



# Semiannual Report to Congress

---

APRIL 1, 2021 — SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

Social Security Administration  
Office of the Inspector General







I am pleased to present this Semiannual Report to Congress summarizing the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) activities from April 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021.

During this reporting period, as the nation continued to face the challenges of the ongoing global novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19) pandemic, we focused on our core mission to serve the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations. Notwithstanding that nearly our entire workforce is working remotely due to the pandemic, we continued to produce meaningful work and increased our productivity this reporting period. We accomplished this by auditing and investigating fraud, waste, mismanagement, and abuse in SSA's programs and operations, both related and unrelated to the pandemic.

Our Office of Audit (OA) continued analyzing and reporting on systemic weaknesses in SSA's programs and operations, and recommending program, operations, and management improvements. OA completed more audit reports during this reporting period than the previous reporting period. We issued 30 audit reports, including audits on payments made to deceased beneficiaries, resources owned by Supplemental Security Income recipients, and systems limitations that prevent SSA from identifying and collecting overpayments. These 30 reports included two interim reports related to SSA's work in serving customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, covering visitor safety, enumeration, and mail processing. We engaged with and continue to engage with SSA management on addressing many of the issues described in these reports, and we plan to issue final reports in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. These accomplishments during these trying times demonstrate OA's contributions to our important mission.

Our Office of Investigations (OI) continued conducting and coordinating investigations of fraud and misconduct related to SSA programs and operations, as well as SSA employees who violate the public trust. Our investigators' commitment revealed itself in our results. We outpaced our investigative efforts from the previous reporting period in terms of indictments and informations, criminal convictions and civil actions, administrative actions, referrals to the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ), and referrals to state and local prosecutors. We also continued to commit resources to enforcement of Social Security-related phone scams, initiated new complex fraud investigations under our Major Case Unit, and increased our public integrity reviews of SSA under our Office of Special Reviews and Professional Responsibility.

Given that Social Security number (SSN) misuse, including identity theft, is a common thread in many pandemic-related fraud cases, the OIG plays an important role in combating pandemic-related fraud. During this reporting period, OI continued collaborating with federal, state, and local law enforcement entities on over 55 joint investigations related to misappropriations of federal pandemic relief funds. These include SSN misuse investigations and COVID-19-related fraud schemes pertaining to unemployment insurance benefits and business loans. Throughout the reporting period, we actively participated in 26 COVID-19 fraud working groups, which improve collaboration, information sharing, and analysis, through a government-wide approach to protecting critical taxpayer dollars.

To increase our impact, we are investing in our employees. We developed enhanced training and developmental programs to support individual employee growth and increase operational efficiencies. We are also working to address short and longer-term workforce recruitment, retention, and promotional needs through the development of a strategic workforce plan. Engaged employees are at the heart of every healthy, high functioning organization, and we are committed to addressing the challenges facing our workforce.

We remain committed to serving the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations and driving meaningful change to protect taxpayer dollars. We appreciate your interest in our work and welcome your feedback. Please contact us if you have any questions about this report or other aspects of our oversight of SSA. Thank you for sharing in our commitment to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Social Security programs that are so vital to millions of Americans.



**Gail S. Ennis**  
*Inspector General*

<b>Message from the Inspector General .....</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Appendix I</b>	<i>Audit Reports Issued Prior to the Reporting Period for Which No Management Decision Had Been Made by the End of This Reporting Period.....</i>	<b>47</b>
<b>Glossary of Acronyms .....</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Appendix J</b>	<i>Significant Management Decisions That Were Revised .....</i>	<b>48</b>
<b>High-Impact Initiatives.....</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Appendix K</b>	<i>Draft Audit Reports for Which Agency Comments Were Not Provided Within 60 Days .....</i>	<b>49</b>
<b>Investigations Overview.....</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Appendix L</b>	<i>Closed Audits and Investigations Not Available to the Public.....</i>	<b>50</b>
<b>Audit Overview .....</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Appendix M</b>	<i>Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996 Compliance .....</i>	<b>51</b>
<b>Legal Overview.....</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Appendix N</b>	<i>Instances of Agency Interference or Refusal to Provide Information .....</i>	<b>52</b>
<b>Appendix A-P.....</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Appendix O</b>	<i>Peer Reviews .....</i>	<b>53</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>		<b>Appendix P</b>	<i>Investigations Involving Senior Government Employees Where Allegations of Misconduct Were Substantiated .....</i>	<b>54</b>
<i>Reporting Requirements.....</i>	<b>26</b>			
<b>Appendix B</b>				
<i>Reports with Questioned Costs .....</i>	<b>28</b>			
<b>Appendix C</b>				
<i>Reports with Funds Put to Better Use .....</i>	<b>29</b>			
<b>Appendix D</b>				
<i>Audit Reports Issued.....</i>	<b>30</b>			
<b>Appendix E</b>				
<i>Significant Management Decision with Which the Inspector General Disagrees...</i>	<b>33</b>			
<b>Appendix F</b>				
<i>Significant Monetary Recommendations from Prior Fiscal Years for Which Corrective Actions Have Not Been Completed .....</i>	<b>34</b>			
<b>Appendix G</b>				
<i>Significant Non-Monetary Recommendations from Prior Fiscal Years for Which Corrective Actions Have Not Been Completed .....</i>	<b>38</b>			
<b>Appendix H</b>				
<i>Open Recommendations and Reports with Unimplemented Recommendations..</i>	<b>41</b>			





<b>AG</b>	Attorney General
<b>CDI</b>	Cooperative Disability Investigations
<b>CMP</b>	civil monetary penalty
<b>COVID-19</b>	novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2
<b>DDS</b>	disability determination services
<b>DI</b>	Disability Insurance
<b>DoD</b>	U.S. Department of Defense
<b>DoJ</b>	U.S. Department of Justice
<b>FY</b>	fiscal year
<b>OA</b>	Office of Audit
<b>OASDI</b>	Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance
<b>OI</b>	Office of Investigations
<b>OIG</b>	Office of the Inspector General
<b>PPP</b>	Paycheck Protection Program
<b>RSI</b>	Retirement and Survivors Insurance
<b>SSA</b>	U.S. Social Security Administration
<b>SSI</b>	Supplemental Security Income
<b>SSN</b>	Social Security number
<b>VoIP</b>	Voice over Internet Protocol

# Office of Investigations



**\$106,203,218**

**Monetary Accomplishments**

This number includes court-ordered restitution, recoveries, settlements, judgments, fines, civil monetary penalties (CMP), and estimated savings resulting from our investigations.



**727**

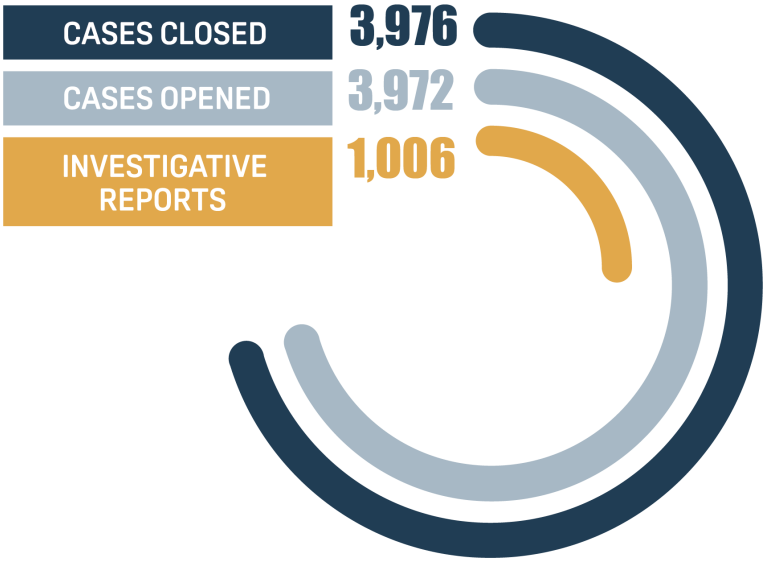
**Administrative Actions**

Administrative actions include benefits terminated, claims denied, administrative recoveries, reduction in benefits, removal of representative payee, benefits suspended, and personnel actions.



**663**

**Subjects with Administrative Actions**



In October 2020, we changed how we categorized our open cases to include both full investigations, and preliminary investigations where we took some investigative action but lacked enough information to determine whether the alleged act likely occurred. This approach more accurately reflects our investigative efforts and is consistent with investigative case structure codified in the Attorney General's Guidelines for Domestic Federal Bureau of Investigations Operations. The implementation of this new methodology was undertaken in FY 2021 in connection with the rollout of a new case management system.

The number of investigative reports includes summary reports of investigative findings issued externally by the OI, including prosecution referrals, reports of employee investigations, reports of special investigations, and reports of findings by a Cooperative Disability Investigations (CDI) unit.

**36****Program Civil Actions**

Program Civil Actions include civil judgments, settlements, and agreements, including CMPs. This number includes the 34 CMPs cases referenced in the Legal section below.

**575****Total Subpoenas Issued**

This number includes subpoenas reviewed by our OA and our Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General.

**113****Persons Referred to State and Local Prosecutors for Criminal Prosecution**

This number reflects the total number of individual subjects or entities referred to state and local prosecuting authorities where the investigative findings were not subject to pre-established prosecution declination guidelines. These persons may also have been referred to DoJ.

**339****Indictments/Criminal Informations**

This number includes indictment or criminal information filings per subject. It does not include subsequent or superseding indictments and/or criminal informations for the same subject.

**270,020****Total Allegations Received**

This number includes **102,278** regular allegations and **167,742** imposter-scam related allegations.

**353****Criminal Convictions****494****Persons Referred to the U.S. Department of Justice for Criminal Prosecution**

This number includes individual subjects or entities referred to DoJ where the investigative findings were not subject to pre-established prosecution declination guidelines.

**166****Task Forces/Working Groups**

During the reporting period we were members of **166** task forces/working groups. This includes **26** related to COVID-19 fraud.

**293****Safety and Threats: 293 Total Allegations**

During the reporting period, the OIG received **293 allegations** related to employee safety issues, of which **123** involved assault or harassment, over **125** were associated with threats against SSA employees or buildings, and **45** involved other safety threats. OI **opened 68 cases** and **closed 62 cases** nationwide related to employee safety.



## Office of Audit



**\$620,576,453**  
Questioned Costs

**30**

### Reports Issued

This number includes two interim reports related to SSA's work during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**\$1,309,679,830**  
Funds Put to Better Use

**156**

### Unimplemented Recommendations

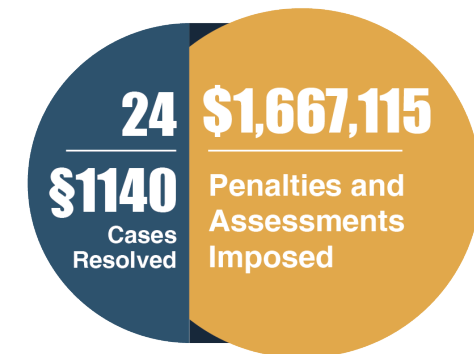
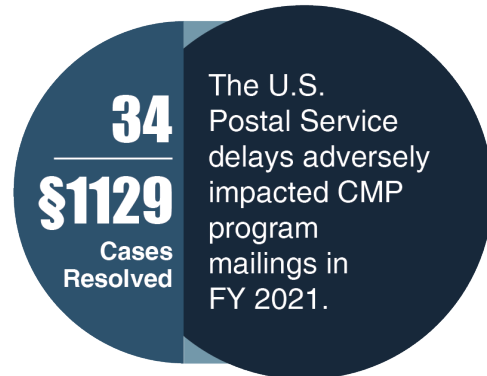
To provide SSA with adequate time to implement our recommendations, we only report unimplemented recommendations 6 months after providing them to the Agency. The FY 2021 figure includes audits issued through March 31, 2021. Numbers are comparative to prior years' fall semiannual reports. SSA reported that the COVID-19 pandemic affected implementation of **27** open recommendations; however, OIG has not done analysis to confirm that is the case for these recommendations.



