



Office *of the* Inspector General
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Informational Report

Hearing Office Average Processing
Times

A-05-15-50083 | September 2015

OIG Office of the Inspector General
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 23, 2015

Refer To:

To: The Commissioner

From: Inspector General

Subject: Hearing Office Average Processing Times (A-05-15-50083)

The attached final report presents the results of the Office of Audit's review of average processing time at the Social Security Administration's hearing offices.

If you wish to discuss the final report, please call me or have your staff contact Steven L. Schaeffer, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, at (410) 965-9700.



Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr.

Attachment

Hearing Office Average Processing Times

A-05-15-50083



September 2015

Office of Audit Report Summary

Background

We are issuing this report to convey information related to average processing time (APT) at the Social Security Administration's (SSA) hearing offices.

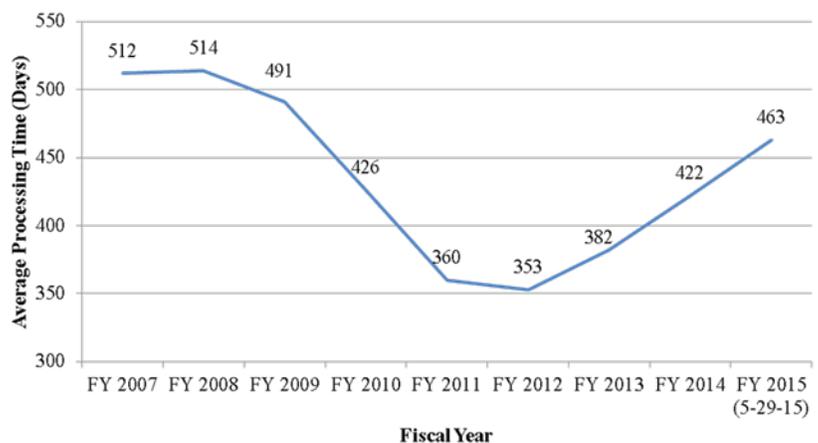
Claimants who are denied disability benefits at a State disability determination services can appeal the decision to an administrative law judge (ALJ) in the Agency's Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR). SSA maintains 164 hearing and satellite offices as well as 5 National Hearing Centers in 47 of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

ODAR's initial appeals process generally entails a hearing before an ALJ as well as the participation of expert witnesses, as appropriate. These hearings can be in-person or via a videoconference.

SSA has a long-term goal of completing the average initial appeals process, from the time it receives the hearing request to the final decision on the case, in an average of 270 days. The Agency calls this the APT.

Summary

As of May 2015, ODAR's national APT for hearing decisions was 463 days. APT has been increasing since Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, when it averaged 353 days. The Agency's performance plan expects APT to be 470 days at the end of FY 2015 and 490 days at the end of FY 2016.



Three of SSA's 10 regions had an APT that exceeded the national average. The Denver Region maintained the lowest APT of 391 days, whereas the Atlanta Region had the highest APT of 508 days—a 117-day variance.

We also reviewed APT at hearing offices in the 10 largest States to identify variances. For example, in May 2015, we found 15 of the 17 hearing offices in California had an APT better than the national average, whereas all 8 offices in Florida had an APT that was worse than the national average. As a result, someone living in Miami, Florida, would wait about 300 days (about 10 months) longer for a hearing than someone living in Orange, California.

ODAR managers said they had a number of tools to address APT issues at hearing offices, including national and regional assistance with case adjudication, case pulling, and decision writing. The Agency was also expanding its hearing capacity through additional hiring and new offices.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ALJ	Administrative Law Judge
APT	Average Processing Time
FY	Fiscal Year
JOV	Judge-Only Video
NCAC	National Case Assistance Center
NHC	National Hearing Center
OCALJ	Office of the Chief Administrative Law Judge
ODAR	Office of Disability Adjudication and Review
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
RVP	Representative Video Project
SAR	Service Area Realignment
SSA	Social Security Administration

