



Office of the Inspector General
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Audit Report

Customer Wait Times in the
Social Security Administration's
Field Offices and Card Centers

152307 May 2024



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 17, 2024

Refer to: 152307

To: Martin O'Malley
Commissioner

From: Gail S. Ennis *Gail S. Ennis*
Inspector General

Subject: Customer Wait Times in the Social Security Administration's Field Offices and Card Centers

The attached final report presents the results of the Office of Audit's review. The objectives were to observe customer wait times in select Social Security Administration field offices and Social Security Card Centers. In addition, we determined the (1) factors that may affect customer wait times and (2) steps SSA took to reduce wait times.

Please provide within 60 days a corrective action plan that addresses each recommendation. If you wish to discuss the final report, please call me or have your staff contact Michelle L. Anderson, Assistant Inspector General for Audit.

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Attachment

Customer Wait Times in the Social Security Administration's Field Offices and Card Centers

152307



May 2024

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objectives

Our objective was to observe customer wait times in select Social Security Administration (SSA) field offices (FO) and Social Security Card Centers (SSCC). In addition, we determined the (1) factors that may affect customer wait times and (2) steps SSA took to reduce wait times.

Background

SSA administers its programs and operations through a network of over 1,200 FOs that serve the public. FOs are SSA's primary point of face-to-face contact with the public.

On March 17, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SSA began limiting in-person services in FOs and requiring appointments for limited services. SSA redirected the majority of customers to online and telephone service channels.

On April 7, 2022, SSA restored in-person services in its FOs and SSCCs. Media outlets began reporting that some office visitors were waiting outside for several hours.

In February and March 2023, we visited 76 FOs and SSCCs. During these visits, we observed customer wait times and interviewed office management regarding best practices for reducing customer wait times. We also interviewed SSA staff to determine Agency initiatives to enhance the customer experience and reduce wait times.

Results

During our office visits, we observed the wait times of customers throughout their visit for services. For the 76 FOs and SSCCs we visited, we observed the average wait time for customers before check-in ranged from 5 to 12 minutes, depending on the method of check-in. The check-in method(s) used varied, based on management's discretion. Once checked in, customers waited an average of 32 to 45 minutes to receive services. We do not assert, and the reader should not infer, that our observations during our visits represent all SSA offices.

We noted five factors that may affect customer wait times: number of customers; the check-in process; staffing; appointments; and the availability of telephone and online services.

SSA has implemented, or is implementing, initiatives aimed at reducing customer wait times in its offices, including: mobile check-in, installing new and updated self-check-in kiosks, and the availability to upload documents remotely. While SSA has developed many initiatives, it has not developed processes to measure the effectiveness of reducing customer wait times in its offices.

SSA did not set goals specific to wait times for customers in the office or the time customers must wait for scheduled appointments. Without goals, we believe there is a risk of SSA customers experiencing prolonged wait times in receiving service when visiting offices or through scheduled appointments.

Recommendations

We recommend SSA:

1. Develop and/or enhance systems to capture data that measure the effectiveness of initiatives to reduce customer wait times.
2. Develop goals specific to wait times for customers in the office and time customers wait for scheduled appointments.

SSA agreed with Recommendation 1 and partially agreed with Recommendation 2.

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ABBREVIATIONS

OIG	Office of the Inspector General
CSR	Customer Service Record
FO	Field Office
FY	Fiscal Year
POMS	Program Operations Manual System
Pub. L. No.	Public Law Number
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSCC	Social Security Card Center
SSN	Social Security Number
VIPr	Visitor Intake Process Re-write

OBJECTIVES

Our objective was to observe customer wait times in select Social Security Administration (SSA) field offices (FO) and Social Security Card Centers (SSCC). In addition, we determined the (1) factors that may affect customer wait times and (2) steps SSA took to reduce wait times.

BACKGROUND

SSA administers its programs and operations through a network of over 1,200 FOs and 7 SSCCs in 10 regions that serve the public throughout the United States and its territories.¹ FOs and SSCCs are SSA's primary point of face-to-face contact with the public.²

On March 17, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SSA began limiting in-person services in FOs and SSCCs and requiring appointments for limited services. SSA redirected the majority of customers to its online and telephone service channels. SSA restricted in-person interviews to dire need situations, including, but not limited to:

- certain applications for original and replacement Social Security number (SSN) cards;³
- immediate payments; and
- certain situations to resolve erroneous deaths.

On April 7, 2022, SSA restored in-person services in its FOs and SSCCs, including those for people who do not have appointments. Once SSA re-opened for in-person services, media outlets began reporting that some customers were waiting several hours outside of office lobbies. In August 2022, SSA responded to the Committee on Ways and Means' letter regarding information on the steps it had taken to reduce wait times, how offices responded to extreme weather, and COVID-19 safety protocols.⁴

¹ SSCCs process enumeration services for a geographical area. Any applicant who resides within the geographical area served by an SSCC transacts all SSN business with the card center rather than a FO.

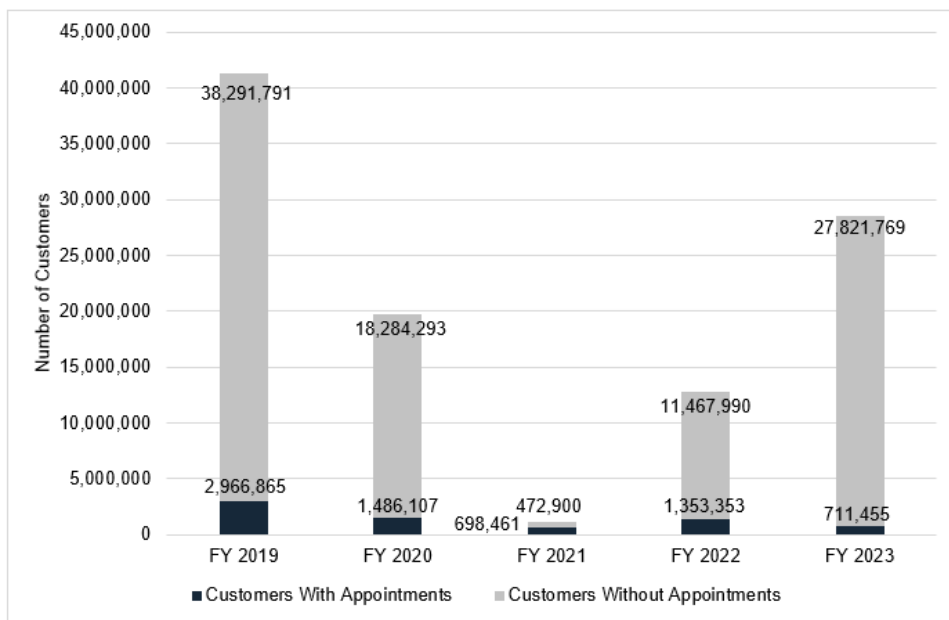
² SSA also serves its customers via mail, telephone, and the internet.

³ This included applications for individuals who were age 12 or older and applying for their first SSN card and those who needed to update or correct their SSN information to obtain income, resources, or medical care or coverage, or other services or benefits.

⁴ See Appendix B and Appendix C for the congressional letter and SSA's response, respectively.

