management programs including budget, financial policy, acquisition, grants, facilities and logistics management, and security and emergency preparedness. DCBFM also serves as the Chief Financial Officer; Performance Improvement Officer; the Program Management Improvement Officer; and the responsible official for Enterprise Risk Management and the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act.

Deputy Commissioner for Communications (DCCOMM) conducts our national public information and outreach programs and fosters the transparency of our operations.

Deputy Commissioner for Hearings Operations (DCHO) administers our nationwide hearings program in accordance with relevant Federal laws.

Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources (DCHR) administers our human resources programs, including training, human capital initiatives, personnel and employee relations, labor management, and civil rights and equal opportunity. DCHR also serves as the Chief Human Capital Officer and the senior accountable official on employee engagement initiatives.

Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs (DCLCA) develops and conducts our legislative program, serves as our liaison to Congress, and analyzes legislative and regulatory initiatives.

Deputy Commissioner for Operations (DCO) directs our network of field offices, National 800 Number teleservice centers, and processing centers. DCO also oversees the Chief Business Office and the State disability determination services.

Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy (DCRDP) advises the COSS on the major policy issues and is responsible for all activities in the areas of program policy planning, policy research and evaluation, statistical programs, and overall policy development, analysis, and implementation. DCRDP serves as liaison with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and leads our efforts to improve the clarity, tone, and readability of our notices. DCRDP also leads our efforts in implementing the Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018.

Deputy Commissioner for Systems (DCS) directs the strategic management of our systems and databases, which includes the development, validation, and implementation of new systems. DCS directs operational integration, strategic planning processes, and implementation of a systems configuration program. DCS is responsible for implementing the agency's five-year IT Modernization Plan. DCS also serves as the Chief Information Officer.