BACKGROUND

We are issuing this report to convey information related to average processing time (APT) at the Social Security Administration's (SSA) hearing offices.¹ Claimants who are denied disability benefits at a State disability determination services can appeal the decision to an administrative law judge (ALJ) in the Agency's Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR). As of May 2015, SSA had 164 hearing offices and satellites as well as 5 National Hearing Centers (NHC)² nationwide including Puerto Rico.³

The ODAR appeals process generally entails a hearing before an ALJ and the participation of expert witnesses, as appropriate. These hearings can be in-person or via a videoconference. Moreover, while hearings are usually performed by local ALJs and staff, when an office needs assistance, its workload can be assigned to another hearing office, an NHC, or a National Case Assistance Center (NCAC).⁴

SSA stated its long-term goal for hearing office APT is 270 days.⁵ The Agency has determined that this amount of time is sufficient to ensure due process.⁶

We analyzed hearing workload data and related management information. We also met with ODAR management to discuss workload goals and any actions to adjust hearing office workloads as a result of backlogs and APT variations.

¹ The Agency defines APT as the average number of calendar days from the hearing request date to the disposition date for all dispositions in a report period.

² NHCs generally conduct their hearings by videoconference. NHCs are in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; Falls Church, Virginia; and St. Louis, Missouri.

³ We used the term "office" in this report to represent the 164 hearing and satellite offices and 5 NHCs. SSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 public use data through May 2015 reflected workload statistics for 163 hearing offices and 1 satellite office.

⁴ NCACs assist offices with case assembly, or pulling, and decision writing.

⁵ Former SSA Commissioner Michael J. Astrue, in a June 2012 hearing, stated APT was the "best metric for tracking progress." He also stated, "When people request a hearing, they want to know how long it will take to get a decision. Much like a line in a store, the customer's experience depends not on how many other people are waiting, but on how quickly we help them ... With grocery stores, we can choose where we get our groceries and decide if we are willing to accept a particular store's customer service, but Americans seeking Social Security benefits have only one place to go." *The Appeals Process: Hearing Before H. Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Social Security*, 112th Cong. (June 27, 2012) (statement of Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner, Social Security Administration).

⁶ *ALJ Performance: Hearing Before H. Way and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Social Security, and H. Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Regulator Reform, Commercial, and Antitrust Law*, 112th Cong. (July 11, 2011) (statement of Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner, Social Security Administration).

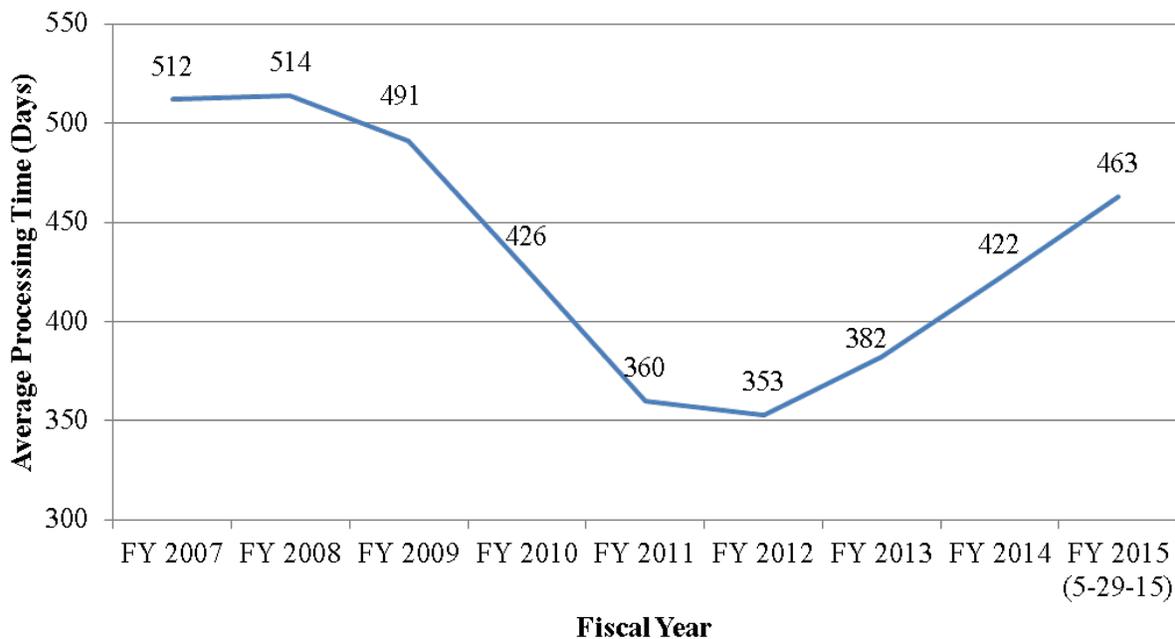
AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME TRENDS