Figure 1 shows the total number of in-office customers with and without appointments in Fiscal Years (FY) 2019 through 2023. Figure 2 shows the average wait time for customers with and without appointments, while Figure 3 shows the number of customers with wait times longer than 1 hour for FYs 2019 through 2023. In FY 2023, SSA’s data showed 11 percent of customers waited longer than 1 hour to be served.⁵

**Figure 1: Total In-office Customers with and Without In-office Appointments—
FYs 2019 Through 2023⁶**

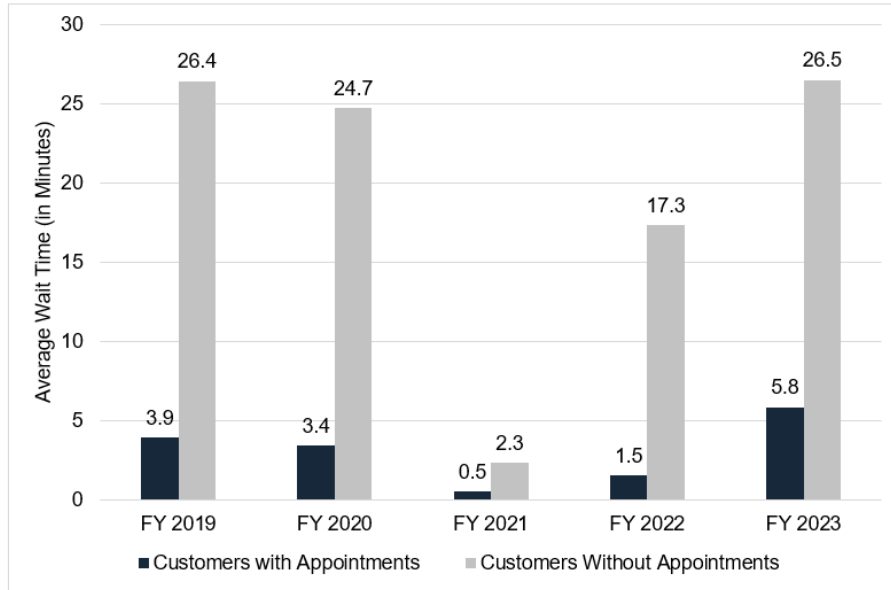


Note: Between March 2020 and April 2022, SSA provided limited in-person services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁵ We calculated the percentage by dividing total customers who waited over an hour by the total number of customers; see Figure 1 and Figure 3.

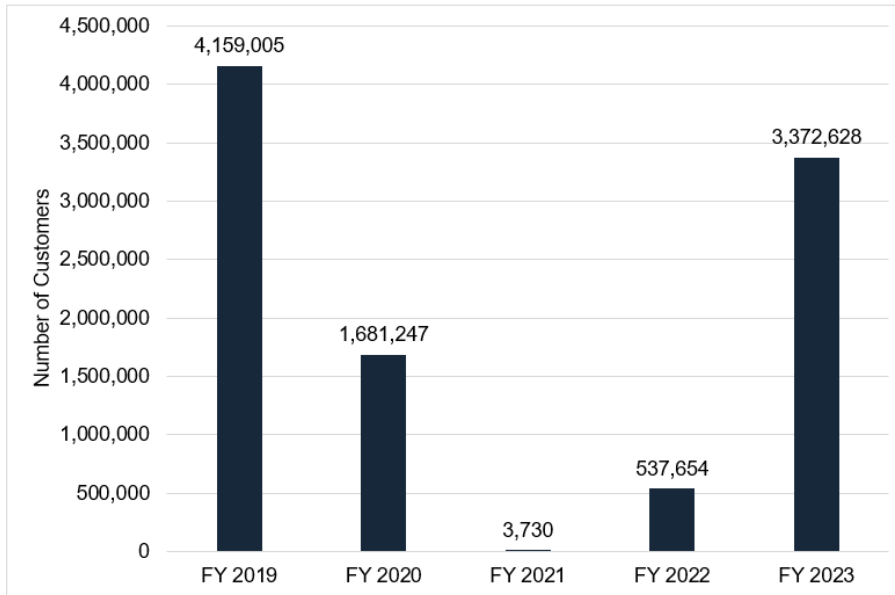
⁶ Source: SSA’s Customer Service Record (CSR) data. We did not audit and therefore do not express an opinion about the accuracy and completeness of these data.

Figure 2: Average Customer Wait Times—FYs 2019 Through 2023⁷



(Note: Between March 2020 and April 2022, SSA provided limited in-person services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Figure 3: Customers with Wait Times Longer than 1 Hour—FYs 2019 Through 2023⁸



Note: Between March 2020 and April 2022, SSA provided limited in-person services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁷ Source: SSA's CSR data. We did not audit, and therefore do not express an opinion about, the accuracy and completeness of these data.

⁸ Source: SSA's CSR data. We did not audit, and therefore do not express an opinion about, the accuracy and completeness of these data.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

In February and March 2023, we visited 76 FOs and SSCCs in SSA's 10 regions. We observed customer wait times and interviewed office management regarding best practices for reducing customer wait times. We also interviewed SSA staff to determine Agency initiatives to enhance the customer experience and reduce wait times. (See Appendix A for information on our scope and methodology.)

RESULTS OF REVIEW

During our office visits, we observed the wait times of customers throughout their visit for services. We noted five factors that may affect customer wait times: number of customers; the check-in process; staffing; appointments; and the availability of telephone and online services. SSA has implemented, or is implementing, many initiatives to reduced customer wait times in its offices, including: mobile check-in, installing new and updated self-check-in kiosks, and providing the ability to upload documents remotely.

Wait Times We Observed

During our visits to 76 offices, we interviewed 432 customers to determine the average time elapsed from the moment they arrived at the office to when SSA provided service. We observed customers at various points throughout the day. The check-in method(s) used in the offices varied based on management's discretion.

The average time the customers waited before being checked in ranged from 5 to 12 minutes, depending on the method of check-in. Once checked in, the customers we observed waited an average of 32 to 45 minutes to receive services; see Table 1.

Table 1: Average Wait Times for Customers We Observed During Our Visits⁹

Method of Check-In	Total Customers We Observed	Average Wait Time Before Being Checked In ¹⁰	Average Wait Time for Service After Being Checked In	Total Average Wait Time
Kiosk	285	7 minutes	32 minutes	39 minutes
Employee Assisted	44	12 minutes	41 minutes	53 minutes
Multiple Methods ¹¹	103	5 minutes	45 minutes	50 minutes

⁹ Of the customers we interviewed, approximately 6 percent had scheduled appointments.

¹⁰ We began tracking wait time when the office opened.

¹¹ Methods of check-in included batch ticketing (at office opening, SSA employees or guards pass out pre-printed Visitor Intake Process Re-write [VIPr] tickets to customers waiting in line), hybrid process with employee assisted check-in when the office first opened in the morning and kiosks used for the rest of the day, and mobile check-in.

We do not assert, and the reader should not infer, that our observations during our visits represent all SSA offices because we selected a portion of our offices based on non-random factors.¹²

Factors that May Affect Customer Wait Times

During our visits, we noted five factors that may affect customer wait times: number of customers; the check-in process; staffing; appointments; and availability of telephone and online services.

Number of Customers

SSA FOs and SSCCs generally open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 4:00 p.m. During our visits, we observed the number of customers waiting outside before the offices opened ranged from a low of 18 to a high of 150. Table 2 captures the office in each region with the highest number of customers waiting outside of the office, before office opening.

Table 2: Customers Waiting Outside During Office Visits

Region	Number of Offices We Visited	Highest Number of Customers Waiting Outside Before Office Opened ¹³	Highest Number of Customers Waiting Outside After Office Opened ¹⁴
Atlanta	11	100	10
Boston	5	30	0
Chicago	10	29	0
Dallas	7	119	0
Denver	5	25	5
Kansas City	5	24	0
New York	6	18	0
Philadelphia	7	46	15
San Francisco	8	106	82
Seattle	5	37	22
SSCCs ¹⁵	7	150	100

¹² Refer to Appendix A for more information about how we selected the offices we visited.

¹³ Some offices allow customers into their lobby before the official opening time.

¹⁴ This is based on our second observations during the visits and occurred within 2 hours of opening.

¹⁵ The SSCCs in New York state open at 7:00 a.m.