**\$6,920,745,946**  
Dollar Value of Aggregate Potential Cost Savings

This figure reflects the dollar value of aggregate potential cost savings for all reports with unimplemented monetary recommendations through March 31, 2021.

## Legal



## Anti-Scam



**167,742**  
Imposter Scam Allegations Received



**1**  
Public Report of Social Security-Related Imposter Scams

Since October 2019, SSA OIG has shared information on our efforts to combat Social Security-related imposter scams with the House Committee on Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Finance; and Senate Special Committee on Aging. We began publicly releasing the quarterly *Congressional Status Update* to raise public awareness about the scammers and their tactics.

# High-Impact Initiatives

---

- 1. COVID-19 Pandemic Response Efforts
- 2. Social Security-Related Imposter Scams
- 3. Cooperative Disability Investigations
- 4. Facilitator Fraud Investigations
- 5. Improper Payments



The following are summaries of five OIG initiatives that had a significant impact on the integrity, effectiveness, and efficiency of the SSA programs and operations during this reporting period.

## 1. COVID-19 Pandemic Response Efforts

The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially transformed federal agency business processes and customer service. Since March 17, 2020, SSA has maintained telephone and online services. SSA's 1,237 field offices have been open to the public for limited in-person services by appointment only since that time. Since then, the Agency has relied primarily on its customers to submit paperwork by mail to permit the Agency to continue processing customer requests. We conducted oversight examining how the Agency responded to these challenges. We also investigated allegations of fraud tied to COVID-19 pandemic relief programs, funds, and related scams, and assisted other federal agencies with their investigations.

The OIG plays an important role in addressing COVID-19-related fraud throughout the federal government. SSN misuse, including identity theft, is a common thread running through a substantial number of the pandemic investigative cases across the nation. To address this pressing issue, during this reporting period we participated in 26 COVID-19 fraud-related workgroups, and collaborated with other federal law enforcement entities on joint investigations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including unemployment insurance fraud and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) fraud. We participate in the National COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement

Taskforce, led by the Deputy Attorney General of the United States. We are also working with other federal, state, and local agencies to pursue SSN misuse and other crimes committed in relation to PPP fraud. Below, we highlight a PPP case with updates this reporting period.

### ■ **Florida Man Sentenced to 5 Years Imprisonment Followed by 5 Years Supervised Release for a \$24 Million Paycheck Protection Program Fraud Scheme**

We worked jointly with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation OIG, U.S. Secret Service-Miami, Small Business Administration OIG, Federal Bureau of Investigation-Miami Field Office, U.S. Postal Service OIG, and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration to investigate a PPP fraud case. In September 2021, a Florida man was sentenced to 5 years of incarceration and 5 years of supervised release for his role in a major fraud scheme. According to court records, from about January 2017 through August 2020, the man and his co-conspirators manufactured synthetic identities, combining the personal information of real people (such as stolen SSNs) with fraudulent information, such as false names and dates of birth. They used the identities to fraudulently open credit cards and bank accounts for those identities. They also registered shell companies associated with various service industries such as yachting, technology, and landscaping, then used the fake identities and shell companies to fraudulently apply for and receive \$24 million in PPP funding. For additional information about this case, see the DoJ [press release](#).



## 2. Social Security-Related Imposter Scams

In a Social Security-related imposter scam, a caller claims to be an SSA or other government employee. The caller may ask for personal information, demand payment, or make threats. These scams primarily use the telephone, but some scams also use email, text messages, or U.S. mail. During this reporting period, the perpetrator of a major Social Security-related imposter scam was sentenced, as described below.

- ### South Carolina Couple Pleaded Guilty to Laundering More Than \$500,000 in a Foreign-Based Call Center Imposter Scam

In our [Spring 2021 Semiannual Report to Congress](#), we highlighted a joint investigation with the U.S. Secret Service, and several federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to investigate a South Carolina woman, Chaitali Dave, and her husband, Mehulkumar Manubhai Patel. The couple worked with a foreign-based call center to perpetrate Social Security-related and technology support scams. As part of the Social Security-related scam, the India-based callers posed as federal agents to mislead victims to believe their SSNs were involved in crimes. The callers threatened arrest and loss of assets if the victims did not send money. The callers directed the victims to mail money to a network of individuals. The couple, working with the network, laundered the funds. After pleading guilty, a U.S. District Court judge sentenced Dave on April 28, 2021, to 1 year, 8 months of incarceration, followed by 3 years of supervised release and ordered her to pay \$320,550 in restitution.

- ### Status Update on Social Security-Related Imposter Scams

Since October 2019, we have provided updates on our efforts to combat Social Security-related imposter scams to the

House Committee on Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Finance; and Senate Special Committee on Aging. In August 2021, we published a quarterly status update on Social Security-related imposter scams for the third quarter of FY 2021 (April 1 to June 30) on our [public website](#). The report addressed our ongoing efforts to raise public awareness of, and disrupt, Social Security-related imposter scams. It provided a brief analysis of scam allegation data and highlighted scam related investigative cases and outreach.

- ### Social Media Campaign to Recognize Retail Employees Who Intervene to Prevent Fraud

Scammers often demand payment in the form of retail gift cards, which are easily accessible and difficult to trace. Retail workers selling these gift cards are often the last line of defense against scammers. During this reporting period we kicked off the first in a series of posts about “scam fighters” who intervene to stop a scam.

In August, we highlighted one such “scam fighter” on our social and media accounts. When Holly, a Target employee in Rochester, New York, noticed a customer trying to buy thousands of dollars in gift cards, she remembered her training on government imposter scams and suspected that her customer was a victim of a Social Security-related imposter scam. She asked the customer about the gift card purchase, listened to the response, and told the customer she may have been a scam victim. She urged the customer to ignore the scammer and call the police. The customer had already purchased \$3,000 in gift cards for the scammers before going to Target to purchase more gift cards. Holly’s intervention saved the customer from losing thousands of dollars more.

We created a series of [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) posts highlighting Holly’s efforts, to raise awareness of the warning signs of a scam, and to encourage others to speak up

if they suspect someone might be the victim of a scam. Twitter users viewed our series of four tweets, shown below, approximately 25,000 times and engaged with them hundreds of times.



**Social Security OIG @TheSSAOIG**  
**@SocialSecurity** does not demand immediate payment by gift card, prepaid debit card, Internet currency, wire transfer, or by mailing cash. If someone tells you that you must immediately pay a bill or fine using these methods – it is a SCAM. **#SlamtheScam**  
**#GiftCardsAreForGifts**  
[pic.twitter.com/FZrtaHx543](https://pic.twitter.com/FZrtaHx543)



**Social Security OIG @TheSSAOIG**  
 "Store employees are often the last line of defense against scammers and are powerful partners in helping to protect the public," said Gail S. Ennis, Inspector General. Share how you slammed the scam.  
**#SlamtheScam** **#SocialSecurity**  
**#HollySlammedtheScam**  
**#GiftCardsAreForGifts**  
[pic.twitter.com/1m9vTEEvqW](https://pic.twitter.com/1m9vTEEvqW)



**Social Security OIG @TheSSAOIG**  
 Holly (left, pictured with our agent) noticed a customer trying to buy gift cards and asked a few questions. Holly saved the customer from being scammed out of thousands of dollars. Thank you Holly! **#SlamtheScam**  
**#SocialSecurity** **#HollySlammedtheScam**  
**#GiftCardsAreForGifts**  
[pic.twitter.com/hKUG6GwqoU](https://pic.twitter.com/hKUG6GwqoU)



**Social Security OIG @TheSSAOIG**  
 Holly (left) and the employees at the Target Henrietta store in Rochester, NY make sure their customers know that gift cards are for gifts – not payments. **#SlamtheScam**  
**#SocialSecurity** **#HollySlammedtheScam**  
**#GiftCardsAreForGifts**  
[pic.twitter.com/cG88V7RMgm](https://pic.twitter.com/cG88V7RMgm)

## Investigative Efforts Helped Lead to Groundbreaking Settlement with a U.S.-Based Voice over Internet Protocol “Gateway” Carrier

In April 2021, the Vermont Attorney General (AG) announced a ground-breaking settlement with a U.S. based Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) “gateway” carrier that routed thousands of foreign Social Security-related imposter scam calls to Vermont residents. We assisted

in investigating the company—Strategic IT Partner—after reports of scam robocalls to the Vermont Consumer Assistance Program. With investigative help from our office, the Vermont AG discovered that the company serviced customers (other VoIP interconnect companies or call centers) based in India, the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates, and Hong Kong; and that they took no meaningful steps to verify these customers’ legitimacy prior to accepting their call traffic. For example, in one day alone, the company routed hundreds of thousands of fraudulent robocalls from these foreign customers to the United States, including thousands to Vermont. The company ignored red flags that these foreign customers and their call traffic were illegitimate. Under the terms of the settlement, the company must take rigorous steps to screen the legitimacy of all potential customers, is barred from accepting illegal robocalls from foreign customers, and is required to monitor its customers’ call traffic patterns for signs that fraudulent robocalls are occurring.

## 3. Cooperative Disability Investigations

The CDI program is a critical anti-fraud initiative that combats fraud within SSA’s disability programs. A CDI unit consists of an OIG special agent who leads the unit, and personnel from SSA, State disability determination services (DDS) agencies, and state or local law enforcement partners. CDI units primarily investigate allegations of fraud before benefits are paid and support continuing disability reviews by providing evidence for determinations.

Stopping an improper payment before it occurs, or as soon as it is suspected, is in the best interest of SSA, the OIG, and taxpayers. CDI units combine resources and expertise from SSA, the OIG, DDS, and state or local law enforcement, to investigate and deter disability fraud. By combining federal and state resources and expertise, CDI units benefit not only Social Security programs, but

also other federal and state programs, such as food and nutrition assistance, housing assistance, Medicare, and Medicaid. Since 1997, CDIs have improved disability program integrity by resolving questions of fraud in Social Security disability claims. CDI units have contributed to a projected savings to taxpayers of approximately \$7.7 billion.

During this reporting period, the work of CDIs led to 455 disability claims being denied or ceased, \$33,207,312 in projected savings for SSA programs, and \$39,777,645 in projected savings for non-SSA programs. As of September 30, 2021, there were 49 CDI units covering 47 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. CDI units also covered the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. SSA and the OIG will continue to work with state and local partners to expand CDI coverage for all 50 states not later than October 1, 2022, in accordance with the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015*. Following are CDI case highlights from this reporting period.

