



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 3, 2026

Media Inquiries: <https://oig.ssa.gov>
oig.press@ssa.gov

Report Finds SSA Could Improve the Administration of its Programs by Modernizing its Data-Matching Systems

Outdated matching rules left millions of external records unverified – limiting SSA's ability to prevent improper payments

A new report from the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) concluded SSA could increase verified matches for data the Agency receives from external parties and improve the administration of its programs by enhancing the criteria it uses in its Numident verification systems.

Through over 3,400 data-exchange agreements, SSA obtains information from external parties—such as prisons, the Internal Revenue Service, and state agencies—to administer its programs. The data is critical to helping SSA maintain accurate beneficiary records and prevent improper payments.

SSA uses various methods to verify information, including electronically comparing external data with the Numident—the Agency's database containing personally identifiable information for all individuals assigned Social Security numbers. The Agency's Numident verification systems help ensure the Agency correctly associates the information it receives through data exchanges with the appropriate individuals' records.

The OIG reviewed four Numident verification systems which—between FY 2021 and 2025—processed 13.9 billion transactions involving data SSA received from external sources. For 1.3 billion of these transactions, SSA's systems determined the personally identifiable information associated with the external data did not match SSA's records. The auditors focused their review on these nonmatches to determine whether improvements could be made.

The OIG sampled some of these nonmatches and found some of SSA's automated systems failed to verify incoming data when minor name discrepancies were present—even though existing manual verification tolerances or criteria used in other SSA systems would have concluded the data, in fact, matched. Some of the incoming data could have been verified using enhanced criteria or advanced analytics similar to those used by other federal agencies.

*Members of the press may make inquiries to Social Security OIG at oig.press@ssa.gov.
Connect with us on social media: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [X](#) | [YouTube](#)*

“Ensuring SSA can accurately identify and match incoming data is fundamental to maintaining the integrity of its programs,” said Michelle L. Anderson, Assistant Inspector General for Audit as First Assistant. “Enhancing these systems will not only improve accuracy—it will reduce manual workloads, strengthen program administration, and help prevent improper payments.”

The report notes even a modest improvement—a one percent increase in verified matches—could result in millions of additional accurate matches annually.

The OIG also found inconsistencies in the way SSA components applied matching criteria across various verification systems. Because systems were developed and managed independently, matching standards varied, leading to avoidable nonmatches and inefficient processing. In addition, SSA has not routinely assessed risks or updated system criteria to address evolving program needs.

SSA plans to consolidate several Numident verification systems into a centralized platform, but system owners have not developed plans to strengthen the current matching criteria. The OIG emphasized refining those criteria, guided by formal risk assessments, will be essential to improving the impact of SSA's data exchanges.

The OIG recommended that SSA:

- Establish processes to ensure Agency components collaborate when developing and maintaining matching criteria.
- Conduct periodic risk assessments and enhance criteria where appropriate to increase verified matches and improve the integrity of SSA's programs.

SSA agreed with the recommendations and stated it will implement them.

Read the full report [here](#).

###