During our visits, most offices brought customers into their lobbies by 10:00 a.m.—1 hour after opening. However, the number of customers waiting outside the office to check in remained high at some offices.¹⁶ For example, in the San Francisco Region, 1 office had 82 customers waiting outside 1 hour after it opened, with an additional 45 customers waiting inside the lobby. On the day of our visit, this office continued to have customers waiting outside until 4:00 p.m. closing.¹⁷ This office had tents available to provide shelter for those waiting outside during adverse weather.

Check-in Process

SSA allows office managers to assess their office's needs and determine the best method to check customers in. Most customers who visit an FO or SSCC either use a self-check-in VIPr kiosk or visit a service window to be checked in by an SSA employee.¹⁸ The check-in process varies by office, but most customers we observed checked themselves in using the VIPr kiosk. During our 76 office visits, we observed the following during the offices' business hours:

- 50 offices were using kiosks as the only method of check-in;¹⁹
- 7 offices were using employee-assisted check-in; and
- 19 offices were using multiple methods to check-in customers.²⁰

SSA conducted a study in offices to compare self-check-in through the kiosk and the employee-assisted check-in. The Agency concluded employee-assisted check in primarily reduced visit times for small to medium FOs but did not reduce visit times for medium to large FOs.²¹

¹⁶ Customers remained outside because of the lobby's capacity limits.

¹⁷ Fifty-nine customers were waiting outside the office at 11:00 a.m., 47 at 12:00 p.m., 43 at 1:00 p.m., 31 at 2:00 p.m., and 20 at 3:00 p.m.

¹⁸ VIPr collects information about office visitors and appointments and provides management information for area, regional, and national reports. SSA measures wait time as follows: a visitor's wait time begins when they check into VIPr and does not include time waiting in line to get to the VIPr kiosk; the wait time ends when the field office employee calls the visitor for their first substantive interview.

¹⁹ Three offices had SSA employees assisting at the kiosks in the morning.

²⁰ Methods of check-in included batch ticketing (at office opening, SSA employees or guards pass out pre-printed VIPr tickets to customers waiting in line), hybrid process with employee assisted check-in when the office first opened in the morning and kiosks used for the rest of the day, and mobile check-in.

²¹ Small FOs have 11 or fewer interviewers, medium FOs have 12 to 21 interviewers, and large FOs have 22 or more interviewers.

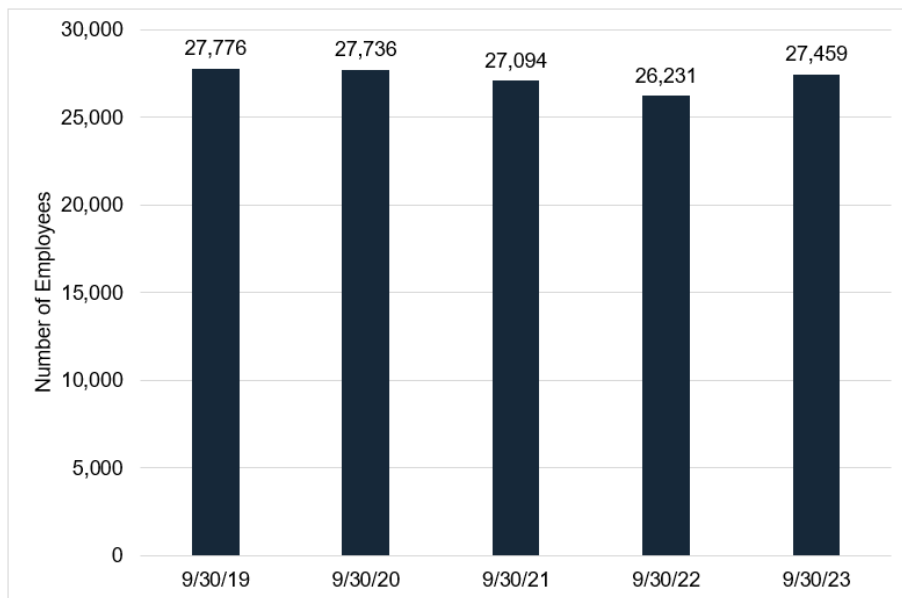
Per SSA, “. . . the evaluation also found [FOs] at the end of the business day, when volumes [of customers] are low and offices are expediting customer service, [FOs] naturally switch from Kiosk Self-check-in to Employee assisted check-in at the end of the business day, which indicates that [FOs] see Employee assisted check-in as the more expeditious check-in method.” In addition, per SSA, “. . . the employee assisted check-in method shortens customers’ visit times in [FOs] across the nation as compared to Kiosk self-check-ins . . . [however, the] Kiosk Self-check-in and Employee assisted check-in are primarily substitutes in the production of [FO] wait times as opposed to being complements, which means that the two check-in methods are replaceable with the other . . .”²²

Staffing

Number of Employees

SSA stated, in FY 2022, it experienced its lowest staffing levels in over 25 years.²³ Figure 4 shows the total number of FO and SSCC employees who were on duty at the end of FYs 2019 through 2023.²⁴

**Figure 4: Total Employees in FOs and SSCCs as of September 30—
Years 2019 Through 2023**



²² We did not evaluate SSA’s study and therefore do not express an opinion about the reasonableness of SSA’s conclusions.

²³ SSA, *Agency Financial Report Fiscal Year 2022*, p. 1 (November 2022).

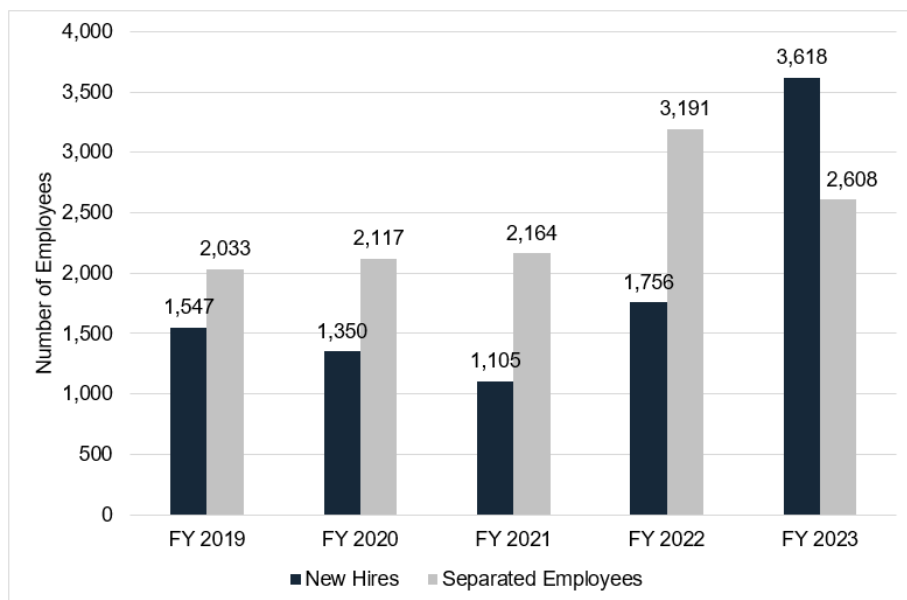
²⁴ Source: SSA’s Federal Personnel and Payroll System and transaction files data. We did not audit and therefore do not express an opinion on the accuracy and completeness of, these data. This includes only new and separated employees and does not include existing SSA employees who transferred into and out of FOs and SSCCs.