- St. Louis CDI Unit Investigation Led to Projected SSA Savings of \$74,364 and Non-SSA Savings of \$41,518**

Acting on a referral received from Missouri DDS, the St. Louis CDI Unit investigated a 51-year-old Title II Disability Insurance (DI) claimant. The claimant alleged blindness and nerve damage in her arms and hands. The DDS referred the claim due to inconsistencies between medical evidence and the claimant's functional limitations on record. Pursuant to the investigation, the CDI unit reviewed SSA's file, conducted surveillance, and obtained copies of various records. During a surveillance, CDI staff observed the woman walking without assistance and successfully navigating parking blocks, curbs, and other patrons. As a result of the investigation, the DDS denied her disability claim resulting in a projected SSA savings of \$74,364 and projected non-SSA savings of \$41,518 in Medicare benefits.

- Dallas CDI Unit Investigation Led to Guilty Plea and Restitution of \$128,168 to SSA**

The Dallas CDI Unit investigated an anonymous allegation from the OIG's Analysis and Allegation Management Division, about a Title II DI beneficiary. The investigation found that the beneficiary concealed his work activities from SSA to receive benefits. Based on the CDI investigation, SSA determined that from January 2011 through December 2016, he improperly received approximately \$128,168 in DI benefits. Subsequently, he pleaded guilty to theft of government funds. On June 2, 2021, a U.S. District Court judge sentenced him to 5 years of probation and ordered restitution of approximately \$112,568 to SSA. Prior to sentencing, he paid approximately \$15,600 toward the overpayment.

- Des Moines CDI Unit Investigation Led to Projected SSA Savings of \$102,132 and Non-SSA Savings of \$71,042**

Acting on an anonymous complaint from the OIG's Analysis and Allegation Management Division, the Des Moines CDI Unit, investigated a 49-year-old Title II DI beneficiary. Since 2002, the beneficiary received DI benefits due to mood disorders, anxiety, agoraphobia, disassociation, fibromyalgia, depression, neuropathy in feet, and irritable bowel syndrome. The complaint alleged that the beneficiary failed to report income from self-employment, which exceeded an amount that would have made her ineligible for benefits. The investigation found that she owned and operated a business focusing on mental health treatment for individuals dealing with trauma and education services. A second arm of the beneficiary's business focused on alternative medicines for trauma treatment, such as oils, elixirs, and yoga meditation. As a result of the investigation, the DDS ceased the beneficiary's disability payments, leading to a projected SSA savings of \$102,132 and projected non-SSA savings of \$71,042 in Medicare benefits.



## 4. Facilitator Fraud Investigations

In recent years, we re-focused resources on third-party facilitator investigations. Third-party facilitators assist individuals in the disability claims process and may include licensed medical sources, attorneys, non-attorney representatives, interpreters, social workers, and even SSA or DDS employees. Fraud occurs when third-party facilitators provide false information in the application process for disability benefits. Often, facilitator fraud investigations uncover widespread fraud, as demonstrated by the following case highlight.

### Final Co-Conspirator Sentenced in Major Disability Insurance Fraud Scheme

During this reporting period, we closed a major facilitator DI fraud case that involved a doctor, non-attorney representatives, and others, with the final co-conspirator receiving his sentence in June 2021. The final co-conspirator, Samuel Perez-Rivera, was a non-attorney representative who admitted to submitting fraudulent information to SSA in support of disability claims. Perez-Rivera prepared and submitted fraudulent psychiatric medical reports signed by a doctor who participated in the scheme. Perez-Rivera was sentenced to 3 years of probation, ordered to pay \$150,000 in restitution to SSA, and prohibited from participating as a non-attorney representative before SSA. Prior to Perez-Rivera's sentencing, our investigation into this scheme helped secure convictions of the doctor, his secretary, two non-attorney representatives, and three patients/beneficiaries. Our New York Field Division investigated this case with assistance from the Drug Enforcement Administration, Puerto Rico Police Bureau, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Health and Human Services OIG.

## 5. Improper Payments

According to an SSA **Fact Sheet**, in 2021, an average of 65 million Americans per month will receive an SSA benefit, totaling over 1 trillion dollars in benefits paid during the year.<sup>1</sup> Given the magnitude of SSA payments, even the slightest error in the payment process can result in millions of dollars in over or underpayments. SSA estimated it made approximately \$8.3 billion in improper payments<sup>2</sup> in FY 2020. Of those, \$6.8 billion were overpayments and \$1.5 billion were underpayments.

Ten of our 30 audit reports issued during this period were completed in response to the management challenge, "Improve the Prevention, Detection and Recovery of Improper Payments." Our work related to this management challenge identified nearly \$1.7 billion in potential cost savings and included 24 recommendations.

1. SSA benefits include disability, retirement, and survivor benefit payments.

2. SSA considers payments to be improper if they result from its mistake in computing the payment, its failure to obtain or act on available information, a beneficiary's failure to report an event, or a beneficiary's incorrect report. Improper payments can be overpayments, when SSA pays someone more than they were due, or underpayments, when SSA pays someone less than they were due.

# Investigations Overview

---

- Allegations Received by Category
- Disability Insurance Fraud
- Supplemental Security Income Fraud
- Retirement and Survivors Insurance Fraud
- Social Security Number Misuse
- Employee Fraud



The OIG's OI receives and evaluates allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in SSA's programs and operations, and takes appropriate action in coordination with federal, state, and local prosecutors. OI also investigates allegations of retaliation against whistleblowers who have made protected disclosures. Our investigations may result in criminal or civil prosecutions, CMPs, or Agency administrative actions. We received 270,020 allegations during this reporting period, shown by category in the chart below.

## Allegations Received by Category

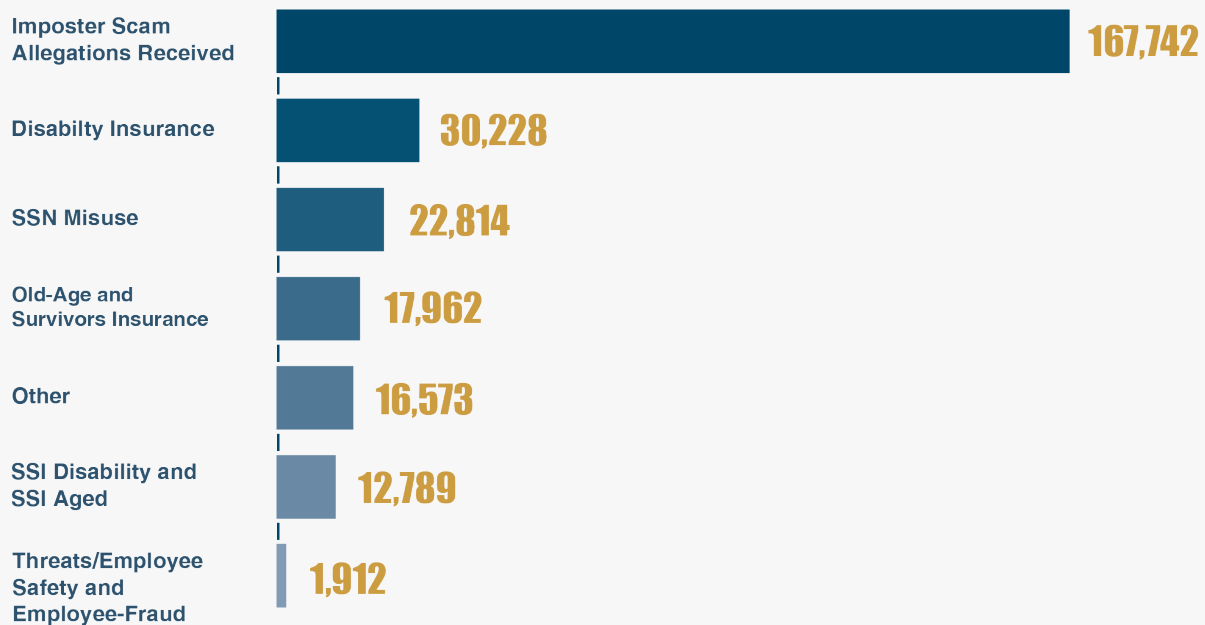
April 1 – September 30, 2021

## Disability Insurance Fraud

This type of fraud historically comprises a significant part of our investigative workload. DI fraud includes, among other activities, concealing work activity or medical improvement while receiving disability benefits, representative payee misuse, and deceased payee fraud.

### Arkansas Man Sentenced to 2 Years Imprisonment Followed by 3 Years Supervised Release, Ordered to Pay \$284,862 in Restitution

A DI fraud highlight from this period involves an investigation into an SSA disability beneficiary who reported to SSA that he had several medical conditions and could neither work nor leave his home. Our investigation determined that the beneficiary was not only able to leave his home, but he also owned and operated several businesses, some of which involved construction, landscaping, and lawn services. Based on his concealment of work activity, SSA determined that he was improperly paid \$284,862.25, which included \$139,957.71 in SSA disability benefits and \$144,904.54 in Medicare benefits.





The beneficiary pleaded guilty to theft of government funds in December 2020. In June 2021, a U.S. District Court judge sentenced him to 2 years imprisonment, 3 years supervised release, and ordered him to pay restitution of \$139,957.71 to SSA and \$144,904.54 to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

## Supplemental Security Income Fraud

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a needs-based program, and we work to ensure that only those who are truly eligible for these critical benefits receive them. Eligibility for SSI primarily relies on self-reporting many factors including earnings, assets, resources, marital status, residency, and living arrangements, among others. We investigate allegations of many types of SSI fraud, including when someone conceals a marriage, real estate or other assets, or their true country of residence from SSA while receiving SSI payments.

### — Florida Woman Sentenced to 30 Months Imprisonment Followed by 3 Years Supervised Release, Ordered to Pay \$710,608 in Restitution

An SSI highlight from this reporting period involves our investigations into a Florida woman who was receiving SSI benefits and fraudulently obtained Retirement and Survivors Insurance (RSI) benefits. The investigation found that the woman improperly obtained SSNs to create two synthetic identities to apply for and receive survivors' insurance benefits from approximately December 1989 to August 2007. In 1993, while receiving these benefits, she applied for SSI benefits in her own name, claiming to be disabled. She did not disclose the RSI benefits she was receiving at the time, which would have made her ineligible for SSI benefits. Further, she fraudulently assumed the identity of two individuals. She received RSI benefits from approximately December 2016 to May 2019 using the identity of the first

individual, and from May 2019 to July 2019 using the identity of the second. Additionally, following her father's death in October 2018, she forged his signature to access SSA checks improperly paid to her father. In addition to the money received through her fraudulent actions, her failure to disclose her fraudulent behavior resulted in her receiving SSI benefits she was not entitled to from approximately February 1994 through November 2019.

She pleaded guilty to theft of government funds and aggravated identity theft in January 2021. In April 2021, a U.S. District Court judge sentenced her to 30 months imprisonment followed by 3 years supervised release and ordered restitution of \$710,608 to SSA.

## Retirement and Survivors Insurance Fraud

These investigations pertain primarily to RSI benefits, including deceased payee fraud, representative payee misuse, false statements about marital or parental status in applying for survivors' benefits, and other related types of fraud. The following is an RSI fraud highlight from this reporting period.

### — Ohio Man Sentenced to 2 Years of Probation, Ordered to Pay \$31,525 in Restitution

Following an investigation by our Cincinnati, Ohio office, an Ohio man pleaded guilty in May 2021 to making a false statement to an agency of the United States. The man devised a scheme with his employer to pay his salary to his wife, who did not work for the company, so his earnings would stay below the earning limit established by the Title II RSI program. He then made a false statement to Internal Revenue Service agents that his wife worked for the company. In September 2021, he was sentenced to 2 years of probation, ordered to pay a \$100 special assessment, and ordered to pay \$31,525 in restitution to SSA.

