



OIG

Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2016-2020

Revised January 2020

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Executive Summary

Our *Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2016 through 2020* follows the framework established by the *Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010* and the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended (IG Act). The January 2020 updates are necessary to reflect organizational changes and are based on OIG's prior performance and industry standards.

Three strategic goals serve as the Plan's overall framework. The first goal focuses on the *impact* we have on enhancing the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) programs and operations. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) components are committed to improving SSA's program's and operations by promoting OIG-wide processes for cross-component communications, identifying mission critical issues, and prioritizing investigations, audits, and counsel actions.

The second goal reflects the *value* we provide to SSA, Congress, the American public, and other key decision-makers by providing quality products and services in a timely manner. It is imperative that we deliver products and services that ensure continual improvement and effectively meet the needs of our stakeholders. Therefore, we must integrate best practices and information technology investments to maximize efficiency while providing a positive return for each tax dollar invested in OIG activities.

The third goal is to enhance the work experience of our *people*, who are the foundation of the OIG organization. We must create and sustain a positive and rewarding work environment so that we can attract and retain a skilled, motivated, and diverse workforce, which is crucial to our success. To address the different needs across the OIG, we encourage a proactive approach in recruiting and hiring candidates. We believe our commitment to employee engagement and professional development will lead to superior work efficiency and effectiveness.

To achieve these goals across the OIG, we will define objectives and target associated performance measures. We communicate the results of our ongoing efforts to our stakeholders by submitting semiannual reports, reporting violations of law to U.S. Attorney's Offices and State and local prosecutors, and informing Congress and the Commissioner of Social Security of our findings and recommending corrective action. We collaborate periodically with stakeholders, particularly SSA management officials, U.S. Attorneys, and congressional representatives and staff to obtain feedback on our results.

The goals, objectives, and performance measures under our Plan are designed to improve OIG and ensure we provide value to SSA and Congress through effective oversight. Although there are internal and external factors that may affect the achievement of our goals, we are confident that with the necessary resources, our list of accomplishments will grow and benefit SSA and the American public.

Mission Statement

By conducting independent and objective audits, evaluations, and investigations, we inspire public confidence in the integrity and security of SSA's programs and operations and protect them against fraud, waste, and abuse. We provide timely, useful, and reliable information and advice to Administration officials, Congress, and the public.

Vision and Values

We strive for continual improvement in SSA’s programs, operations, and management by proactively seeking new ways to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse. We commit to integrity and excellence by supporting an environment that provides a valuable public service while encouraging employee development and retention and fostering diversity and innovation.

Strategic Goals

The FY 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan includes three strategic goals, each containing a series of crosscutting objectives. We used these objectives to develop our performance measures that support these goals. For the goals in the following chart, the objectives and associated performance measures are described in the Goals, Objectives, and Measures section beginning on page 6.

Strategic Goals	
Impact	Enhance the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of SSA programs and operations.
Value	Provide quality products and services of value in a timely manner to SSA, Congress, the American public, and other key decision-makers while sustaining a positive return for each tax dollar invested in OIG activities.
People	Promote a skilled, motivated, diverse workforce in a positive and rewarding work environment.

Statutory Responsibilities

On March 31, 1995, the SSA OIG was established pursuant to Public Law 103-296, known as the *Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994*. General OIG authority is established under the IG Act, which provides statutory responsibility to protect the integrity of SSA programs and operations. We are an independent and objective organization within SSA dedicated to preventing and detecting fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA's programs and operations. We comply with various statutory laws and their implementing regulation, as well as Federal law enforcement and auditing policies and guidance. The following chart describes some of the statutory laws with provisions affecting OIG's mission and work.

Legislation	Provisions Affecting the Office of the Inspector General
<i>Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended</i>	Requires the Inspector General (IG) to prepare and submit to the Commissioner of Social Security semiannual reports summarizing our activities for the preceding six-month periods, which are required to be transmitted by the Commissioner to Congress within thirty days.
<i>Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982</i>	Requires Federal managers to identify material weaknesses in agency systems of internal accounting and administrative controls, take corresponding corrective actions, and report annually on its evaluation of such controls.
<i>Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990</i>	Requires assessments of SSA's internal control environment to assure the issuance of reliable financial information and to deter fraud, waste, and abuse of SSA resources.
<i>Government Performance and Results Act of 1993</i>	Requires the assessment of the internal control environment over SSA's performance measures.
<i>Government Management Reform Act of 1994</i>	Requires an assessment and evaluation of the (1) reliability of SSA's performance data and (2) extent to which SSA's performance plan meaningfully describes its planned and actual performance.
<i>Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996</i>	Denies Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for fugitives and probation and parole violators, resulting in the OIG's management of the partnership between SSA and local law enforcement to identify and apprehend these individuals.
<i>Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996</i>	Evaluates agency's financial systems compliance with Federal standards.
<i>Reports Consolidation Act of 2000</i>	Requires the IG to provide a summary and assessment of the most serious management and performance challenges facing Federal agencies and their progress in addressing them.
<i>Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002</i>	Requires the IG to evaluate SSA's overall information security program and practices.