Although FO and SSCC total staffing numbers remained relatively consistent in FYs 2019 through 2023, as shown in Figure 4, it does not reflect employee attrition and the challenges for training new staff. SSA stated:

Staff attrition led to a loss of institutional knowledge across our agency, with significant impact among our mission-critical occupations (MCO). Further, the lack of knowledge transfer processes or practices limits our ability to mitigate the impact of the loss of seasoned employees on available technical expertise. Failure to retain and transfer institutional knowledge may result in increased staff turnover and further loss of knowledge, translating into higher costs and potential degradation of customer service.²⁵

Figure 5 shows the number of employees SSA hired and the number of employees who separated from the Agency in FYs 2019 through 2023.

Figure 5: Number of FO and SSCC New Hires and Separated Employees FYs 2019 Through 2023



During our interviews with office management, we asked, “. . . are there enough staff to support the number of customers coming into the office?” Approximately 70 percent of managers answered no. SSA curtailed additional anticipated hiring in June 2023 when the *Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023* was passed.²⁶ SSA decreased each of its components’ allocation of employees because it did not want to hire employees whose salaries future budgets may not support given that the *Act* limits non-Defense funding in FY 2024.

²⁵ SSA, *Human Capital Operating Plan Fiscal Years 2023-2026*, p. 32 (September 2023).

²⁶ Pub. L. No. 118-5, 137 Stat. 10 (2023).

According to SSA, it cannot offer its frontline employees some workplace flexibilities other agencies can, such as expanded remote work. Employees who separate from SSA reported they were leaving to take higher-paying jobs or because they felt overworked at SSA. SSA stated it is “. . . consistently unable to compete with the workplace flexibilities of other similar agencies (e.g., [the] Internal Revenue Service and [the Department of] Veterans Affairs) effectively due to our direct service structure and the pay and flexibilities of the private sector.”²⁷

While SSA hired many new employees, it reported it still had challenges recruiting and retaining employees because its positions are complex and require more training compared to similar positions in private industry. SSA has taken steps to supplement its self-directed online training through virtual and in-person training opportunities that bring new employees together through virtual classrooms and in-person gatherings. Senior regional managers reported these sessions have led to higher levels of engagement and a better sense of inclusion among the new employees. In December 2023, we started an audit to review how SSA determines the staffing levels it needs in its public-facing offices, which is still ongoing at the time of publication.

Portable and Non-portable Work

FO employees perform numerous tasks, such as, but not limited to: conducting telephone and in-person interviews for Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance claims and Supplemental Security Income applications; developing cases for required evidence; and processing SSN applications and post-entitlement actions, including redeterminations and wage reports. Some work—such as conducting telephone interviews—is portable and can be performed remotely. Other work, such as opening mail and interviewing in-person visitors, is not portable and requires that employees be present in the office.

From March 2020 to April 2022, SSA FO and SSCC employees primarily performed their duties from their homes. When SSA reopened its offices to provide in-person services in April 2022, the Agency permitted FO and SSCC employees to continue teleworking up to 2 days per week. While teleworking, employees conduct telephone appointments and address other portable workloads. According to SSA, in FY 2019, FO staff completed approximately 2 million telephone appointments, growing to 4.3 million in FY 2023.

Some managers informed us recalling teleworking employees to provide services to in-office customers would disrupt the telephone appointment schedule and create a backlog for other workloads. If an employee is physically working in the office, they may not be available to serve in-office customers because they must serve customers who previously scheduled telephone appointments.

For example, an FO employee working from home has telephone appointments scheduled throughout the day to take disability claims. Between appointments, the employee works on other portable assignments, such as inputting claims and workloads offices received through the mail and employees uploaded into SSA’s workload management system. If the employee was in the office, they would need to conduct their scheduled telephone appointments or cancel/postpone the appointments to assist with in-office customers.

²⁷ SSA, *Human Capital Operating Plan Fiscal Years 2023-2026*, p. 16 (September 2023).

Appointments

SSA encourages customers to use the Agency’s online and telephone services before they schedule in-office appointments. Customers can make appointments to file initial Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance claims and Supplemental Security Income applications. Generally, these appointments are completed through telephone interviews. In-office appointments for initial claims are generally reserved for people who face barriers.²⁸

SSA stated, “. . .we are employing new strategies to serve people visiting our offices as efficiently as possible. We continue to encourage people to first go online for services and call us, including to schedule an appointment, which prevents individuals from waiting in long lines outside offices, reduces office wait times, and allows us to better serve everyone who requires in-person service. . . .” We asked in-office customers if they had an appointment and if not, did they use online or telephone services before coming into the office. Some customer responses included:

- “[I] tried to call, but was told [I] could not make an appointment and to just come in.”
- “[I] called but they said they didn’t take an appointment for [my] service.”

We inquired with SSA about the reason employees did not schedule appointments for customers when they handled their calls. SSA stated, “appointments are not always available in some offices, as field office calendars are often booked out the full 40 business days that the system allows. Giving individuals an option to go into the field office without an appointment will likely result in their business being handled on the same day.”²⁹

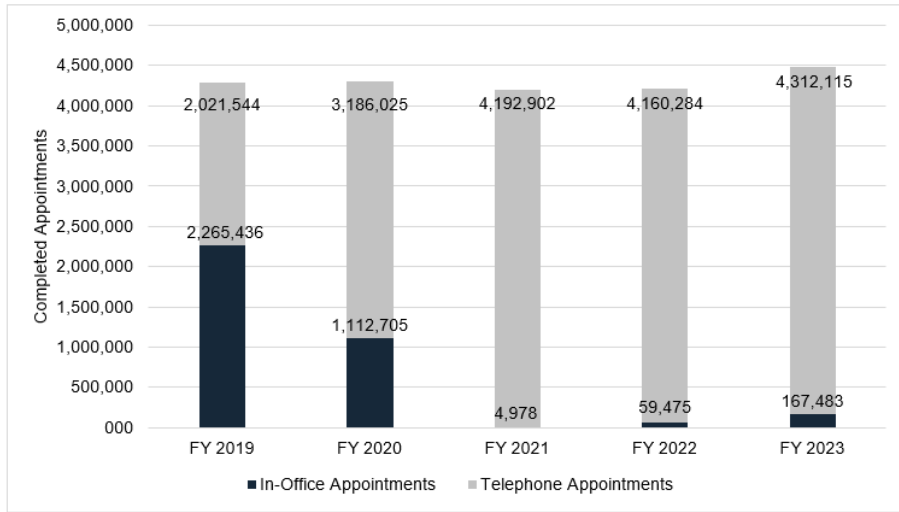
Figure 6 shows the number of completed in-office and telephone appointments. Figure 7 shows the average elapsed days between request for an appointment and appointment dates for FYs 2019 through 2023.³⁰

²⁸ People facing barriers may include customers who do not have telephone or internet access, have language barriers, have alleged homelessness, have alleged disability and is a child or diagnosed with a mental illness, or require assistance filling out forms.

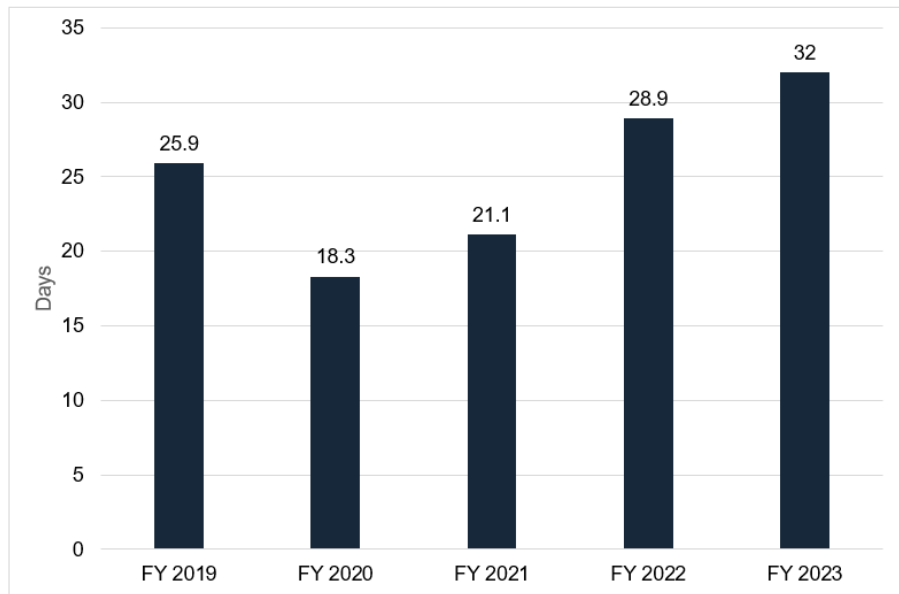
²⁹ In addition, SSA stated appointment calendars—on average as of August 2023—were 21 days out for FOs, meaning if a customer calls to request an appointment, generally the appointment will not be scheduled for at least 21 days. SSA also stated the average elapsed days between a request for appointment and the appointment was 32 days for FY 2023.

