



Press Release

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Report: Employees Did not Accurately Process 38 Percent of Critical Payments Issued in Fiscal Year 2023

A new audit by the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General (SSA OIG) found that SSA accurately processed about 44,000 critical payments issued in Fiscal Year 2023 but did not accurately process about 27,000—making over 28,000 errors when they processed the payments.

SSA initiates a critical payment when a beneficiary or representative payee notifies SSA of a critical case or special situation, such as when regular monthly benefits are not being paid, additional benefits are due, or a beneficiary reports not receiving a monthly benefit. These situations include cases of dire need, court orders, legislative mandates, and preliminary and expedited payments.

Based on their review of a random sample of critical payments SSA issued in Fiscal Year 2023, auditors estimate employees made about 8,100 errors resulted in SSA improperly paying beneficiaries \$12 million because employees did not accurately adjust beneficiary records. Auditors also estimate SSA issued approximately 10,500 beneficiaries a *Form SSA-1099, Social Security Benefit Statement*, with a benefit total that was over- or understated by about \$14 million because employees did not manually adjust records for replacement checks.

SSA OIG found that stronger internal controls, particularly over manual inputs, could help reduce errors and improve the accuracy of beneficiaries' records.

"We identified opportunities for SSA to strengthen its policies, procedures, and oversight to improve accuracy in payment processing," said Michelle L. Anderson, Assistant Inspector General for Audit as First Assistant. "Effective systems and clear guidance are important to ensuring payments are processed correctly."

SSA OIG made seven recommendations to improve guidance and strengthen system controls to prevent future errors. SSA agreed to implement all seven SSA OIG recommendations and plans to take corrective action.

Read the full report [here](#).

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