



Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General

Strategic Plan

2021-2025

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Table of Contents

Message from the Inspector General	2
Office of the Inspector General Roles and Responsibilities.....	3
Overview of the SSA OIG.....	4
Our Mission, Vision, and Values	5
Strategic Framework	6
Strategic Goal 1: Deliver solutions to promote positive change.	7
Strategic Goal 2: Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA programs and operations.	8
Strategic Goal 3: Optimize operations.....	9
Strategic Goal 4: Strengthen our workforce	10
Appendix A: Key Development Factors.....	11

Message from the Inspector General



I am pleased to present the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) Strategic Plan, outlining the direction of SSA OIG through 2025. This plan reflects our mission and vision for the future, describes our values, establishes clear goals and objectives, and outlines the strategies we will employ to reach our goals. We will use this plan as a guide to align our resources and focus our efforts on initiatives that will drive meaningful change to protect taxpayer dollars.

Our mission is *to serve the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations*. We accomplish our mission by conducting independent audits, evaluations, and investigations; searching for and reporting systemic weaknesses in SSA's programs and operations; and providing recommendations for program, operations, and management improvements. In FY 2020, we expanded our priorities to include oversight and investigations work related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have consistently delivered valuable oversight information to SSA, Congress and other stakeholders, and the public. Our work has led to changes in legislation, regulation, policy, and operations. As our workloads grow and evolve, we will continue to deliver products that lead to meaningful change; and we will find new ways to increase our impact. We will take innovative steps forward to improve our organization by building our data analytics capacity, increasing data driven decision-making, and investing in information technology and automation tools. These improvements will lead to a more nimble and responsive organization.

This plan is dynamic and adaptive by design to accommodate the realities of changing circumstances, emerging threats and vulnerabilities, and shifts in priorities. We are committed to regularly reviewing data and discussing our progress and achievements with our stakeholders, and, as necessary, adjusting our plan to best serve taxpayers.

Office of the Inspector General Roles and Responsibilities

The [Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, \(the IG Act\)](#) was intended to increase transparency and accountability in the Executive branch. The IG Act established a statutory Inspector General in cabinet-level agencies to provide independent and objective oversight within their agencies. The Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) was established in 1995 when SSA became an independent agency. SSA OIG conducts its oversight work to combat waste, fraud, and abuse and to promote economy and efficiency within SSA programs and operations.

Role of the Office of the Inspector General

The IG Act directs OIG to execute its mission by:

- Conducting audits and investigations related to agency programs and operations;
- Leading and coordinating activities and recommending policies that promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in agency programs and operations, as well as that prevent and detect fraud and abuse in such programs and operations; and
- Keeping the agency head and Congress fully and currently informed about fraud, waste, abuses, and deficiencies in programs and operations, as well as progress in implementing corrective actions.

OIG Independence

OIG independence from the agency is vital to OIG's ability to carry out its mission and honor its reporting obligations to Congress. This independence helps to limit potential conflicts of interest that exist when an agency program or operation is under scrutiny, protects the Inspector General and OIG employees against reprisal, and allows for objective reporting.