³⁰ Source: SSA’s CSR data. We did not audit, and therefore do not express an opinion on the accuracy and completeness of, these data. For purposes of this report, “telephone appointments” does not refer to any business conducted by the representatives answering SSA’s 800 number, where staff are available during certain hours of the day to answer inquiries from SSA beneficiaries and the general public. The 800-number also has an automated telephone service component available 24 hours a day that provides limited services and informational messages on certain subjects.

**Figure 6: Completed In-office and Telephone Appointments for FOs and SSCCs—
FYs 2019 to 2023**



**Figure 7: Average Elapsed Days Between Request for Appointment and Appointment—
FYs 2019 to 2023³¹**



³¹ Source: SSA's CSR data. We did not audit, and therefore do not express an opinion on the accuracy and completeness of, these data. From the data, we could not determine whether a customer selected SSA's first available appointment.

SSA employees in teleservice centers, workload support units, and FOs use the enhanced Leads and Appointment System to schedule appointments. If an offices' appointment calendar is full, SSA employees will note the customer's request for an appointment as the protective filing date.^{32, 33}

During our visits, multiple customers came into the offices to schedule appointments for later dates. For example, on February 28, 2023, we interviewed a customer who called the Agency's national 800-number and was told to come into the office for their services. Once the customer was seen by an SSA employee, they were given a telephone appointment for April 25, 2023 to complete services. The customer did not receive their requested services for nearly 2 months.

We noted inconsistencies between offices when they scheduled appointments for customers. For example, some offices scheduled their own in-person appointments as opposed to using the 800-number to schedule them. Other offices, such as SSCCs, do not offer in-person appointments and are walk-in only. We also noted available appointments in enhanced Leads and Appointment System can be up to 40 days from the date the appointment was requested. Successfully scheduling an appointment affects the number of customers coming into the office as well as office wait times.

Availability of Telephone and Online Services

Customers can transact business with SSA via the Agency's telephone and online services. When customers are unable or unwilling to obtain services online, over the telephone or through the mail, they must visit SSA offices. This results in an increase in the number of customers visiting the offices and potentially increases customer wait times.

We interviewed 460 customers and asked whether they attempted to complete their services using SSA's website, and/or calling the National 800-number or local field office.³⁴ Of the 460 customers, 150 (33 percent) responded they attempted to use these services before they visited the offices. Some of the customers who visited the offices experienced issues accessing online services or were told they had to go into the office to complete their services. Office managers told us—depending on the office population, resource availability, and awareness of online options—they believed from 5 to 90 percent of in-office customers could have completed their services online instead of going into an office.³⁵

We asked office managers what the customers' reasoning was for coming to the office instead of going online or using the telephone services. The main reasons provided were convenience, wanting to talk face-to-face with an employee, and a lack of awareness of online services. Most issues occur when a customer tries to call to get information from the 800-number and are told they cannot schedule an appointment or the wait time to speak to someone on the phone is too long for the customer to wait, forcing them to visit an office.

³² A protective filing date is the date a customer first contacts SSA about filing for benefits.

³³ SSA, *POMS*, GN 00204.010 (July 31, 2023).

³⁴ 28 customers were removed from our wait time calculation in Table 1 due to insufficient data collected. For example, some customers checked in but left the office before receiving service.

³⁵ Some examples of available online services include applying for retirement, requesting a replacement Social Security card, and printing a benefit verification letter.

We found inconsistencies in whether office telephone numbers were available to customers through SSA's office locator feature on its website.³⁶ The majority of offices we visited listed SSA's national 800 number in the locator; however, approximately 20 percent listed the office's direct business number.

SSA estimates 65 percent of its customers are unaware of available online services. SSA is working to reduce this percentage through search engine marketing, public service announcements, radio advertisements, television advertisements, media articles, blog posts, and social media.

Agency Actions Aimed at Reducing Wait Times

In general, the majority of customers we interviewed did not have an appointment. To quickly get customers into the lobby and checked-in for services, SSA implemented and encouraged its employees to use the "express, schedule and refer" model. The model categorizes customers by the types of services they are requesting, as follows:

- **Express:** Interviews lasting no longer than 10 minutes will be completed at first contact.
- **Schedule:** Initial claims and actions that require longer interviews will be scheduled as appointments.
- **Refer:** People facing barriers, or time-sensitive actions, will be referred to a technician for assistance. Actions that directly impact benefits should be offered same-day or future-day priority referrals.

SSA stated it has taken the following steps to improve the check-in process:

- As of May 2022, all FOs can allow customers to use their mobile devices to check in to their scheduled appointments. Per SSA, as of May 2022, SSA improved the "mobile appointment check-in" process by reducing the number of check-in screens and eliminating the need for a visitor to enter their personally identifiable information. This service is available for appointments manually scheduled in the VIPr system or scheduled via the Enterprise Scheduling System.
- SSA began installing updated 508-compliant self-check-in kiosks in March 2023 and will continue through early 2024.
- As of July 5, 2023, all offices can allow all customers, whether they have an appointment or not, to check-in via mobile devices through Quick Response Codes on signs in the offices. SSA employees informed us, ". . . we don't expect Mobile Check-in [to] have any direct connection to reducing overall customer wait times, nor do we have any way to measure or correlate the two." As of February 24, 2024, Mobile Check-In Express increased communication by advising the number of visitors ahead of them, sending a "heads up" message when the visitor is close to being called.

³⁶ SSA, *Social Security Office Locator*, secure.ssa.gov (November 2, 2023).

- SSA is working toward “. . . designing a new prototype report that will accurately measure the amount of time spent checking in, the total amount of time spent waiting to be called to an interview, the total amount of time spent being interviewed by a technician, and the sum average ‘experience’ at the field office.” SSA does not have a timeline for implementing this initiative.

SSA stated it has taken the following actions to provide additional online services and decrease the number of in-office customers.

- As of February 2024, customers in 17 states could request replacement SSN cards online because of last name changes due to marriage.³⁷
- In July 2023, SSA implemented the Upload Documents initiative to offices in the Boston region and a small group of pilot offices across the United States.^{38, 39} With the Upload Documents initiative, a technician can send the customer an email containing a link to upload the required documentation to the Upload Documents portal. SSA plans to expand this initiative nationwide by March 2024.
- As of December 2023, SSA released the Enterprise Scheduling System for enumeration appointments to all states. Customers, teleservice center representatives, FO personnel, and SSCC personnel use the system to schedule, reschedule, modify, or cancel appointments. Per SSA, “the Enterprise Scheduling System communicates with [VIPr] and supports delivery of electronic messages to visitors including appointment reminders and check-in link.”
- SSA is using video conferencing equipment to deliver services remotely to people who may not have access to local offices, telephone, or the internet. Per SSA, it has over 900 video conferencing units in both SSA and non-SSA sites that allow shared workloads between offices, allow for customers visiting non-SSA sites (for example, Tribal and community service locations) to complete services with SSA, and provide customers in remote areas with additional access to SSA services.