We reviewed APT trends at the national, regional, and hearing office levels. We also reviewed APT by State, focusing on the 10 largest States based on population, to identify variances.

National Average Processing Time

As of May 2015, ODAR’s national APT for hearing decisions was 463 days. APT has been increasing since FY 2012, when it fell to its lowest level in years and averaged 353 days (see Figure 1).⁷ In SSA’s FY 2016 Annual Performance Plan, the Agency stated it anticipates APT will be 470 days at the end of FY 2015 and 490 days at the end of FY 2016.⁸

**Figure 1: Trends in APT for FYs 2007 to 2015
(as of May 29, 2015)**



⁷ We plan to report on the status of the Agency’s 2007 hearings backlog initiatives. See SSA OIG, *Agency Progress in Eliminating the Pending Hearings Backlog and Improving Hearing Timeliness* (A-12-15-15005).

⁸ SSA, *Annual Performance Report, 2014-2016*, p. 84 (this report includes the FY 2014 *Annual Performance Report* and FY 2015-16 *Annual Performance Plans*).

Regional Average Processing Time

As of May 2015, the Denver Region had the lowest APT of 391 days while the Atlanta Region had the highest APT of 508 days, a variance of 117 days. The APT for 3 of the 10 Regions⁹ exceeded the national average (see Table 1).¹⁰

**Table 1: Regional APT in FYs 2012 and 2015
(as of May 2015)**

Region	Percent of Total Workload	FY 2012 APT	FY 2015 APT	APT Percent Change
Region I: Boston	3.9%	351	404	15.1%
Region II: New York	7.8%	337	485	43.9%
Region III: Philadelphia	9.5%	363	496	36.6%
Region IV: Atlanta	26.7%	366	508	38.8%
Regional V: Chicago	14.3%	348	460	32.2%
Region VI: Dallas	13.3%	304	411	35.2%
Region VII: Kansas City	3.8%	410	442	7.8%
Region VIII: Denver	2.2%	351	391	11.4%
Regional IX: San Francisco	11.1%	333	423	27.0%
Region X: Seattle	3.1%	373	458	22.8%
National Hearing Centers	4.3%	426	464	8.9%
National Average		353	463	31.2%

Note: Percent of total dispositions workload determined using May 2015 data.

In terms of worsening APT since FY 2012, the New York Region's processing time increased by 44 percent whereas the Kansas City Region's processing time increased by 8 percent, though it was already high in FY 2012.

Average Processing Time by Office

We found that 80 hearing offices (47 percent) had exceeded the 463-day national APT as of May 2015 while 89 offices (53 percent) were less than the national APT.¹¹ Of the 80 offices that exceeded the national APT, 28 (35 percent) were located in the Atlanta Region.¹² Nationally,

⁹ As Table 1 reflects, the three regions that exceeded the national APT average in May 2015 processed 44 percent of the total national hearings workload.