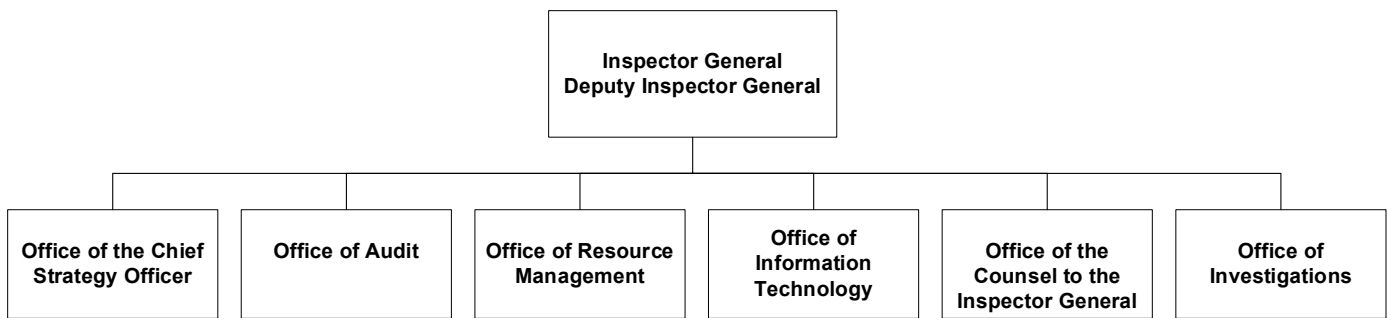
Overview of the SSA OIG

Our Employees

We operate with a staff of over 500 employees that include auditors, investigators, attorneys, analysts, and specialists in information technology, human resources, and budget. Our employees are our greatest strength. They are passionate, dedicated to our mission, and knowledgeable.

Our Offices

Visit the [SSA OIG website \(oig.ssa.gov\)](http://oig.ssa.gov) to read a description of the responsibilities and functions of the offices below.



Our Mission, Vision, and Values

Our mission and vision statements reinforce our statutorily directed purpose and role in the continuous improvement and safeguarding of SSA's programs and operations. Our values represent the overarching principles that guide how we do our work.

Mission

Serve the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations.

Vision

Drive meaningful change to protect taxpayer dollars.

Values



PASSION

through commitment



EXCELLENCE

through teamwork and accountability



INNOVATION

through agility and creativity



PROFESSIONALISM

through integrity



INCLUSION

through respect

Strategic Framework

The [Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 \(GPRA\)](#) and [GPRA Modernization Act of 2010](#) created a strategic framework for federal agencies to communicate long-term plans and priorities, and near-term results. Overall, the GPRA framework serves as a means to improve program effectiveness and strengthen public accountability.

Strategic goals and objectives identify outcomes agencies plan to accomplish over the course of the strategic plan to advance their mission. Performance measures indicate progress toward achieving a strategic objective, and specific targets reflect near term priorities and results. The strategies under each objective are operational activities that will contribute to accomplishing the strategic goals and objectives. Together, these elements form a strong link between long-term planning, resource allocation, and performance.



Our Strategy

Our leadership team, in collaboration with representatives from the field, developed this strategic plan through a series of discussions. In developing the plan, we considered OIG's statutory responsibilities; SSA's mission, strategic plan, and management challenges; Congressional and stakeholder interest; and the Inspector General's priorities. Appendix A provides a brief summary of our evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and potential risks facing OIG.

The plan prepares OIG for potential challenges and opportunities and provides us with a roadmap to advance our mission, focus our efforts, and prioritize our resources.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our organizational performance, adjusting implementation strategies as needed, overcoming barriers to progress, and achieving our desired outcomes. With the necessary resources to support a growing list of oversight responsibilities and priorities, SSA OIG will further benefit SSA and taxpayers. We will continue to work with SSA and Congress to strengthen the programs that provide vital benefits to the American public.

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver solutions to promote positive change.

This goal directly aligns with our vision to *drive meaningful change to protect taxpayer dollars*. Our primary stakeholders include taxpayers, Congress, and the Social Security Administration. We also provide evidence of criminal wrongdoing to the Department of Justice and State and local jurisdictions for prosecution. We are committed to delivering high quality information that is accurate, relevant, and timely so that our stakeholders can take action to prevent or correct wrongdoing and improve operations.

Objective 1: Enhance analyses and collaboration.

Strategy 1: Expand use of root cause analysis.

Strategy 2: Partner with stakeholders to mitigate identified risks.

Strategy 3: Leverage cost benefit analysis to propose actionable results.

Objective 2: Provide timely and high-quality work products.

Strategy 1: Improve mechanisms for priority communications.

Strategy 2: Optimize the allocation of internal and external resources.

Strategy 3: Improve quality controls.

Strategic Goal 2: Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA programs and operations.

SSA OIG has an enormous responsibility to protect taxpayer dollars. We protect the integrity and efficiency of SSA's administration of about one trillion dollars in benefit payments annually to more than 70 million people. OIG strives to continuously improve our approach to oversight work. We will advance our capabilities and impact over the next five years through new initiatives and increased outreach. We will prioritize and focus our work on high impact or high-risk program areas.

Objective 1: Improve education and deterrent efforts.