³⁷ The 17 states are: Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

³⁸ The pilot offices were in the Boston region along with an additional 52 offices nationwide.

³⁹ Executive Order 14058, *Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government*, requires that SSA develop a mobile-accessible, online process so any individual applying for or receiving services from SSA can upload forms, documentation, evidence, or correspondence associated with their transaction without service-specific tools or traveling to an FO. To comply with the Executive Order, SSA created the Upload Documents application, which allows customers to upload and submit certain forms, documentation, and evidence to SSA online from their personal, desktop, and mobile devices.

Per SSA, its “. . . [FY 2024] Budget invests in our frontline staff so that we provide timely help to people who need our assistance. The Budget also invests in [information technology] modernization to provide convenient digital and automated services so that many of our customers do not need to visit a[n] [FO], as well as provide our employees user-friendly systems and tools to perform their work. We are improving [customer experience] in our [FOs] by providing options that will make visits to our field offices easier, such as an enhanced mobile check-in application, expanding enumeration self-scheduling, and exploring additional self-scheduling options.”⁴⁰

While SSA has developed many ongoing initiatives, it has not developed processes to measure the effectiveness of reducing customer wait times in its offices; therefore, we were not able to conclude whether initiatives were effective in reducing customer wait times or improving the customer experience. We encourage SSA to continue implementing initiatives to reduce customer wait times and improving the customer service experience.

CONCLUSION

One of SSA’s strategic goals is to optimize the experience of customers.⁴¹ SSA plans to do this by identifying and addressing barriers to accessing services, expanding digital services, and building a customer-focused organization. However, SSA has not set goals specific to wait times for customers in the office or the time customers must wait for scheduled appointments. Without goals, we believe there is a risk that SSA customers will experience prolonged wait times—when visiting offices or through scheduled appointments—before receiving service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend SSA:

1. Develop and/or enhance systems to capture data that measure the effectiveness of initiatives to reduce customer wait times.
2. Develop goals specific to wait times for customers in the office and time customers wait for scheduled appointments.

⁴⁰ SSA, *Justification of Estimate for Appropriations Committees Fiscal Year 2024*, p. 25 (March 2023).

⁴¹ SSA, *Agency Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2022-2026*, pp. 9 through 14 (March 2022).

AGENCY COMMENTS AND THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL RESPONSE

SSA agreed with Recommendation 1 and partially agreed with Recommendation 2. SSA stated, “[q]uality customer service is a top priority for the agency and [it will] monitor wait time data and address problem areas as needed. [SSA is] implementing initiatives, such as video as a service, mobile check-in, and upload documents, to improve [its] customer service, including reducing wait times.” See Appendix D for SSA’s comments.⁴²

We continue to believe SSA should develop goals specific to wait times for customers in the office and time customers wait for scheduled appointments to better assist SSA in managing wait times.



Michelle L. Anderson
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

⁴² We provided a draft of this report to SSA on March 7, 2024 and requested the Agency provide comments no later than April 8, 2024. SSA provided their response on April 23, 2024. SSA requested the extension as it “[required] more time to finalize [its] response.”

APPENDICES

Appendix A – SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our objectives, we:

- reviewed applicable information from Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Program Operations Manual System;
- visited 69 field offices and 7 card centers;
 - We selected the offices based on: (1) SSA’s provided listing of offices that had at least 40 people waiting outside at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (see Appendix C); (2) offices selected as part of another audit;¹ and (3) a random sample of offices based on data from SSA’s Visitor Intake Process Re-write (VIPr) system for the period April 7 through October 3, 2022. To optimize our office selections, we added four field offices that had geographic proximity to other selected offices. We conducted all visits during regular business hours with no days of the week excluded.
- interviewed members of management and customers from the 69 field offices and 7 card centers;
- observed the updated self-check-in kiosk; and
- met with SSA employees to determine initiatives in place to enhance the customer experience and reduce wait times.

The principal entity audited was the Office of Operations. We conducted our audit from December 2022 through November 2023, including interviews and visits to offices throughout the continental United States.

We assessed the significance of internal controls necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. This included an assessment of the five internal controls components, including control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring. In addition, we reviewed the principles of internal controls as associated with the audit objective. We identified the following components and principles as significant to the audit objective.

- Component 1: Control Environment
 - Principle 2: Exercise oversight responsibility
 - Principle 3: Establish structure, responsibility, and authority
- Component 2: Risk Assessment
 - Principle 9: Analyze and respond to change

¹ SSA, OIG, *Follow-up: The Social Security Administration’s Implementation of Mail Procedures*, 042312 (January 2024).

- Component 4: Information and Communications
 - Principle 14: Communicate internally
 - Principle 15: Communicate externally
- Component 5: Monitoring
 - Principle 16: Perform monitoring activities

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

We determined the reliability of the Agency's VIPr data by tracing a statistically random sample of data to source documents. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Appendix B – CONGRESSIONAL LETTER

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

August 16, 2022

The Honorable Kilolo Kijakazi
Acting Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Acting Commissioner Kijakazi:

We write to urge the Social Security Administration (SSA) to ensure that visitors to SSA offices are served effectively and safely, and are not waiting in line outside in the summer heat in many areas of the country.

We appreciate the efforts SSA has taken to accept in-person visits and reopen field offices to the public in April 2022. After two years of field offices being closed to most visitors, many people are in urgent need of in-person service. However, due to COVID-19 safety precautions, the capacity in air-conditioned waiting areas and at service windows has been reduced, and when offices reach capacity, visitors line up outside.

Although most SSA field offices can assist visitors, in some locations people have been standing outside in the heat for hours at a time, without the guarantee of getting their needs met.¹ News reports have highlighted how, in high-demand areas, many people, some of whom are elderly or have a disabling condition, have had to wait more than six hours in near 100-degree weather to get help, and in some circumstances, people have had to come back multiple days to get the service they need.² At one SSA office in Texas, an individual fainted outside while waiting for hours in the heat.³ In Florida, some people slept outside the night before to secure a spot in line in hopes of obtaining an appointment the following day.⁴ We appreciate that SSA has taken steps

¹ Abrahams, Tom, *People wait outside Social Security offices in near-record heat* (June 13, 2022), <https://abc13.com/social-security-administration-offices-near-record-heat-houston-long-lines/11955620/>.

² Canales, Jesse and Mills, Ashleigh, *Long waits continue at Orlando Social Security office* (July 6, 2022), <https://www.mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2022/07/05/dozens-wait-in-long-lines-at-orlando-social-security-facility>.

³ Puente, Claudia and Mendoza, Kamryn, *Many wait hours in sweltering heat outside Lubbock Social Security Administration building* (June 23, 2022), <https://www.everythinglubbock.com/news/many-wait-for-hours-in-sweltering-heat-outside-of-social-security-administration-building/>.

⁴ McCray, Q and Brieskorn, Katlyn, *Long line returns to Orlando Social Security office* (July 7, 2022), <https://www.wftv.com/news/local/dozens-line-up-outside-orlando-social-security-office-again/XWUD6EXJCFZBANKXKFBND03M/>.

Acting Commissioner Kijakazi
August 16, 2022
Page 2

to improve waiting conditions at some offices, such as providing canopies and access to restrooms and water fountains, but it is clear that more must be done.