## Social Security Number Misuse

We work to ensure the integrity of SSNs, as SSA depends on them to accurately post earnings to individuals' records and calculate earned benefits. SSNs are used by not only SSA but also other agencies and entities, so we often pursue joint investigations into SSN misuse. We are authorized to investigate any situation in which a person misuses an SSN, whether for unauthorized work, obtaining a loan, applying for a government benefit, or any other purpose.

- ### California Woman Sentenced to 24 Months Imprisonment Followed by 12 Months Supervised Release, Ordered to Pay \$179,628 in Restitution

An SSN misuse highlight from this reporting period involves our investigation into an allegation that a California woman was using an SSN fraudulently to receive both DI and SSI benefits. The woman received benefits under her own SSN while working at a children's hospital and receiving wages under her sister's SSN. On various occasions, she signed forms acknowledging her obligation to inform SSA of earned income. The income she failed to report would have rendered her ineligible for a significant portion of SSA benefits that she received. Later, she applied for additional SSA benefits under her sister's SSN and repeatedly misrepresented to SSA her SSN misuse. Following our investigation, she pleaded guilty to aggravated identity theft in January 2020. In August 2021, she was sentenced by a U.S. District Court judge to 24 months of imprisonment, followed by 12 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution of \$179,628 to SSA. This restitution represents \$73,209 in SSI payments and \$106,419 in disabled adult child's benefits that she fraudulently received.

## Employee Fraud

Public integrity investigations are critical to ensuring we maintain the public trust in SSA's programs and operations. We must take swift action concerning allegations against employees who may have misused their position for personal gain or violated other laws or regulations in the performance of their official duties.

- ### Florida Woman Sentenced to 3 Years of Probation, 45 Days Service, Ordered to Pay \$11,754 in Restitution

An employee fraud highlight from this reporting period involves an allegation we received concerning an SSA employee who was a representative payee for her child's SSI benefits. Investigators determined that the employee provided several false statements about her living arrangements to SSA during redetermination interviews. Further, she provided a false lease to support her deception. SSA lost \$11,754.76 due to her fraudulent actions. In February 2021, she pleaded guilty to making a false statement. In May 2021, a U.S. District Court judge sentenced her to 3 years of probation, 45 days of community service, and to pay restitution of \$11,754.76 to SSA. We referred this case to the Agency for appropriate action.

## Whistleblower Retaliation

Section 5(a)(20) of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, requires SSA OIG to provide a detailed description of any instance of whistleblower retaliation, including information about the official found to have engaged in retaliation and what, if any, consequences the establishment imposed to hold that official accountable. There are no known instances of retaliation to report for this reporting period.

# Audit Overview

---

- Potential Cost Savings from Unimplemented Recommendations
- Significant Audit Findings During the Reporting Period





Our audits help SSA serve the American people by identifying opportunities for savings, better use of funds, and improvements in SSA's program management and results. We continue to deploy audit resources to address **SSA's top management and performance challenges**.

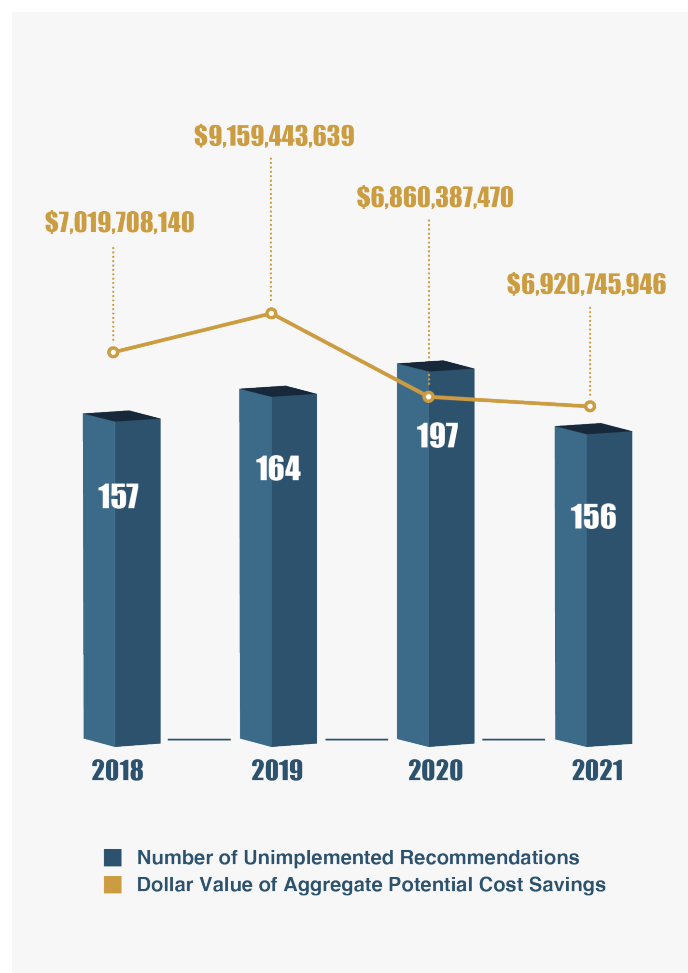
These challenges include: **(1) improving service delivery; (2) modernizing information technology; (3) protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of SSA's information systems and data; (4) improving the prevention, detection, and recovery of improper payments; (5) improving administration of the disability programs; and (6) responding to the COVID-19 pandemic**. We also conduct reviews at the request of Congress.

This reporting period, we issued 30 audit reports, 17 with recommendations related to approximately \$1.9 billion in potential cost savings,<sup>1</sup> 11 with non-monetary findings, and 2 interim reports related to SSA's work during the COVID-19 pandemic. One interim report covered visitor safety and the other discussed enumeration and mail processing. The interim reports did not contain recommendations; however, we are engaged with SSA management on addressing issues described in the reports and plan to issue final reports in FY 2022. See **Appendix B** and **Appendix C** for statistical tables showing potential cost savings and **Appendix D** for the full list of audit reports issued during this reporting period.

We continuously engage SSA to ensure timely resolution of all recommendations. As shown in detail at **Appendix F**, SSA had not implemented 23 significant monetary recommendations from FYs 2016 through 2020, offering potential savings of more than \$3.6 billion. As shown on the following chart, potential cost savings from all unimplemented recommendations increased

slightly from approximately \$6.86 billion to \$6.92 billion from FY 2020 through this reporting period. However, the number of unimplemented recommendations decreased from 197 to 156 over the same period.<sup>2</sup>

## Potential Cost Savings from Unimplemented Recommendations



1. Potential cost savings include recommendations associated with questioned costs and putting funds to better use. The \$1.9 billion includes \$424,767,831 from audits with questioned costs in which the dollar value was supported, \$195,808,622 from audits with questioned costs in which the dollar value was not supported (for both figures, see **Appendix B**, row B), and \$1,309,679,830 from audits with recommendations for funds to be put to better use (see **Appendix C**, row B).
2. To provide SSA with adequate time to implement our recommendations, we only report unimplemented recommendations 6 months after providing them to the Agency. The FY 2021 figure includes audits issued through March 31, 2021. Numbers are comparative to prior years' fall semiannual reports. SSA reported that the COVID-19 pandemic affected implementation of 27 open recommendations; however, OIG has not done analysis to confirm that is the case for these recommendations.

## Significant Audit Findings During the Reporting Period

- Match of death information against SSA records ([A-04-19-50819](#), [A-06-18-50706](#), and [A-06-18-50653](#))

**Payments Made to Deceased Beneficiaries Totaling \$234.1 Million:** The three audits matched death information obtained from four states, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and from SSA against SSA records to identify, among other discrepancies, payments made to individuals after they were deceased. In total, we identified \$234.1 million already paid and \$51.5 million that could be paid if SSA does not take corrective action on the individual cases identified. By resolving these discrepancies, SSA could reduce exposure to future payments after death and improve the accuracy and completeness of the death information it shares with other federal benefit-paying agencies. SSA agreed with the 13 recommendations we made and immediately initiated corrective action on these cases.

- SSA needs to address limitations in systems it uses to identify and collect overpayments ([A-07-18-50743](#) and [A-07-19-50775](#))

**Recoverable Delinquent Overpayments of \$36.8 Million and Over \$1.2 Billion in Funds Put to Better Use:** We completed two audits identifying limitations in systems SSA uses to identify and collect overpayments. In the first audit ([A-07-18-50743](#)), we found SSA did not resolve delinquent debt status for 81 percent of beneficiaries we reviewed and could attempt to recover approximately \$36.8 million in delinquent overpayments. In the second audit ([A-07-19-50775](#)), we found SSA's system could not account for \$1.2 billion in overpayments it may not fully recover by December 2049. SSA agreed with the three recommendations we made and plans to resolve the issues through further system enhancements, including a comprehensive

multi-year information technology investment to consolidate, modernize, and streamline its debt collection processes into one system, with expected implementation in FY 2023.

- SSA needs to finalize its decision on updating its administrative finality policy ([A-01-19-50859](#))

**Unimplemented Recommendations from Prior OIG Reports:** Our prior work showed SSA had not corrected millions of dollars of ongoing Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) payments because of its administrative finality policy. Although SSA agreed with our recommendation to evaluate its administrative finality policies since 2012, as of April 2021, SSA had not finalized its decision on policy changes. We recommended SSA finalize its decision on updating its administrative finality policy and execute an action plan with specific milestones to ensure any updates are implemented timely. SSA agreed with our recommendation.

- Interim report on employee and visitor safety during the COVID-19 pandemic ([A-15-20-51001](#))

**Preliminary Observations on Employee and Visitor Safety:** The Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security, asked questions regarding how SSA is handling the safety of employees and visitors for in-person appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic. We reviewed SSA's responses and asked additional questions on in-office workloads, safety measures during the pandemic, and contact tracing. The review observed that SSA does not maintain contact information for all individuals who visit SSA facilities or maintain a centralized log of employees who enter the facilities. This lack of information impairs SSA's ability to support local health departments with their contact tracing efforts. We are continuing to engage with Agency leadership to obtain additional information regarding SSA's efforts to ensure

the health and safety of employees and the public in SSA facilities during the pandemic and plan to issue a final report in FY 2022.

■ **Interim report on mail and enumeration services during the COVID-19 pandemic (A-08-21-51036 and A-15-21-51015)**

**Preliminary Observations on Management of Mail, and Social Security Card Processing:** We visited 73 SSA facilities, including field offices, program service centers, and Social Security Card Centers and identified critical issues related to policy and practices affecting timely and efficient processing of mail and enumeration-related work. We observed that SSA does not have performance metrics and does not maintain management information on the volume of incoming, outgoing, or pending mail. We also observed that SSA lacks comprehensive policies and procedures to track and return original documents that customers provide as proof of eligibility for benefits or an SSN card. We are engaged with SSA management on addressing many of the issues described in these reports, and we plan to issue final reports in FY 2022. These reports will describe final findings and recommendations as well as Agency actions taken to address these concerns.