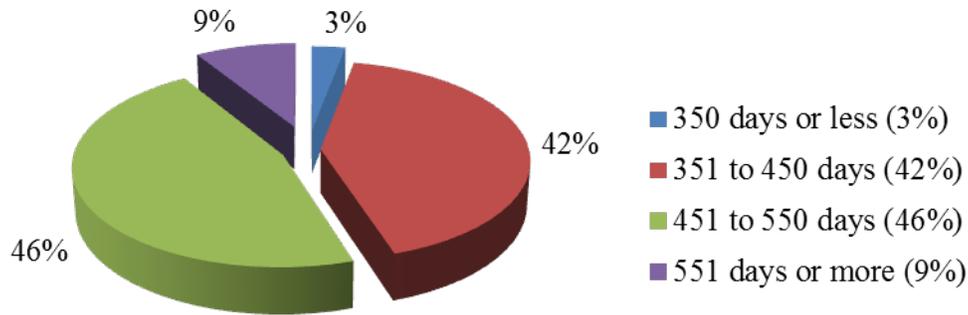
¹⁰ As we note later in this report, during FY 2015, ODAR began realigning offices in West Virginia (from the Philadelphia Region) and Kentucky (from the Atlanta Region) to the Kansas City Region. However, in its technical comments for this report, the Agency stated that it has not yet finalized the formal reorganization and delegations. We did not find these changes reflected in ODAR's management information, so our data reflects the status of the hearing offices before the FY 2015 realignment.

¹¹ The median APT in May 2015 was 461 days.

¹² The Atlanta Region had 37 hearing offices in May 2015.

hearing office APT ranged from 305 days in the Alexandria, Louisiana, Hearing Office to 699 days in the Fort Myers, Florida, Hearing Office.¹³ We determined that 3 percent of the offices had an APT less than 350 days while 9 percent of the offices had an APT greater than 550 days (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: FY 2015 APT Range for Hearing Offices
(as of May 2015)**

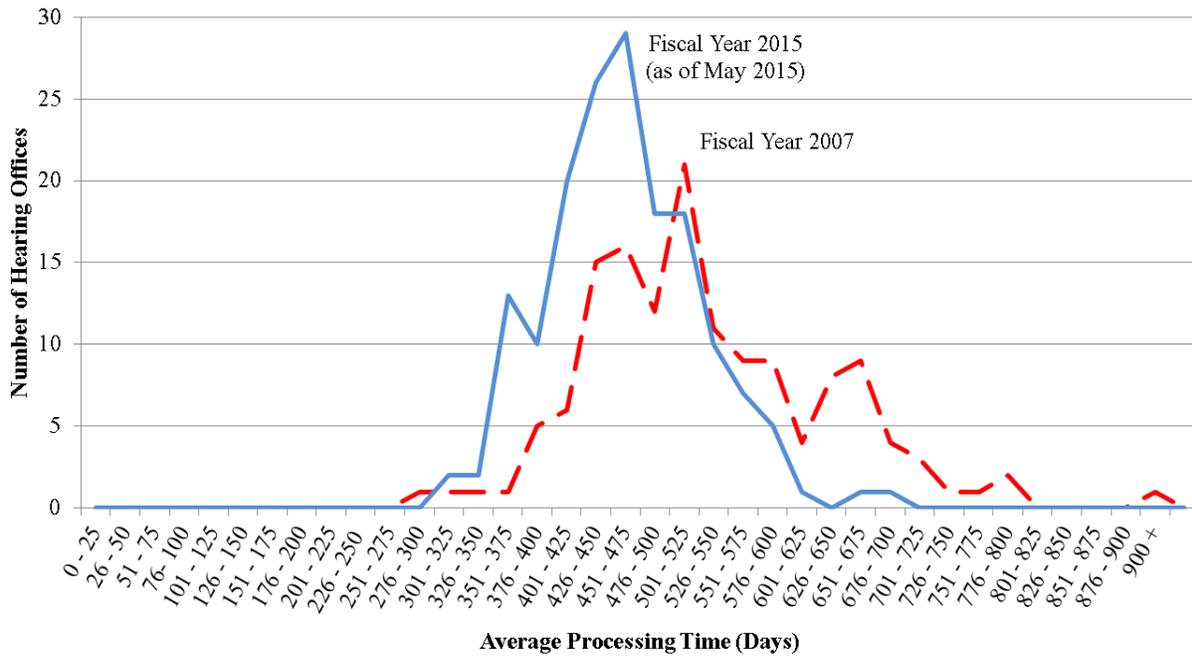


Note: We included a satellite office that reported APT separately from its parent office.

As Figure 3 shows, hearing offices tended to have a higher APT in FY 2007 than May 2015, and APT among hearing offices was more widely dispersed in FY 2007.