We strongly urge SSA to take additional action to address the safety needs of individuals who are seeking field office services. We respectfully request your response to the following by no later than August 30, 2022:

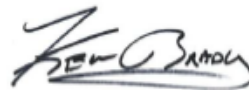
- 1) What steps is SSA taking to address the immediate safety needs of individuals who are waiting in dangerous environmental conditions? Specifically:
 - a) What steps is SSA taking to reduce the wait times for individuals who are seeking in-person service?
 - b) What steps is SSA taking to ensure that individuals are not waiting outside without shelter in extreme weather?
- 2) What guidance should we provide to our constituents who are having trouble accessing SSA's services?
- 3) How many and what offices have had members of the public waiting outside for more than one hour at a heat index at or above 90 degrees since reopening to the general public (April 2022)?
- 4) Please provide SSA's current field office COVID-19 safety policy and protocols.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent situation. If you have any questions, please contact Social Security Subcommittee Majority Staff Director Kathryn Olson at (202) 225-3625 and Minority Chief Social Security Counsel Shaun K. Freiman at (202) 225-4021. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Richard E. Neal
Chair
Committee on Ways and Means



Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means

Appendix C – RESPONSE TO CONGRESSIONAL LETTER



SOCIAL SECURITY

The Commissioner

August 30, 2022

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Committee Chair Neal:

Thank you for your August 16, 2022 letter regarding visitors waiting for service outside Social Security field offices. I share your concerns. We have taken steps to improve service to people waiting outside our offices, which is often caused by physical distancing.

Local offices are working hard to help people who need our services. Enclosed we provide responses to your specific questions including the variety of steps we have taken to balance safety and service. We are updating our physical distancing policy for the public, which we expect will significantly address the concerns you raise. We will let you know as soon as that change is in place.

We encourage the use of our online and telephone services when possible, which saves people from having to visit an office while also allowing our in-person staff to meet the needs of people who must receive service in person, including people who face barriers to accessing other service channels.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have further questions, please contact me. Your staff may contact Tom Klouda, our Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs, at (202) 358-6030. I am providing a similar response to Ranking Member Kevin Brady.

Sincerely,

Kilolo Kijakazi, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Acting Commissioner

Enclosures

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BALTIMORE, MD 21235-0001

1) What steps is SSA taking to address the immediate safety needs of individuals who are waiting in dangerous environmental conditions? Specifically:

a) What steps is SSA taking to reduce the wait times for individuals who are seeking in-person service?

We are committed to serving our visitors as quickly and efficiently as possible. We are using various strategies to reduce in-person wait times, particularly in our busiest offices. For example, we are:

- Triaging customers who can be referred for a quick express interview or for a same-day or future appointment, depending on office availability;
- Ensuring people waiting in line have the necessary information and documentation;
- Providing a drop box to drop off documents and evidence at many offices;
- Assigning some workloads to offices with less walk-in traffic, so staff in our busier offices can serve more people in person;
- Assigning agency volunteers to some of our busier offices;
- Rehiring retired employees to assist with office needs;
- Suspending telework for some office employees, so an office can help more people in person instead of answering calls remotely; and
- Increasing overtime for busier offices.

b) What steps is SSA taking to ensure that individuals are not waiting outside without shelter in extreme weather?

For those offices with visitors who need to wait outside, we are providing access to our bathrooms and water fountains. When possible, we are adding outdoor canopies and fans.

Additionally, we are reconfiguring our waiting areas to allow more people to enter the air-conditioned office. We are expanding the use of mobile check-in for customers with appointments and notifying them on their cell phones when we are ready to serve them, allowing them to remain in their vehicles or nearby facilities.

2) What guidance should we provide to our constituents who are having trouble accessing SSA's services?

We greatly appreciate you sharing the following guidance with your constituents.

Most Social Security services do not require a visit to an office. People can apply for benefits and much more online and over the phone. Throughout the pandemic, millions of people have successfully used our secure and convenient online services and received help by phone. People who have access to the internet should first try our online services before calling us or visiting an office. For a complete list of online services see www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices/. This blog post at <https://blog.ssa.gov/we-remain-committed-to-serving-you/> provides a summary of helpful information and links.

Enclosure 1 - Page 2

Please help us spread the word that while people often need to know their Social Security number, they do not always need a physical card. We encourage people to get a card only if they really need it. Most people can request a replacement card online at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber/.

3) How many and what offices have had members of the public waiting outside for more than one hour at a heat index at or above 90 degrees since reopening to the general public (April 2022)?

We do not have wait times for people standing in line because our systems measure waiting times from the point of check-in. However, since reinstating walk-in service in April 2022, onsite employees have identified numbers for offices with lines greater than 40 people outside at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. These weekly data reveal a very low percentage of our more than 1,200 field offices experienced lines of 40 or more visitors. To date, 216 separate offices had multiple occurrences of 40 people waiting at 9 a.m. However, the numbers are much lower at 3 p.m. Specifically, 37 offices had multiple occurrences, indicating that most offices have been able to effectively balance safety and service considerations. For the week ending August 19th, 87 offices had 255 occurrences at 9 a.m. while 4 offices had 7 occurrences at 3 p.m. For more detail, see Enclosure 2.

4) Please provide SSA's current field office COVID-19 safety policy and protocols.

Our Workplace Safety Plan 2.0 is available here: [Workplace-Safety-Plan-2.0.pdf \(ssa.gov\)](#).

Enclosure 2

Sites with Over 40 People Waiting Outside at 9 AM	
Site	Number of occurrences Apr 2022-Aug 2022
OOG - ORLANDO SSSC - FL	94
OOL - TWIN CITIES SSSC - MN	94
036 - Worcester - MA	6
059 - Lancaster - CA	11
062 - Chatsworth - CA	8
064 - Watts - CA	17
093 - Lakewood - CO	16
136 - Patchogue - NY	2
150 - Flushing - NY	1
151 - Freeport - NY	6
182 - Hackensack - NJ	11
190 - Bellevue - WA	34
191 - Kent - WA	12
248 - Walnut Creek -	1
249 - Anaheim - CA	10
251 - Riverside - CA	31
260 - South Broward - FL	87
261 - Perrine - FL	94
262 - Hialeah - FL	93
264 - Allapattah - FL	67
267 - Wilmington - DE	1
318 - Fairfax - VA	35
320 - Charlotte - NC	41
322 - Raleigh - NC	12
366 - Ann Arbor - MI	1
383 - Richmond - CA	1
411 - Cincinnati North - OH	1
436 - Chula Vista - CA	45
491 - Waukegan - IL	2
510 - Chicago-Near NW - IL	1
532 - Mount Prospect - IL	35
562 - Norwalk - CA	1
566 - Memphis - TN	1
619 - Marietta - GA	5
620 - Gwinnett - GA	92
622 - Birmingham OT - AL	1
624 - Mobile - AL	1
656 - Tampa - FL	40
661 - West Palm Beach - FL	92
667 - Sarasota - FL	1
669 - Miami North - FL	87
674 - Ocala - FL	6
677 - St Paul - MN	1
687 - Beaverton - OR	8

690 - Des Moines - IA	1
722 - North Broward - FL	12
723 - Miami South - FL	94
738 - Springfield - MO	26
769 - Wichita - KS	6
783 - Oklacity - OK	4
784 - Tulsa - OK	76
813 - Austin - TX	92
814 - Dallas North - TX	75
815 - San Antonio Central - TX	66
816 - Houston Southwest - TX	94
817 - El Paso - TX	92
821 - Fortworth - TX	37
827 - Lubbock - TX	8
834 - Odessa - TX	48
838 - Temple - TX	13
841 - Mcallen - TX	31
850 - Pasadena - TX	94
852 - San Antonio NW - TX	43
853 - Dallas Oak Cliff - TX	41
855 - Houston Northwest - TX	94
856 - Houston Northeast - TX	92
857 - Houston Southeast - TX	55
863 - Las Cruces - NM	7
873 - Mid Cities - TX	90
887 - Colorado Springs - CO	15
900 - Salt Lake City Utah - UT	1
906 - Hemet - CA	21
907 - Phoenix North - AZ	4
908 - Tucson - AZ	8
913 - Phoenix Downtown - AZ	85
915 - Spokane - WA	4
916 - Seattle Metro - WA	1
917 - Tacoma - WA	5
922 - Everett - WA	2
931 - San Marcos - CA	2
943 - West Covina - CA	1
945 - Reno - NV	47
946 - Las Vegas - NV	94
949 - Carrollwood - FL	94
952 - Fresno - CA	7
954 - San Diego - CA	2
958 - Long Beach - CA	1
959 - San Bernardino - CA	28
962 - Stockton - CA	1
963 - Bakersfield - CA	7
965 - Glendale - CA	1