# Legal Overview

---

- Civil Monetary Penalty Program
- Review of Legislation and Regulations



## Civil Monetary Penalty Program

SSA's CMP program, delegated to the OIG, allows the Inspector General to impose CMPs for certain violations of the *Social Security Act*. The CMP program is an effective administrative enforcement alternative when criminal or civil prosecution is not appropriate or feasible.<sup>1</sup>

Section 1129 of the *Social Security Act*, as amended, authorizes a CMP under Titles II, VIII, and XVI of the *Social Security Act* against anyone who: (1) makes a false or misleading statement to SSA to obtain or retain benefits or payments; (2) receives benefits or payments while withholding disclosure of a material fact; or (3) wrongfully converts a beneficiary's payments while acting as a representative payee. We are authorized to impose penalties of up to \$8,708 for each false or misleading statement, material omission, or conversion.<sup>2</sup> Violators may also be subject to an assessment, in lieu of damages, of up to twice the amount of any resulting overpayment or conversion.

During this reporting period, we resolved 34 Section 1129 cases and imposed \$1,667,115 in penalties and assessments resulting from Section 1129 violations. In one case, OI investigated a daughter who continued to access her father's bank account for 16 years after his death. The daughter took affirmative steps to continue the fraud, including endorsing personal checks in her father's name, changing addresses on bank accounts, and changing telephone contact numbers with SSA. OIG settled the case with the daughter, imposing a \$258,106 CMP. In another case, a Florida recipient used one SSN to work while concurrently using another SSN to receive SSI payments. The woman wrongfully concealed the use of a second SSN for over nine years. OIG settled the case with the recipient, imposing a \$38,819 CMP.

Section 1140 of the *Social Security Act*, as amended, prohibits people and companies from misleading consumers by giving a false impression of an official association with, or endorsement by SSA. Section 1140 also prohibits the reproduction and sale of SSA publications and forms without authorization.

During the reporting period, we resolved 24 Section 1140 cases and imposed \$5,000 in penalties and assessments resulting from 1140 violations. Previously, in the Fall 2020 Semiannual Report, we reported that a marketing company and 16 of its customers violated Section 1140 by using the protected words "Social Security" on the return envelopes of business reply mailers in a misleading manner. During the current reporting period, OIG reached a settlement agreement with an additional customer, imposing a penalty of \$5,000.

## Review of Legislation and Regulations

Section 4(a)(2) of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, requires the OIG to review existing and proposed legislation and regulations, and make recommendations concerning the impact of such legislation or regulations on the economy and efficiency of, or the prevention and detection of fraud in SSA programs and operations. In addition to communicating directly with congressional staff as needed to discuss legislative issues, below are examples of the way we accomplished this statutory requirement during this reporting period:

- Reviewed proposed legislation and regulations, including the following:**
  - A bill that would create new whistleblower protections; expand and clarify existing protections; establish new procedures to ensure that employees receive timely relief for their retaliation claims; and

1. U.S. Postal Service delays adversely impacted CMP program mailings in FY 2021.

2. The *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015* authorized the annual adjustment of CMP amounts for inflation.

extend protections to non-career Senior Executive Service employees, Public Health Service Officers or applicants, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Commissioned Officer Corps.

- A bill that would amend the *Inspectors General Act of 1978* to authorize inspectors general to continue operating and conducting oversight during a lapse in appropriations.
- A bill that would amend the *Inspectors General Act of 1978* to provide inspectors general with testimonial subpoena authority as a tool to conduct oversight.

● **Evaluated SSA's compliance with existing laws and regulations in the following reports:**

- *The Social Security Administration's Reporting Under the Federal Information Security Modernization Act (A-14-18-50450)*
- *The Social Security Administration's Compliance with the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 in the Fiscal Year 2020 Agency Financial Report (A-15-20-50949)*



# Appendix A-P

---

- **Appendix A:** Reporting Requirements
- **Appendix B:** Reports with Questioned Costs
- **Appendix C:** Reports with Funds Put to Better Use
- **Appendix D:** Audit Reports Issued
- **Appendix E:** Significant Management Decision with Which the Inspector General Disagrees
- **Appendix F:** Significant Monetary Recommendations from Prior Fiscal Years for Which Corrective Actions Have Not Been Completed
- **Appendix G:** Significant Non-Monetary Recommendations from Prior Fiscal Years for Which Corrective Actions Have Not Been Completed
- **Appendix H:** Open Recommendations and Reports with Unimplemented Recommendations
- **Appendix I:** Audit Reports Issued Prior to the Reporting Period for Which No Management Decision Had Been Made by the End of This Reporting Period
- **Appendix J:** Significant Management Decisions That Were Revised
- **Appendix K:** Draft Audit Reports for Which Agency Comments Were Not Provided Within 60 Days
- **Appendix L:** Closed Audits and Investigations Not Available to the Public
- **Appendix M:** *Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996 Compliance*
- **Appendix N:** Instances of Agency Interference or Refusal to Provide Information
- **Appendix O:** Peer Reviews
- **Appendix P:** Investigations Involving Senior Government Employees Where Allegations of Misconduct Were Substantiated



## Reporting Requirements

This report meets the requirements of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and includes information as mandated by Congress.

Section	Requirement	Page(s)
4(a)(2)	Review of legislation and regulations	23-24
5(a)(1)	Significant problems, abuses, and deficiencies	18-21
5(a)(2)	Recommendations concerning significant problems, abuses, and deficiencies	18-21
5(a)(3)	Significant recommendations described in previous Semiannual Reports on which corrective action has not been completed	34-37
5(a)(4)	Matters referred to prosecutive authorities and the prosecutions and convictions that have resulted	5-6
5(a)(5), 6(c)(2)	Summary of any report made from the Inspector General to the Commissioner regarding instances when Social Security Administration (SSA) employees refused to provide information or assistance to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	52
5(a)(6)	A listing, subdivided according to subject matter, of each audit/evaluation report issued, and where applicable, the total dollar value of questioned costs and dollar value of recommendations that fund be put to better use	28-32
5(a)(7)	Summary of significant reports	18-21
5(a)(8)	Table showing the total number of audit reports and total dollar value of questioned costs	28
5(a)(9)	Table showing the total number of audit reports and total dollar value of funds put to better use	29
5(a)(10)	Summary of reports: (1) with outstanding unimplemented recommendations; (2) for which no management decision had been made by the end of the reporting period; and (3) for which SSA did not provide comments within 60 days	41-47, 49
5(a)(11)	Description and explanation of the reasons for any significant revised management decision made during the reporting period	48
5(a)(12)	Significant management decisions with which the Inspector General disagrees	33
5(a)(13)	Information described under section 804(b) of the <i>Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996</i>	51
5(a)(14)	The results of any peer review conducted by another OIG during the reporting period	53
5(a)(15)	List of any outstanding recommendations from any peer review conducted by another OIG that have not been fully implemented, including a statement describing the status of the implementation and why implementation is not complete	53
5(a)(16)	List of any peer reviews conducted by the Inspector General of another OIG during the reporting period, including a list of any outstanding recommendations made from any previous peer review (including any peer review conducted before the reporting period) that remain outstanding or have not been fully implemented	53

Section	Requirement	Page(s)
<b>5(a)(17), (18)</b>	Table showing total number of investigative reports issued, persons referred to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution, persons referred to state and local prosecuting authorities for criminal prosecutions, and number of indictments/informations, as well as a descriptions of the metrics used	<b>5-6</b>
<b>5(a)(19)</b>	Detailed report on each investigation involving a senior government employee where allegations of misconduct were substantiated	<b>54</b>
<b>5(a)(20)</b>	Detailed description of any instances of whistleblower retaliation	<b>17</b>
<b>5(a)(21)</b>	Description of any attempt by the establishment to interfere with the independence of the OIG	<b>52</b>
<b>5(a)(22)</b>	Description of inspection, evaluation, and audit conducted that was closed and was not disclosed to the public; and investigation conducted involving a senior government employee that is closed and was not disclosed to the public	<b>50</b>



## Reports with Questioned Costs

Questioned costs include Social Security Administration (SSA) expenditures that we determined, based on our audits: (1) violated a provision of a law, regulation, contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other agreement or document governing the expenditure of funds; (2) were not supported by adequate documentation; or (3) were unnecessary or unreasonable.

Disallowed costs are those questioned costs identified through our audits that SSA management has sustained or agreed should not be charged to the government.

Section 5(a)(8) of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, requires that we provide statistical tables showing the total number of audit reports, inspection reports, and evaluation reports, and the total dollar value of questioned costs (including a separate category for the dollar value of unsupported costs), for reports—

- A. for which no management decision had been made by the commencement of the reporting period;
- B. which were issued during the reporting period;
- C. for which a management decision was made during the reporting period, including—
  - i. the dollar value of disallowed costs; and
  - ii. the dollar value of costs not disallowed; and
- D. for which no management decision had been made by the end of the reporting period.

Reports with Questioned Costs for April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021			
	Number of Reports	Dollar Value Supported	Dollar Value Unsupported
A. For which no management decision had been made by the commencement of the reporting period.	33	\$2,455,547,565	\$98,792,243
B. Which were issued during the reporting period. <sup>1</sup>	15	\$424,767,831	\$195,808,622
<b>Subtotal (A + B)</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>\$2,880,315,396</b>	<b>\$294,600,865</b>
Less:			
C. For which a management decision was made during the reporting period.			
i. Dollar value of disallowed costs. <sup>2</sup>	11	\$535,235,214	\$5,203,985
ii. Dollar value of costs not disallowed. <sup>2</sup>	2	\$73,027,057	\$0
<b>Subtotal (i + ii)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>\$608,262,271</b>	<b>\$5,203,985</b>
D. For which no management decision had been made by the end of the reporting period. <sup>2</sup>	38	\$2,272,053,125	\$289,396,880

1. See [Appendix D](#) for a detailed listing of all reports issued, including reports with questioned costs.

2. Some reports have multiple monetary recommendations and are accounted for as follows: (1) one report has one recommendation recorded in C.i. and one recorded in D; (2) one report has one recommendation recorded in C.i. and two recorded in D; and (3) one report has one recommendation recorded in C.i. and one recorded in section C.ii.

## Reports with Funds Put to Better Use

Funds may be put to better use when the Social Security Administration could avoid expenditures by implementing our recommendations. Section 5(a)(9) of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, requires that we provide statistical tables showing the total number of audit reports, inspection reports, and evaluation reports, and the dollar value of recommendations that funds be put to better use by management, for reports—

- A. for which no management decision had been made by the commencement of the reporting period;
- B. which were issued during the reporting period;
- C. for which a management decision was made during the reporting period, including—
  - i. the dollar value of costs agreed to by management; and
  - ii. the dollar value of costs not agreed to by management; and
- D. for which no management decision had been made by the end of the reporting period.

Reports with Funds Put to Better Use — April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021		
	Number of Reports	Dollar Value
A. For which no management decision had been made by the commencement of the reporting period.	16	\$938,993,703
B. Which were issued during the reporting period. <sup>1</sup>	8	\$1,309,679,830
<b>Subtotal (A + B)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>\$2,248,673,533</b>
Less:		
C. For which a management decision was made during the reporting period.		
i. Dollar value of costs agreed to by management. <sup>2</sup>	4	\$23,073,587
ii. Dollar value of costs not agreed to by management.	0	\$0
<b>Subtotal (i + ii)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$23,073,587</b>
D. For which no management decision had been made by the end of the reporting period. <sup>2</sup>	22	\$2,225,599,946

1. See [Appendix D](#), Reports with Funds Put to Better Use

2. Some reports have multiple monetary recommendations and are accounted for as follows: two reports have one recommendation recorded in C.i. and one recorded in D.