<p><i>Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPIA), as amended by the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 and the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, including Executive Order 13520</i></p>	<p>Requires agencies to conduct a risk assessment and identify programs having a significant risk of improper payments, as well as develop corrective action plans for reducing estimated improper payments based on root causes identified. In addition, requires agencies to report, on a quarterly basis, (1) the total amount of high-dollar overpayments made by the agency, (2) any actions the agency has taken or plans to take to recover high-dollar overpayments, and (3) any actions the agency will make to prevent overpayments from occurring in the future.</p> <p>Requires the IG to review the reports provided by the agencies. The IG shall assess the level of risk associated with the applicable programs, determine the extent of oversight warranted, and provide the agency head with recommendations. The IG will determine whether the agencies complied with IPIA, as amended, and may evaluate the accuracy and completeness of reporting and performance in reducing and recapturing improper payments.</p>
<p><i>Social Security Protection Act of 2004</i></p>	<p>Generally denies Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance benefits to persons fleeing prosecution, custody, or confinement after conviction, and to persons violating probation or parole, and permits disqualification of representative payee status for some of those individuals. This legislation resulted in the IG’s management of the partnership between SSA and local law enforcement to identify and apprehend these individuals.</p>
<p><i>Inspector General Reform Act of 2008</i></p>	<p>Requires the IG to post reports and audits to their website within 3 days of the report or audit’s issuance. Also requires that SSA provide a direct link on its website homepage to the OIG’s website.</p>
<p><i>Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014</i></p>	<p>Requires detailed disclosure on agency websites of funds made available to an agency, and amounts expended. Requires the IG to (1) review a statistically valid sampling of the spending data submitted under this Act by SSA; and (2) submit to Congress and make publicly available a report assessing the completeness, timeliness, quality, and accuracy of the data sampled and the implementation and use of data standards by SSA.</p>
<p><i>Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2016</i></p>	<p>Establishes an exemption for IGs from the Computer Matching and Privacy Protection Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act when conducting work to identify and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. Authorizes IGs to have timely access to all relevant agency records. Requires posting of all audit, inspection, or evaluation reports on the OIG website no later than 3 days after submission in final form to the head of the Agency. Requires additional information to be included in the Semiannual Report to Congress, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a summary of audit, inspection, and evaluation reports for which an IG’s agency did not return a comment and for which there are outstanding unimplemented recommendations, including the aggregate potential cost savings of those recommendations;

- statistical tables and metrics showing the total number of issued investigative reports, referrals to prosecuting authorities for criminal prosecution, and indictments from prior referrals;
- a report on each investigation involving a senior government employee where allegations of misconduct were substantiated;
- descriptions of: any whistleblower retaliation; inspection, evaluation, and audit that was closed and not disclosed to the public; investigation involving a senior government employee that was closed and not disclosed to the public; or attempts by an agency to interfere with IG independence, including through budget constraints, resistance to oversight, or delayed information access.

Strategic Planning Process

To develop this Strategic Plan, OIG personnel examined the prior Strategic Plan, reviewed the IG Act and other relevant laws and regulations, and evaluated other Federal OIG goals and indicators. They then suggested strategic goals, objectives, and performance measures that would be useful in monitoring our ability to serve our stakeholders and meet our mission of improving and protecting SSA programs and operations.

In January 2019, Gail S. Ennis was sworn in as Inspector General for the Social Security Administration. Under Inspector General Ennis' leadership, OIG reevaluated this Strategic Plan and made limited changes for FY 2020 based on OIG's prior performance and industry standards. We will continue to reassess OIG goals and objectives as we develop the FY 2021-2025 OIG Strategic Plan to ensure we are meeting stakeholder needs and striving to have maximum impact on SSA program integrity.

Stakeholder Feedback

Our primary stakeholders include members of Congress and congressional staff; the Commissioner of Social Security, SSA senior officials, managers, and staff; the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) and the IG community at large; OIG employees; and the public. Other stakeholders include the Government Accountability Office, the Office of Special Counsel, the Office of Government Ethics, the Department of Justice, other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, other outside groups, both public and private, and other parties interested in improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity of SSA programs and operations. We meet periodically with stakeholders, particularly SSA management officials, U.S. Attorneys, and congressional representatives and staff to obtain feedback on our work.

Internal Factors Affecting the Achievement of Strategic Goals

For the Strategic Plan to succeed as a management tool, all OIG employees must embrace and commit to this Plan. Major internal challenges include:

- implementing unified leadership, commitment, and involvement to ensure that we can effectively execute the Plan;
- designing and implementing processes and technology needed to enhance information sharing; and
- adjusting to changing workload requirements and resource constraints.