968 - Hollywood - CA	1
970 - L.A. Westwood - CA	1
971 - Inglewood - CA	3
972 - Santa Ana - CA	1
975 - Panorama City - CA	3
981 - Pomona Valley - CA	1
ADO - Henderson - NV	92
A39 - Manassas - VA	37
A70 - Ori West - LA	1
A72 - Angleton - TX	1
A74 - Conroe - TX	42
A76 - Mckinney - TX	55
B58 - Mission Viejo - CA	15
B67 - Oxnard - CA	1
C07 - Greenbelt - MD	24
C18 - Naples - FL	46
C19 - Ft. Lauderdale W - FL	38
C24 - Little River - FL	46
C29 - Little Havana - FL	93
D24 - Aurora - CO	18
D44 - Wilshire Center - CA	33
D49 - North Las Vegas - NV	90
D51 - Puyallup - WA	32
E08 - Southeast Fresno - CA	1
E24 - El Paso Downtown - TX	27
E28 - North Sacramento - CA	11
E35 - Fort Worth South - TX	11
E45 - Georgetown - TX	84
E77 - Roseville - CA	2
253 - University Village - CA	1
655 - Jacksonville South - FL	76
858 - Albuquerque - NM	16
983 - Torrance - CA	10
E64 - Dallas Pleasant Grove - TX	40
109 - Ny Downtown - NY	1
177 - Clifton - NJ	3
198 - Toa Alta - PR	2
380 - San Patricio - PR	1
914 - Glendale - AZ	10
929 - Mesa - AZ	15
966 - Huntington Park - CA	9
B69 - Fontana - CA	13
272 - Ponce - PR	21
281 - Caguas - PR	2
499 - Chicago North - IL	1
665 - Ft. Lauderdale East - FL	20
889 - Louisville - CO	1

137 - Brooklyn New Utrecht - NY	9
C43 - Farmington - MI	1
279 - Mayaguez - PR	11
978 - Modesto - CA	6
A31 - Carolina - PR	4
439 - Lexington - KY	1
670 - Fort Myers - FL	43
168 - Guam - GU	1
937 - Medford - OR	1
B73 - Moreno Valley - CA	16
880 - San Antonio South - TX	17
385 - San Jose East - CA	11
294 - Alexandria - VA	39
D38 - Campbell - CA	1
045 - Malden - MA	3
792 - Moore - OK	17
B89 - Manati - PR	38
803 - Baton Rouge - LA	8
187 - New Brunswick - NJ	10
476 - Ontario - CA	4
825 - Corpus Christi - TX	12
A73 - Denton - TX	14
A87 - Victorville - CA	2
330 - Fayetteville - NC	5
660 - Pensacola - FL	1
C27 - Fairhope - AL	1
694 - Ottumwa - IA	4
828 - League City - TX	3
347 - Grand Rapids - MI	4
919 - Yakima - WA	8
725 - Omaha - NE	1
D36 - Garden Grove - CA	12
824 - Brownsville - TX	1
A33 - Rockville - MD	37
282 - Silver Spring - MD	2
280 - Arecibo - PR	9
442 - FlorenceKY - KY	1
997 - Anchorage - AK	1
B56 - Virginia Beach - VA	1
B60 - Fremont - CA	4
256 - Port St. Lucie - FL	22
089 - Torrington - CT	1
270 - DC Downtown - DC	2
117 - Ny Uptown - NY	3
IIA - Mission - TX	1
287 - Norfolk - VA	1
323 - Asheville - NC	2

563 - Bakersfield East Hills - CA	1
709 - New Port Richie - FL	1
A16 - Kissimmee - FL	1
A80 - Burbank - CA	1
122 - Gloversville - NY	1
163 - Riverhead - NY	2
D63 - Columbus North - OH	1
C65 - Waterville - ME	1
167 - Kapolei - HI	1
985 - El Centro - CA	14
266 - East Hillsborough - FL	4
583 - ColumbiaSC - SC	13
657 - Orlando - FL	10
940 - Portland-East O - OR	4
C41 - Indianapolis Northeast - IN	3
SSCC-MAN HATTAN	1
350 - Pontiac - MI	2
257 - Clearwater - FL	2
621 - DecaturGA - GA	1
801 - Shreveport - LA	1
203 - Reading - PA	1
C63 - Burien - WA	1
A43 - Winter Haven - FL	1
527 - Camp Springs - MD	1
844 - Eagle Pass - TX	1
B47 - Cleburne - TX	1
B63 - Antioch - CA	1
325 - Greensboro - NC	8
E29 - West Sacramento - CA	3
173 - Paterson - NJ	1
271 - San Juan - PR	1
	216
	4461

Sites with Over 40 People Waiting Outside at 3 PM	
Site	Number of occurrences Apr 2022-Aug 2022
00G - ORLANDO SSCC - FL	40
00L - TWIN CITIES SSCC - MN	23
00X - PHILADELPHIA SSCC - PA	2
109 - Ny Downtown - NY	1
120 - Jamaica - NY	1
191 - Kent - WA	1
249 - Anaheim - CA	1
260 - South Broward - FL	13
261 - Perrine - FL	33
262 - Hialeah - FL	12
294 - Alexandria - VA	1
318 - Fairfax - VA	2
620 - Gwinnett - GA	1
655 - Jacksonville South - FL	7
661 - West Palm Beach - FL	2
665 - Ft. Lauderdale East - FL	1
669 - Miami North - FL	21
709 - New Port Richie - FL	1
723 - Miami South - FL	26
782 - SSCC-Brooklyn - NY	8
816 - Houston Southwest - TX	31
817 - El Paso - TX	3
834 - Odessa - TX	2
850 - Pasadena - TX	2
853 - Dallas Oak Cliff - TX	1
855 - Houston Northwest - TX	27
856 - Houston Northeast - TX	2
857 - Houston Southeast - TX	27
931 - San Marcos - CA	1
946 - Las Vegas - NV	3
959 - San Bernardino - CA	1
A74 - Conroe - TX	1
C29 - Little Havana - FL	37
D24 - Aurora - CO	2
D44 - Wilshire Center - CA	1
E45 - Georgetown - TX	1
SSCC-MAN HATTAN	2

37

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Appendix D – AGENCY COMMENTS




SOCIAL SECURITY

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 23, 2024

Refer To: TQA-1

To: Gail S. Ennis
Inspector General

From: Dustin Brown 
Acting Chief of Staff

Subject: Office of the Inspector General Draft Report, “Customer Wait Times in the Social Security Administration’s Field Offices and Card Centers” (152307) – INFORMATION

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft report.

We agree with recommendation 1.

We partially agree with recommendation 2. Quality customer service is a top priority for the agency and we monitor wait time data and address problem areas as needed. We are implementing initiatives, such as video as a service, mobile check-in, and upload documents, to improve our customer service, including reducing wait times.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance. You may direct staff inquiries to Trae Sommer at (410) 965-9102.



Mission:

The Social Security Office of the Inspector General (OIG) serves the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations.

Report:

Social Security-related scams and Social Security fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, at oig.ssa.gov/report.

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