## Audit Reports Issued

We issued 30 audit reports, including 2 interim reports during this reporting period. The *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, requires that we identify audit reports with non-monetary findings, questioned costs, and funds put to better use. Audit reports may be listed more than once in the charts that follow. All audit reports are available on our website at [this link](#).

April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021

### Reports with Non-Monetary Findings, by Category

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date
<b>Mandatory Reviews</b>		
The Social Security Administration's Compliance with the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 in the Fiscal Year 2020 Agency Financial Report	A-15-20-50949	5/7/2021
<b>Improve Administration of the Disability Programs</b>		
Single Audit of the State of Texas for the Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2020	A-77-21-00002	4/14/2021
Single Audit of the New Mexico Public Education Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020	A-77-21-00003	4/27/2021
The Social Security Administration's Demonstration Projects	A-04-19-50881	6/11/2021
Single Audit of the State of Minnesota for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020	A-77-21-00004	7/21/2021
Single Audit of the State of Oklahoma for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020	A-77-21-00005	9/17/2021
Costs Claimed by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Disability Determination	A-55-20-00003	9/23/2021
<b>Protect the Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability of SSA's Information Systems and Data</b>		
The Social Security Administration's Reporting Under the Federal Information Security Modernization Act	A-14-18-50450	6/2/2021
Follow-up on Personally Identifiable Information Made Available to the Public Via the Death Master File	A-06-18-50708	6/11/2021
<b>SSA's Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Pandemic</b>		
The Social Security Administration's Telephone Services During June 2020 (Congressional Response Report)	A-05-20-50998	4/7/2021
Safety of Social Security Administration Employees and Visitors Since March 2020 (Interim Response) (Congressional Response Report)	A-15-20-51001	6/16/2021
The Social Security Administration's Processing of Mail and Enumeration Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Interim Response)	A-08-21-51036	7/29/2021
<b>Improve the Prevention, Detection, and Recovery of Improper Payments</b>		
The Social Security Administration's Administrative Finality Policy	A-01-19-50859	5/28/2021



April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021

## Reports with Questioned Costs, by Category

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
<b>Improve the Prevention, Detection, and Recovery of Improper Payments</b>			
The Social Security Administration's Application of the Retirement Insurance Benefits Limitation and Reduced Widow(er)'s Benefit Policy	A-01-13-23095	6/4/2021	\$28,651,232
System Alerts for Beneficiaries Identified by the Delinquent Debt Trigger File	A-07-18-50743	6/9/2021	\$36,806,243
Match of Alabama, Georgia, and Illinois Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-04-19-50819	6/9/2021	\$79,301,066
Redeterminations Social Security Administration Employees Closed Without Assessing Resources	A-02-18-50545	7/21/2021	\$63,865,820
Follow-up on Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits Affected by State and Local Pensions	A-13-17-50191	7/30/2021	\$88,071
Match of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-06-18-50653	8/13/2021	\$125,219,789
Match of California Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-06-18-50706	9/24/2021	\$29,555,933
<b>Improve Service Delivery</b>			
The Social Security Administration's Processing of Misuse Allegations of Individual Representative Payees	A-13-18-50712	6/14/2021	\$2,037,564
The Social Security Administration's Controls over High-priority Modernized Development Worksheets	A-07-18-50363	9/28/2021	\$49,476,491
<b>Improve Administration of the Disability Programs</b>			
Costs Claimed by the Texas Disability Determination Services	A-55-20-00001	9/22/2021	\$10,339,206
Costs Claimed by the Kentucky Disability Determination Services	A-55-20-00006	9/23/2021	\$751,821
Costs Claimed by the California Disability Determination Services	A-55-20-00007	9/24/2021	\$10,497,712
Costs Claimed by the Puerto Rico Disability Determination Services	A-55-20-00002	9/24/2021	\$2,758,969
Costs Claimed by the Michigan Disability Determination Services	A-55-20-00005	9/27/2021	\$12,979,064
Costs Claimed by the New York Division of Disability Determinations	A-55-20-00004	9/27/2021	\$168,247,472
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$620,576,453</b>

April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021

## Reports with Funds Put to Better Use, by Category

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
<b>Improve Administration of the Disability Programs</b>			
Follow-up on Transferring Supplemental Security Income Overpayments from Prior Records to the Current Record for Recovery	A-01-17-50226	6/3/2021	<b>\$14,845,298</b>
The Social Security Administration's Application of the Retirement Insurance Benefits Limitation and Reduced Widow(er)'s Benefit Policy	A-01-13-23095	6/4/2021	<b>\$2,673,456</b>
Match of Alabama, Georgia, and Illinois Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-04-19-50819	6/9/2021	<b>\$13,808,377</b>
Follow-up on Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits Affected by State and Local Pensions	A-13-17-50191	7/30/2021	<b>\$86,339</b>
Match of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-06-18-50653	8/13/2021	<b>\$33,850,395</b>
Match of California Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-06-18-50706	9/24/2021	<b>\$3,865,562</b>
Overpayments with Recovery Agreements that Will Extend Beyond 2049	A-07-19-50775	9/28/2021	<b>\$1,240,312,343</b>
<b>Improve Service Delivery</b>			
The Social Security Administration's Processing of Misuse Allegations of Individual Representative Payees	A-13-18-50712	6/14/2021	\$238,060
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$1,309,679,830</b>

## Significant Management Decision with Which the Inspector General Disagrees

SSA had no significant management decisions with which the Inspector General disagreed.



# Significant Monetary Recommendations from Prior Fiscal Years for Which Corrective Actions Have Not Been Completed



Total Unimplemented  
Significant Monetary Recommendations  
Fiscal Years 2016 – 2020  
**\$3,665,762,781**

Report Title, Report Number, Issue Date  
Dollar Value(s)  
Unimplemented Recommendation

## ■ Fiscal Year 2020

**Miscellaneous Benefit Suspensions for Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Beneficiaries** (**A-07-19-50799**, issued 9/21/20)

**\$376,829,722 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 2:** Analyze a sample of beneficiaries whose benefits have been in miscellaneous suspense status for an extended period to determine the appropriate corrective actions and assess the feasibility of broadening the review.

**Retirement Beneficiaries Potentially Eligible for Widow(er)'s Benefits** (**A-13-13-23109**, issued 6/9/20)<sup>1</sup>

**\$193,202,573 Questioned Costs**  
**\$529,209,461 Funds Put to Better Use**

**Recommendation 2:** Determine whether the remaining 30,665 beneficiaries in our population are due additional benefits and take appropriate action.

**The Social Security Administration's Rejection of State Electronic Death Registration Reports** (**A-08-18-50499**, issued 9/21/20)

**\$30,294,449 Questioned Costs**  
**\$23,088,955 Funds Put to Better Use**

**Recommendation 1:** Record deaths on the Numident, terminate payments, and collect the overpayments for the 1,947 remaining deceased beneficiaries.

**Recommendation 3:** Include a Numident match in the Death Information Processing System, or similar process, to assess Online Verification System discrepancies before rejecting an Electronic Death Registration report.

**Agency Processing of Duplicate Payment Detection Alerts** (**A-05-19-50796**, issued 5/6/20)

**\$24,314,735 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 1:** Review the population of beneficiaries with three or more duplicate payment alerts and correct any additional alerts that were processed incorrectly.

1. SSA considers this recommendation implemented; however, it has not provided sufficient information to enable our audit team to verify that it has fully implemented it.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2020 (Continued)

**Manual Actions on Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Post-entitlement Alerts** (A-07-18-50621, issued 3/9/20)

**\$616,427,374 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 5:** Monitor Title II Redesign alerts employees cleared without taking corrective actions.

**Beneficiaries with Representative Payees and Earnings** (A-02-17-50143, issued 3/5/20)

**\$7,942,555 Questioned Costs**  
**\$2,739,108 Funds Put to Better Use**

**Recommendation 2:** Establish a process to review the accuracy of earnings records and primary insurance amount increases of beneficiaries likely to have inaccurate earnings posted to their records after their entitlement to Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI). The Social Security Administration (SSA) should apply criteria such as, but not limited to, the criteria we used in our review and revise its criteria based on the results of its reviews to continuously improve the effectiveness of the process.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2019

**Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Beneficiaries with Overpayments on Suspended and Terminated Records** (A-07-18-50317, issued 9/25/19)

**\$17,976,178 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 2:** Establish a process to identify overpayments that exist on suspended or terminated Social Security numbers that the Re-entitled Beneficiaries process does not detect, so the Agency can transfer and recover them via benefit withholding.

**Overpayments Pending Collection for Miscellaneous Reasons** (A-04-18-50546, issued 9/24/19)<sup>2</sup>

**\$33,673,719 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 2:** Identify and resolve all debtors with a miscellaneous due process status for longer than 1 year.

**The Social Security Administration's Accounting for, and Monitoring of, Court-ordered Restitutions** (A-04-18-50633, issued 9/24/19)

**\$6,734,317 Funds Put to Better Use**

**Recommendation 2:** Use the reconciled list, mentioned in recommendation 1, to ensure the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) is collecting the court-ordered restitutions, and if not being collected, use all methods of recovery and/or contact DOJ, as required by policy, to determine whether civil actions should be taken.

2. SSA considers this recommendation implemented; however, it has not provided sufficient information to enable our audit team to verify that it has fully implemented it.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2019 (Continued)

**Dedicated Account Underpayments Payable to Children Receiving Supplemental Security Income** ([A-04-18-50607](#), issued 9/17/19)

**\$65,223,112 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 2:** Identify and take corrective action on the remaining population of Supplemental Security Income recipients with unpaid dedicated account underpayments.

**Follow-up: Minor Children Receiving Social Security Benefits Without a Representative Payee** ([A-13-17-50169](#), issued 6/6/19)

**\$22,499,184 Funds Put to Better Use**

**Recommendation 2:** Implement a process to periodically identify all children under age 17 and 5 months being paid directly; and determine and document whether the Agency needs to appoint representative payees.

**Recovery of Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Overpayments When a Contingently Liable Beneficiary Stops Receiving Benefits** ([A-04-18-50651](#), issued 5/15/19)

**\$15,101,940 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 2:** Review and take action to remove the overpayment balance from the 4,690 terminated contingently liable beneficiaries and transfer the debt balance to the original debtor for an immediate payment of the overpayment or seek recovery through additional debt collection tools.

**The Social Security Administration's Application of Due-process Provisions for Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Overpayments** ([A-07-18-50622](#), issued 3/29/19)

**\$144,322,321 Questioned Costs  
\$259,024,702 Funds Put to Better Use**

**Recommendation 2:** Improve its alert and quality review processes for overpayments requiring manual notices to ensure notices are complete, accurate, and sent timely.

**Processing of Deferred Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Cases with a High Risk of Benefit Payment Error** ([A-05-18-50620](#), issued 3/15/19)

**\$39,514,050 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 3:** Review the population of deferred OASDI cases we identified to assess whether additional cases need correction.

**Accuracy of Disability Entitlement Dates for Primary Beneficiaries Who Previously Filed Disability Claims** ([A-07-18-50257](#), issued 12/21/18)

**\$376,918,787 Questioned Costs  
\$279,264,694 Funds Put to Better Use**

**Recommendation 4:** Determine whether SSA needs to review additional beneficiaries who had prior Disability Insurance benefits filings and may have incorrect entitlement dates.