External Factors Affecting the Achievement of Strategic Goals

External factors such as budget or human resource constraints, SSA's ability to implement recommendations, congressional and SSA priorities, and legislative or executive mandates can affect our ability to achieve our strategic goals. For example, we may have to redirect resources due to:

- events that require us to address national security or public safety issues;
- new or emerging fraud schemes, such as vulnerabilities in SSA's online services; or
- an inability to hire staff with specific expertise or skills.

Goals, Objectives, and Measures

Goal 1: Impact

Enhance the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of SSA programs and operations

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote an OIG-wide process for cross-component communications on potential programmatic and operational vulnerabilities
2. Communicate with the Agency to identify mission-critical issues and operations that would benefit from OIG audit and investigation services and develop practical solutions to address identified weaknesses or deficiencies
3. Prioritize investigations, audits, and counsel actions to promote more efficient and effective SSA programs and operations

Performance Measure 1.1

Achieve a 5-year average implementation rate of 85% for accepted recommendations aimed at improving the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of SSA

- **Definition:** The total number of accepted recommendations implemented by SSA during the past 5 FYs divided by the total number of recommendations SSA agreed to implement during the past 5 FYs.
- **Demonstrates:** The impact of OIG recommendations on the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of SSA programs and operations.
- **Source:** OA's management information system

Performance Measure 1.2

Ensure that at least 80% of all cases opened during the fiscal year directly relate to improper payments within SSA's Title II and Title XVI programs

- **Definition:** The total number of cases opened during the FY that are directly related to the Title II or Title XVI programs divided by the total number of cases opened during the fiscal year.
- **Demonstrates:** OIG's focus on investigations that result in reducing fraud, waste, and abuse
- **Source:** National Investigative Case Management System (NICMS)

Performance Measure 1.3

Achieve a successful conclusion on at least 75% of all Title II and Title XVI cases closed during the FY

- **Definition:** The number of closed Title II and Title XVI cases successfully concluded during the FY divided by the total number of Title II and Title XVI cases closed during the FY. A successful criminal conclusion occurs when a subject either pleads guilty or is convicted, or accepts pre-trial diversion or

probation before judgment. A successful civil conclusion occurs when a subject either pleads guilty or is convicted, or when a Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) referral is accepted resulting from Office of Investigations' casework. A successful administrative conclusion occurs when SSA denies, terminates, suspends, recovers, or reduces a benefit; or removes a representative payee, based on an OIG investigation.

- **Demonstrates:** OIG productivity in reducing fraud, waste, and abuse
- **Source:** NICMS

Goal 2: Value

Provide quality products and services of value in a timely manner to SSA, Congress, the American public, and other key decision-makers while sustaining a positive return for each tax dollar invested in OIG activities

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain a “positive-return” culture within OIG
2. Ensure continual improvement of OIG products by using a product and service quality assessment instrument to measure internal and external user satisfaction
3. Implement best practices to ensure quality and timeliness of OIG products and services
4. Utilize information technology investments to enhance OIG work products and service delivery

Performance Measure 2.1

Generate a positive return in excess of \$14 for every tax dollar invested in OIG activities¹

- **Definition:** The total amount of all OIG savings identified during the FY divided by the total amount of appropriated funds during the same period
- **Demonstrates:** The dollar value returned for each tax dollar invested in SSA OIG
- **Source:** Division of Budget and Logistics files, OA's management information system, and NICMS

Performance Measure 2.2

Review and take action within 60 days on 90% of all allegations received

- **Definition:** The total number of allegations closed or acted upon within 60 days during the FY divided by the total number of allegations received during the FY
- **Demonstrates:** OIG's ability to initiate timely action on allegations received
- **Source:** NICMS

¹ This return reflects the average of all Federal offices of inspector general for fiscal year 2018, based on testimony given by Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency Chair Michael Horowitz on September 18, 2019, at a hearing titled, “Overseeing the Overseers: Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency @ 10 Years.”

<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/GO/GO24/20190918/109944/HHRG-116-GO24-Wstate-HorowitzM-20190918.pdf>.