Strategy 1: Leverage information technology to prioritize high-impact work.

Strategy 2: Implement a comprehensive communications strategy.

Strategy 3: Maximize use of our legal authorities.

Objective 2: Implement a risk-based approach.

Strategy 1: Provide comprehensive training on agency programs and operations.

Strategy 2: Develop and implement an OIG enterprise risk management program.

Strategy 3: Develop risk matrices for operational areas to inform decision-making and align work.

Strategic Goal 3: Optimize operations

Effective internal operations is a key component to successfully achieving our mission. We will continuously evaluate our performance, make adjustments to improve workload management, and update our policies and procedures. For effective and efficient decision-making, we will transform our data assets into high quality, timely, actionable information. We will also build our data analytics capacity and invest in information technology and automation tools that help us to support and enhance investigative, audit, and strategic initiatives.

Objective 1: Improve efficiencies and maximize resources.

Strategy 1: Leverage public and private partnerships to maximize internal resources.

Strategy 2: Align best practices with public and private organizations.

Strategy 3: Ensure maximum utilization through cost benefit analyses.

Strategy 4: Streamline processes to improve workload management.

Strategy 5: Continuously monitor and update policies and procedures.

Objective 2: Improve the use of technology and data resources to drive decision-making, operations, and oversight.

Strategy 1: Increase integration of technology and analytics to inform business operations.

Strategy 2: Expand hardware, software, and automation tools available to users.

Strategy 3: Improve methods of measuring efficiency throughout OIG.

Strategic Goal 4: Strengthen our workforce

Our employees are our organization's greatest strength, and the OIG's success depends on our workforce. Over the next five years, we must build an innovative and agile organization to adapt and respond to changes in oversight needs. We plan to address skills gaps, deepen our leadership bench, and promote employee development, safety, and innovation. Through human capital management, we will recruit and hire talented and diverse candidates who possess mission-critical competencies.

Objective 1: Improve employee development and performance.

Strategy 1: Implement individual development plans for employees and include targeted training.

Strategy 2: Increase detail, developmental, and mentorship opportunities.

Strategy 3: Invest in training and support for managers to effectively address performance.

Objective 2: Improve human capital management to ensure a skilled and diverse workforce.

Strategy 1: Integrate the use of human capital data.

Strategy 2: Create a structured plan to develop emerging leaders.

Strategy 3: Reward creativity and innovation.

Strategy 4: Participate in job fairs, internships, co-ops, and other programs to attract a diverse talent pool.

Appendix A: Key Development Factors

To prepare this strategic plan, the SSA OIG leadership team and representatives from the field evaluated the organization's current state by soliciting feedback from staff, considering SSA program challenges and oversight priorities, and discussing a variety of perspectives. We identified the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and potential risks. Our strategic plan capitalizes on our strengths and exploits available opportunities to overcome challenges and mitigate potential risks.

Workforce: Our passionate, motivated, and knowledgeable employees are our greatest strength. Their dedication and connection to our mission have been and will continue to be a strong asset in achieving our goals. Our employees produce a diverse portfolio of work; however, we must improve training to develop their strengths, address skills gaps, and meet mission-critical organizational needs. We must also provide managers with performance management tools that provide meaningful feedback to employees.

Resources: As the case with many federal agencies, our budget is limited. We must carefully plan and focus our efforts to best use our resources. We must develop a plan for staffing and prioritize investments in information technology and tools to increase our productivity, particularly in the face of continually increasing workloads.

Technology: Technology and data offer a key opportunity. Harnessing the potential of new technology, data, and analytics can help further our mission and increase our impact. Our information technology and data assets must remain protected and secure.

External Stakeholders: We have an opportunity to identify new external partners and stakeholders, as well as to strengthen our existing relationships. Both can aid us in implementing new ideas, generating impactful change, and leveraging resources.

External Factors: External factors, such as government imposter telephone scam calls, threaten government trust and credibility. Additionally, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the government and the economy, as well as on our operations, budget, and productivity could affect our work

SSA Partnership: We must forge a better path forward through leveraging relationships with SSA. A productive partnership can be a more effective way to identify areas of concern or priority, improve operations, and determine underlying causes.



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