## ■ Fiscal Year 2018

**The Social Security Administration's Use of Administrative Tolerance Waivers** (A-04-16-50145, issued 8/1/18)

**\$12,568,202 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 1:** Establish controls in the new Debt Management Product, as part of its Debt Management modernization initiative, that ensure technicians can only use the administrative tolerance waiver for overpayments allowable under the provision.

**Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Debtors Who Were Not Current on an Installment Agreement** (A-04-18-50265, issued 5/25/18)

**\$88,295,888 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 1:** Review the 12,269 delinquent debtor records and take action, where appropriate, to begin benefit adjustment or recovery using its external collection tools.

**Higher Benefits for Dually Entitled Widow(er)s Had They Delayed Applying for Retirement Benefits** (A-09-18-50559, issued 2/14/18)

**\$131,817,936 Questioned Costs**  
**\$9,847,464 Funds Put To Better Use**

**Recommendation 1:** Take action, as appropriate, for the 41 beneficiaries identified by our audit.

**Recommendation 2:** Evaluate the results for the 41 beneficiaries in our sample and determine whether SSA should review the remaining population of 13,514 beneficiaries.

**Interim Benefits Paid After a Disability Claim is Denied** (A-02-18-50543, issued 9/13/18)

**\$2,142,834 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 1:** Review and take appropriate actions to correct the cases we determined were not accurately processed.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2017

**Widow(er)s Eligible for an Earlier Initial Month of Entitlement** (A-09-17-50187, issued 8/7/17)

**\$285,191,557 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 2:** Determine the feasibility of reviewing the remaining population of widow(er)s who may be eligible for additional months of benefits before their application filing date and could have chosen an earlier initial month of entitlement.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2016

**Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits Withheld Pending a Windfall Offset Determination** (A-09-15-15041, issued 3/21/16)

**\$71,596,964 Questioned Costs**

**Recommendation 2:** Evaluate the results of its actions for the 58 beneficiaries and take appropriate action to address the remaining population of 61,734 beneficiaries identified during the current audit.

# Significant Non-Monetary Recommendations from Prior Fiscal Years for Which Corrective Actions Have Not Been Completed



**Total Unimplemented Significant Non-Monetary Recommendations  
Fiscal Years 2016 – 2020**

Report Title, Report Number, Issue Date  
Unimplemented Recommendation(s)\

## ■ Fiscal Year 2020

**Miscellaneous Benefit Suspensions for Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Beneficiaries** (**A-07-19-50799**, issued 9/21/20)

**Recommendation 3:** Implement controls, such as systems alerts and management reports, to identify beneficiaries in miscellaneous suspense status and ensure employees take corrective actions timely.

**Retirement Beneficiaries Potentially Eligible for Widow(er)'s Benefits** (**A-13-13-23109**, 6/9/20)

**Recommendation 5:** Develop additional processes to identify retirement beneficiaries who are potentially eligible for widow(er)'s benefits.

**Manual Actions on Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Post-entitlement Alerts** (**A-07-18-50621**, issued 3/9/20)

**Recommendation 6:** Implement a quality review focused specifically on manually processed Title II Redesign alerts to ensure the accuracy of this workload improves.

**Beneficiaries with Representative Payees and Earnings** (**A-02-17-50143**, issued 3/5/20)

**Recommendation 4:** Revise notices sent to beneficiaries and their representative payees informing them of benefit increases due to additional earnings to include the employer(s) name, earnings amounts, a reminder to report errors to the Social Security Administration (SSA), and instructions on reporting errors.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2019

**Dedicated Account Underpayments Payable to Children Receiving Supplemental Security Income** ([A-04-18-50607](#), issued 9/17/19)

**Recommendation 3:** Improve controls to ensure it timely pays dedicated account underpayments for children receiving Supplemental Security Income, such as establishing management reports, retaining diaries, and/or adding automation as discussed in the report.

**Recovery of Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Overpayments When a Contingently Liable Beneficiary Stops Receiving Benefits** ([A-04-18-50651](#), issued 5/15/19)

**Recommendation 3:** Establish controls to remove the outstanding debt from terminated contingently liable beneficiaries and transfer the balance to the original debtor for an immediate payment of the overpayment or seek recovery through additional debt collection tools when available.

**Beneficiaries Whose Payments Have Been Suspended and Who Have Death Information on the Numident** ([A-09-15-15039](#), issued 12/21/18)

**Recommendation 2:** Develop controls for suspended beneficiaries with death information on the Numident to ensure they are resolved in a timely manner.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2018

**Using Nursing Home Data to Determine Suitability of Representative Payees** ([A-03-16-50056](#), issued 3/21/18)

**Recommendation 1:** Review and analyze the Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services nursing home data to determine whether it can be a tool to assess the suitability of organizational payees that are nursing homes to ensure they are serving beneficiaries' best interests, especially those organizational payees that might not meet SSA's monitoring criteria.

**Higher Benefits for Dually Entitled Widow(er)s Had They Delayed Applying for Retirement Benefits** ([A-09-18-50559](#), issued 2/14/18)

**Recommendation 4:** Determine whether it should develop additional controls to ensure it informs widow(er) beneficiaries of their option to delay their application for retirement benefits.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2017

**The Social Security Administration's Telework Program and Its Effect on Customer Service (Congressional Response Report)** ([A-04-17-50267](#), issued 7/12/17)

**Recommendation 1:** Determine whether additional customer service or production metrics would assist in measuring how telework affects field offices' ability to provide customer service and employee productivity.

**Recommendation 3:** Determine the effect telework has on customer wait times when a field office experiences an unusually high number of visitors.

## ■ Fiscal Year 2016

**Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits Withheld Pending a Windfall Offset Determination** (**A-09-15-15041**, issued 3/21/16)

**Recommendation 4:** Periodically identify and select for review beneficiaries whose Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance benefits are being withheld pending a windfall offset determination.

---



## Open Recommendations and Reports with Unimplemented Recommendations

The Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General has open recommendations dating from Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. All recommendations from years prior to FY 2012 are closed. The chart below identifies the number of reports with unimplemented recommendations by year and the aggregate potential cost savings of those recommendations.

### Reports Issued through March 31, 2021

Reports with Open Recommendations			
Fiscal Year	Number of Reports with Unimplemented Recommendations	Number of Unimplemented Recommendations	Dollar Value of Aggregate Potential Cost Savings
2021 (as of March 31)	14	30	\$1,441,026,705
2020	15	35	\$2,032,152,209
2019	21	42	\$2,222,585,335
2018	12	17	\$271,600,335
2017	4	7	\$657,415,597
2016	5	12	\$99,571,198
2015	2	2	N/A
2014	6	6	\$136,153
2013	2	2	N/A
2012	3	3	\$196,258,314
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>\$6,920,745,946</b>

Below is additional detail for each report included in the Number of Reports column above containing an outstanding unimplemented recommendation. All audit reports are available on our website at [this link](#).

\*Denotes that report contains significant unimplemented recommendation as reported in [Appendix D](#) or [Appendix E](#).

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
Achieving a Better Life Experience Accounts	A-02-18-50357	3/26/21	\$18,140
Match of Colorado Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-06-18-50849	3/19/21	\$11,110,033
Match of Louisiana Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-06-18-50907	12/22/20	\$18,935,179

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
Follow-up on Underpayments Payable to Terminated Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Beneficiaries	A-09-19-50848	12/11/20	<b>\$149,221,531</b>
Match of Mississippi Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-08-19-50816	12/11/20	<b>\$9,583,768</b>
Follow-up on Disabled Supplemental Security Income Recipients Potentially Eligible for Childhood Disability Benefits	A-13-18-50714	12/10/20	<b>\$22,115,280</b>
Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits to Individuals Who Are Recorded as Deceased on the Supplemental Security Record	A-13-17-50176	12/9/20	<b>\$1,114,939</b>
Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Child Beneficiaries Receiving Benefits Under Multiple Records	A-08-19-50814	12/7/20	<b>\$18,022,510</b>
Supplemental Security Income Recipients Denied Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits Based on Lack of Technical Evidence	A-05-18-50654	11/30/20	<b>\$135,144,563</b>
Security of the Social Security Administration's Disability Case Processing System	A-14-20-50896	11/20/20	<b>N/A</b>
Benefits Payable to Widow(er)s Subject to Government Pension Offset Had They Delayed Their Application	A-09-19-50791	11/19/20	<b>\$54,878,895</b>
Social Security Administration Beneficiaries Eligible for Total and Permanent Disability Federal Student Loan Discharge	A-06-17-50281	11/9/20	<b>\$25,933,386</b>
Improper Payments to Retired Beneficiaries Who Worked Before Full Retirement Age	A-09-18-50685	11/4/20	<b>\$8,350,912</b>
Disabled Beneficiaries Whose Benefits Have Been Suspended for Address Development, Whereabouts Unknown or Miscellaneous Reasons	A-09-18-50523	10/21/20	<b>\$986,597,569</b>
The Social Security Administration's Rejection of State Electronic Death Registration Reports*	A-08-18-50499	9/21/20	<b>\$53,383,404</b>
Miscellaneous Benefit Suspensions for Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Beneficiaries*	A-07-19-50799	9/21/20	<b>\$377,577,400</b>
Accuracy of Supplemental Security Income Recipients' Reports of Separation	A-02-14-31417	7/30/20	<b>\$496,382</b>
The Social Security Administration's Actions to Resolve Potentially Fraudulent Internet Claims	A-09-18-50603	6/11/20	<b>\$22,083,797</b>
Retirement Beneficiaries Potentially Eligible for Widow(er)'s Benefits*	A-13-13-23109	6/9/20	<b>\$724,767,623</b>

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
Agency Processing of Duplicate Payment Detection Alerts*	A-05-19-50796	5/6/20	<b>\$24,314,735</b>
Match of Pennsylvania Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-15-18-50679	3/23/20	<b>\$24,267,618</b>
Manual Actions on Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Post-entitlement Alerts*	A-07-18-50621	3/9/20	<b>\$616,427,374</b>
Beneficiaries with Representative Payees and Earnings*	A-02-17-50143	3/5/20	<b>\$10,853,640</b>
Follow-up: Beneficiaries Who Had Not Cashed Their Checks Within 1 Year	A-09-18-50562	12/23/19	<b>\$97,311,977</b>
Multiple Social Security Numbers Assigned to Non-citizens Using the Enumeration Beyond Entry Program	A-08-18-50472	12/17/19	<b>N/A</b>
The Social Security Administration's Controls Over Malicious Software and Data Exfiltration	A-14-18-50709	12/4/19	<b>N/A</b>
The Social Security Administration's Controls over Malware Introduced by Email Phishing	A-14-18-50710	12/4/19	<b>N/A</b>
Accuracy of Manual Actions for Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Underpayments over \$6,000	A-03-18-50703	12/2/19	<b>\$80,668,259</b>
Match of Delaware Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records	A-15-18-50662	11/27/19	<b>N/A</b>
Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Beneficiaries with Overpayments on Suspended and Terminated Records*	A-07-18-50317	9/25/19	<b>\$17,976,178</b>
The Social Security Administration's Accounting for, and Monitoring of, Court-ordered Restitutions*	A-04-18-50633	9/24/19	<b>\$9,541,711</b>
Overpayments Pending Collection for Miscellaneous Reasons*	A-04-18-50546	9/24/19	<b>\$33,673,719</b>
Dedicated Account Underpayments Payable to Children Receiving Supplemental Security Income*	A-04-18-50607	9/17/19	<b>\$65,223,112</b>
The Social Security Administration's Controls for Identifying Potentially Fraudulent Internet Claims	A-09-18-50655	9/13/19	<b>N/A</b>
The Social Security Administration's Processing of Returned Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Payments	A-07-18-50570	9/12/19	<b>\$18,964,672</b>