Performance Measure 2.3

Complete investigative fieldwork within 180 days on 75% of all cases

- **Definition:** The total number of investigations closed or referred for prosecution, CMP, SSA or other State or Federal agency action within 180 days during the FY divided by the total investigations closed or referred during the FY
- **Demonstrates:** The ability to conduct investigations in an efficient, timely manner
- **Source:** NICMS

Performance Measure 2.4

Review and take action within 21 days of receipt on 95% of constituent-based congressional inquiries

- **Definition:** The total number of constituent-based congressional inquiries (made by Members of Congress on behalf of one or more constituents) for which action was taken within 21 days of receipt divided by the total number of such inquiries received during the FY. Action taken is defined as
 1. Acknowledgement of receipt to the sender, and
 2. Initial referral to appropriate internal or external entities for development and resolution
- **Demonstrates:** The value we place on being responsive to congressional stakeholders
- **Source:** OIG SharePoint

Performance Measure 2.5

Review and take action within 21 days of receipt on 95% of Civil Monetary Penalty referrals

- **Definition:** The total number of CMP referrals for which action was taken within 21 days of receipt during the FY, divided by the total number of CMP referrals received during the FY. Action taken is defined as
 1. Closing the referral, or
 2. Accepting the referral for CMP action and assigning to an Office of Counsel for Investigations and Enforcement (OCIE) attorney.
- **Demonstrates:** The ability to identify and take timely action on CMP cases
- **Source:** NICMS

Performance Measure 2.6

Achieve a positive external user assessment rating of 85% for product-service quality

- **Definition:** OIG regularly asks external stakeholders, including SSA and other Government entities, such as the Congress, Offices of U.S. Attorneys, and external law enforcement agencies, to rate their level of satisfaction with the quality of OIG products and services. This rating, measured using a five-tier scale, is averaged for each survey given during the FY, and then translated into a percentage, with 85 percent indicating satisfaction.
- **Demonstrates:** The overall quality of OIG products and services as rated by their users
- **Source:** External assessment questionnaires

Performance Measure 2.7

Issue 85% of final audit reports within 1 year of the entrance conference with SSA

- **Definition:** The total number of audit reports issued during the FY within 1 year of the entrance conference divided by the total number of audit reports issued during the FY
- **Demonstrates:** OIG's ability to efficiently focus, plan, conduct, and report timely audit information
- **Source:** OA's management information system

Performance Measure 2.8

Complete 85% of requests for legal advice and review within 30 days

- **Definition:** The total number of legal opinions, subpoenas and audit reviews completed within 30 days of receipt during the FY divided by the total number of requests completed during the FY
- **Demonstrates:** The ability to complete timely legal analysis of OIG products and to issue prompt legal guidance and support
- **Source:** OIG control system

Goal 3: People

Promote a skilled, motivated, and diverse workforce in a positive and rewarding work environment

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify assignment interests and developmental needs of all employees
2. Provide OIG components with training and tools necessary to ensure professional development and skills enhancement
3. Maintain a proactive approach in recruiting and hiring candidates to meet different needs

Performance Measure 3.1

Achieve an annual attrition rate of 6.7% or less²

- **Definition:** The total number of employees voluntarily separated (excluding retirements) during the FY divided by the employees on board at the beginning of the FY
- **Demonstrates:** OIG's ability to provide a quality work experience that encourages staff to pursue their career goals within the OIG
- **Source:** OIG staffing data

² The attrition rate for the Federal government was 6.7% in calendar year 2017, the last year for which data is available.

Performance Measure 3.2

Review and take action within 60 days on 90% of matters raised by the OIG Organizational Health Committee during the fiscal year

- **Definition:** The total number of matters raised by the OIG Organizational Health Committee to OIG senior leadership for which action was taken within 60 days, divided by the total number of matters raised to OIG senior leadership during the FY
- **Demonstrates:** OIG senior leadership' responsiveness to employee concerns and value placed on internal communication
- **Source:** OIG Organizational Health Committee and OIG Weekly Wrap newsletter

Performance Measure 3.3

Ensure that 90% of OIG staff receives 40 or more hours of appropriate developmental and skill-enhancement training annually

- **Definition:** The total number of current OIG staff on board at the beginning of the FY who received at least 40 hours of training during the FY, divided by the current OIG staff on board at the beginning of the FY
- **Demonstrates:** OIG's commitment to continuous staff development and skill enhancement
- **Source:** OIG training database

Conclusion

SSA provides critical services to the American people during times of economic prosperity and economic challenges; and the SSA OIG provides critical oversight of SSA's programs and operations. Whatever challenges await us, SSA stands as an anchor that tethers the American people to security, independence, and peace of mind. As benefits paid begin to outpace revenues received, and record numbers of applicants turn to SSA as they reach retirement age, we must be more diligent than ever in working to improve SSA's efficiency and effectiveness, and to protect SSA's programs from fraud, waste, and abuse.

To accomplish this, we will maintain a focus on addressing persistent management challenges like reducing the disability backlog and modernizing SSA's information technology systems, as well as on conducting high-priority investigations, such as those targeting disability applicants who seek to receive benefits fraudulently or organizational representative payees who misuse their clients' much-needed benefits.

Our Strategic Plan will help us measure our success in providing value and impact to taxpayers and developing and engaging our employees. We are confident that with the necessary resources, our list of accomplishments will grow and benefit SSA and the American public. We will continue to work with SSA and Congress to strengthen the programs that provide timely and accurate benefits to the American public that relies on them.