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
Supplemental Security Income Underpayments Due Deceased Recipients*	A-06-18-50608	9/10/19	<b>\$467,994,323</b>
Security of the Social Security Administration's Cloud Environment	A-14-18-50498	8/29/19	<b>N/A</b>
Windfall Elimination Provision Exemptions*	A-13-17-34132	8/8/19	<b>\$1,835,472</b>
Follow-up: Aged Beneficiaries Whose Benefits Have Been Suspended for Address, Whereabouts Unknown, or Foreign Enforcement	A-09-16-50077	8/6/19	<b>\$497,883,609</b>
Volume Representative Payee for the Social Security Administration in Connecticut	A-15-18-50443	6/24/19	<b>N/A</b>
Follow-up: Minor Children Receiving Social Security Benefits Without A Representative Payee*	A-13-17-50169	6/6/19	<b>\$22,499,184</b>
Follow-up: Underpayments on Prior Supplemental Security Income Records	A-07-18-50676	6/6/19	<b>\$127,431,265</b>
The Social Security Administration's Compliance with the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012 in the Fiscal Year 2018 Agency Financial Report	A-15-18-50678	5/20/19	<b>N/A</b>
Recovery of Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Overpayments When a Contingently Liable Beneficiary Stops Receiving Benefits*	A-04-18-50651	5/15/19	<b>\$17,770,777</b>
The Social Security Administration's Application of Due-process Provisions for Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Overpayments*	A-07-18-50622	3/29/19	<b>\$246,093,782</b>
Processing of Deferred Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Cases with a High Risk of Benefit Payment Error*	A-05-18-50620	3/15/19	<b>\$39,514,050</b>
Supplemental Security Income Underpayments	A-15-18-50612	12/28/18	<b>N/A</b>
Accuracy of Disability Entitlement Dates for Primary Beneficiaries Who Previously Filed Disability Claims*	A-07-18-50257	12/21/18	<b>\$656,658,460</b>
Beneficiaries Whose Payments Have Been Suspended and Have Death Information on the Numident*	A-09-15-15039	12/21/18	<b>N/A</b>
The Social Security Administration's Programs and Projects that Assist Beneficiaries in Returning to Work	A-04-18-50600	11/5/18	<b>N/A</b>
Effectiveness of the Social Security Administration's Medicare Non-utilization Project	A-08-17-50261	9/19/18	<b>\$17,583,591</b>
Interim Benefits Paid After a Disability Claim is Denied*	A-02-18-50543	9/13/18	<b>\$2,142,834</b>



Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
The Social Security Administration's Comprehensive Integrity Review Process	A-14-17-50097	9/10/18	N/A
Institutionalized Beneficiaries Who Have Earnings	A-02-17-50140	8/20/18	N/A
The Social Security Administration's Use of Administrative Tolerance Waivers*	A-04-16-50145	8/1/18	\$12,568,202
Overpayments Not Collected Through Benefit Withholding*	A-07-18-50278	7/16/18	\$9,344,420
Beneficiaries in Suspended Payment Status Pending the Selection of a Representative Payee	A-09-17-50202	6/1/18	N/A
Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Debtors Who Were Not Current on an Installment Agreement*	A-04-18-50265	5/25/18	\$88,295,888
Manual Adjustments to Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Overpayments*	A-07-18-50294	4/9/18	N/A
Undeliverable Social Security Number Cards	A-15-17-50279	4/2/18	N/A
Using Nursing Home Data to Determine Suitability of Representative Payees*	A-03-16-50056	3/21/18	N/A
Higher Benefits for Dually Entitled Widow(er)s Had They Delayed Applying for Retirement Benefits*	A-09-18-50559	2/14/18	\$141,665,400
Widow(er)s Eligible for an Earlier Initial Month of Entitlement*	A-09-17-50187	8/7/17	\$285,453,378
Cross-referred Social Security Numbers*	A-06-13-23091	7/17/17	N/A
The Social Security Administration's Telework Program and Its Effect on Customer Service*	A-04-17-50267	7/12/17	N/A
Individual Representative Payees Who Do Not Have a Social Security Number in the Social Security Administration's Payment Records	A-09-16-50159	2/17/17	\$371,962,319
Access to the Social Security Administration's my Social Security Online Services	A-14-15-15010	9/29/16	N/A
The Social Security Administration's Plan to Achieve Self-Support Program	A-08-16-50030	9/27/16	N/A
Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits Withheld Pending a Windfall Offset Determination*	A-09-15-15041	3/21/16	\$71,596,964
Households with Multiple Children Receiving Supplemental Security Income Payments Because of Mental Impairments	A-08-14-14098	3/2/16	N/A
Higher Retirement Benefits Payable to Families of Disabled Beneficiaries	A-09-14-34080	2/2/16	\$27,974,234

Report Title	Report Number	Issue Date	Dollar Value
Supplemental Security Income Overpayments Pending a Collection Determination by the Social Security Administration*	A-07-15-15030	9/22/15	N/A
Fraud Risk Performance Audit of the Social Security Administration's Disability Programs	A-15-15-25002	4/29/15	N/A
Auxiliary Beneficiaries Who Do Not Have Their Own Social Security Number	A-01-14-14036	9/29/14	\$136,153
Payments to Individuals with Deaths Reported in California from 1980 to 1987	A-06-14-21416	8/14/14	N/A
Access Controls over the Business Services Online	A-03-13-13015	6/5/14	N/A
Supplemental Security Income Recipients Who Had Not Cashed Their Checks Within 1 Year	A-09-13-23023	4/7/14	N/A
Improper Use of Children's Social Security Numbers	A-03-12-21269	3/31/14	N/A
Supplemental Security Income Telephone Wage Reporting*	A-15-12-11233	2/6/14	N/A
Direct Deposit Changes Initiated Through Financial Institutions and the Social Security Administration's Internet and Automated 800-Number Applications	A-14-12-21271	12/20/12	N/A
Benefit Payments Managed by Representative Payees of Children in Pennsylvania's State Foster Care Programs	A-13-12-11245	12/4/12	N/A
Management Advisory Report: Supplemental Security Income Payments to Multi-recipient Households	A-06-09-29149	8/7/12	\$62,563,749
Beneficiaries Who Had Not Cashed their Social Security Checks Within 1 Year	A-09-10-20133	7/19/12	\$133,694,565
Title II Deceased Beneficiaries Who Do Not Have Death Information on the Numident	A-09-11-21171	7/9/12	N/A

## Audit Reports Issued Prior to the Reporting Period for Which No Management Decision Had Been Made by the End of This Reporting Period

We do not have any audit reports with recommendations issued by March 31, 2021, for which no management decision had been made by the end of this reporting period.

## Significant Management Decisions That Were Revised

We have no significant management decisions to report that were revised during the reporting period.



## Draft Audit Reports for Which Agency Comments Were Not Provided Within 60 Days

The Social Security Administration did not respond to one audit report issued to it for comment by March 31, 2021, within 60 days:

- **Achieving a Better Life Experience Accounts (A-02-18-50357)** — Draft report was issued December 1, 2020, but comments were not provided until March 3, 2021.

The agency requested three extensions to perform research and consult with counsel on recommendations they disagreed with, to accommodate transitions due to the change in administration, and to continue “working out” their responses to some of the recommendations. OIG acknowledges that based on SSA’s additional analysis and further information provided to the audit team, one recommendation from the draft report was removed and another was reworded for the final report. Additionally, subsequent to the final report the Agency continued to disagree with another recommendation, which we later agreed to close.

## Closed Audits and Investigations Not Available to the Public

For this reporting period, we did not have any audits not made available to the public. In addition, we did not issue any reports containing “restricted information” due to the sensitivity of the reported information and findings. We do not have any investigations involving a senior Government employee that were closed and not disclosed to the public.

## *Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996 Compliance*

Section 804(b) of the *Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996* requires the Office of the Inspector General to report whether the agency has met the milestones in a remediation plan. Because the Social Security Administration is in compliance with the *Federal Financial Management Integrity Act of 1996*, it does not have a remediation plan. Therefore, we have no information to report.

## Instances of Agency Interference or Refusal to Provide Information

During this reporting period, we have no instances of Social Security Administration (SSA) interference with Office of the Inspector General (OIG) independence to report, and no instances to report in which SSA employees refused to provide information or assistance to the OIG.



## Peer Reviews

### ■ Office of Audit

Generally accepted government auditing standards require that our Office of Audit (OA) undergo a peer review every 3 years to determine whether we suitably designed our system of quality control, and whether we are complying with that system, to provide us with reasonable assurance of conforming with applicable professional standards.

- The final System Review Report related to our most recent peer review, conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Inspector General (OIG), was issued in September 2021. We received a rating of “pass,” which means that the review team concluded that the system of quality control for the audit organization had been suitably designed and complied with, to provide us with reasonable assurance of performing and reporting in conformity with applicable professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements in all material respects. The DoD OIG identified no deficiencies that affected the nature of the report. Further, there were no findings or recommendations because of this peer review.
- We are currently conducting a peer review of the Department of Transportation OIG audit organization.
- There are no outstanding recommendations from prior peer reviews we completed of other OIGs, nor from prior peer reviews other OIGs completed of our OA.

### ■ Office of Investigations

Federal OIG investigative offices must undergo a peer review every 3 years to ensure that the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency *Quality Standards for Investigations* and the *Quality Standards for Digital Forensics* are followed, and that law enforcement powers conferred by Section 6(e) of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, or other authorities, are properly exercised. Each OIG is required to implement and maintain a system of quality control for its investigative operations that ensures compliance with required standards.

- We did not complete a peer review of any other OIG, nor did any other OIG complete a peer review of our Office of Investigations (OI), during this reporting period.
- There are no outstanding recommendations from prior peer reviews we completed of other OIGs, nor from prior peer reviews other OIGs completed of our OI.

## Investigations Involving Senior Government Employees Where Allegations of Misconduct Were Substantiated

During this reporting period, the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General closed one case of alleged misconduct by senior government officials that was not disclosed to the public. The allegations were partially substantiated as detailed below.

■ **Description of Investigation:** A senior government employee within SSA was alleged to have used an SSA issued computer and iPhone to access websites containing inappropriate adult content, and was alleged to have engaged in other inappropriate computer use and illegal activity.

■ **Status: Closed**

■ **Disposition:** The allegation that the employee used his SSA issued computer and iPhone to access websites containing inappropriate adult content was partially substantiated. The investigation found that the employee's assigned computer was unsuccessfully used to attempt to access websites containing inappropriate adult content. The other allegations were not substantiated. SSA reported that the employee was issued a 14-day suspension for misusing government equipment.

■ **DoJ Referral:** Yes

■ **DoJ Referral Date:** November 27, 2019



# Semiannual Report to Congress

April 1, 2021 — September 30, 2021

---

Office of the Inspector General | OIG 85-007

Produced and published at U.S. taxpayer expense