¹³ FY 2015 public Agency data we obtained for this review listed the Fort Myers Office as a hearing office. It was previously one of two satellites that reported APT separately from the parent office. Also, the Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Hearing Office had an APT of 91 days in May 2015. Since it was not functioning as a hearing office in FY 2015, we excluded it from our APT variance assessment. See Appendix B for data on APT by hearing office.

Figure 3: Shift in APT from FY 2007 to May 2015

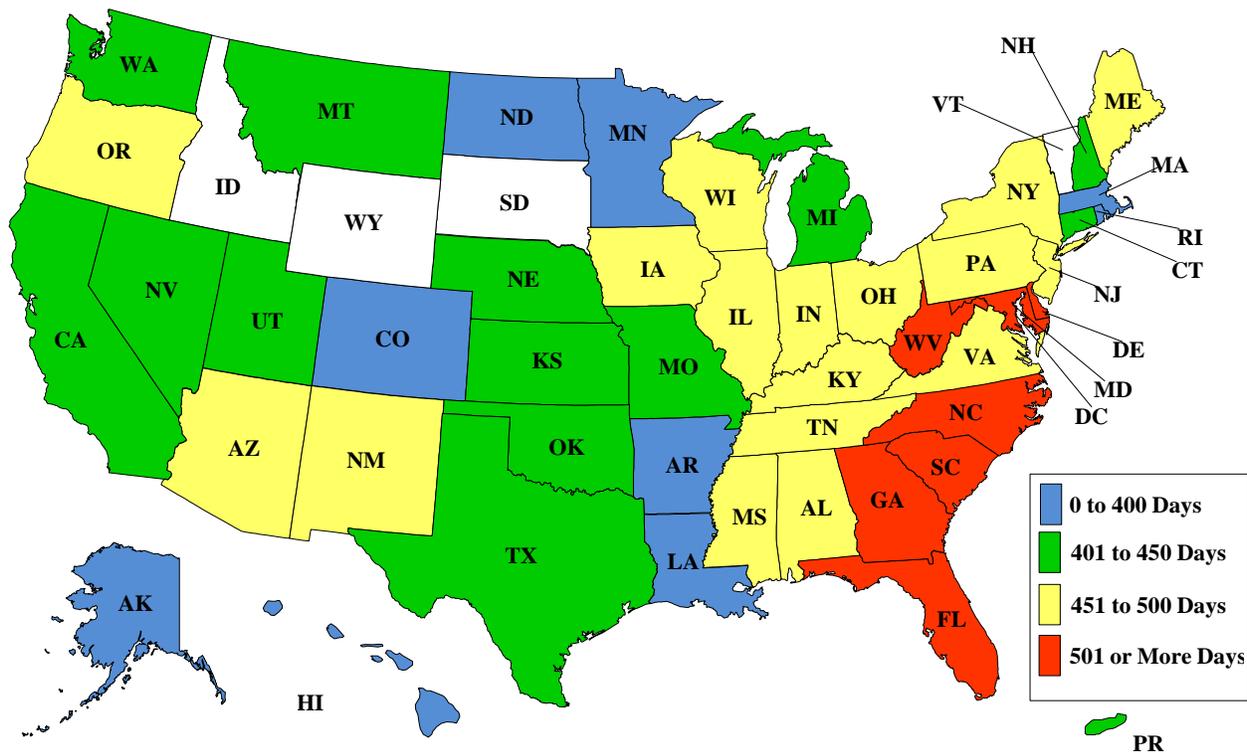


Note: ODAR supported 141 hearing offices in FY 2007 and 163 in FY 2015. We excluded NHCs from our comparison, since they did not exist in FY 2007, as well as the Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Hearing Office since it was not functioning as a hearing office in FY 2015.

Average Processing Time by State

As Figure 4 reflects, Agency data on APT indicated the States in the Philadelphia and Atlanta Regions had higher APTs than elsewhere in the Nation.

Figure 4: APT by State for May 2015



Note: SSA does not have hearing offices in the States of Idaho, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming. Hence, there was no APT data to measure in those States.

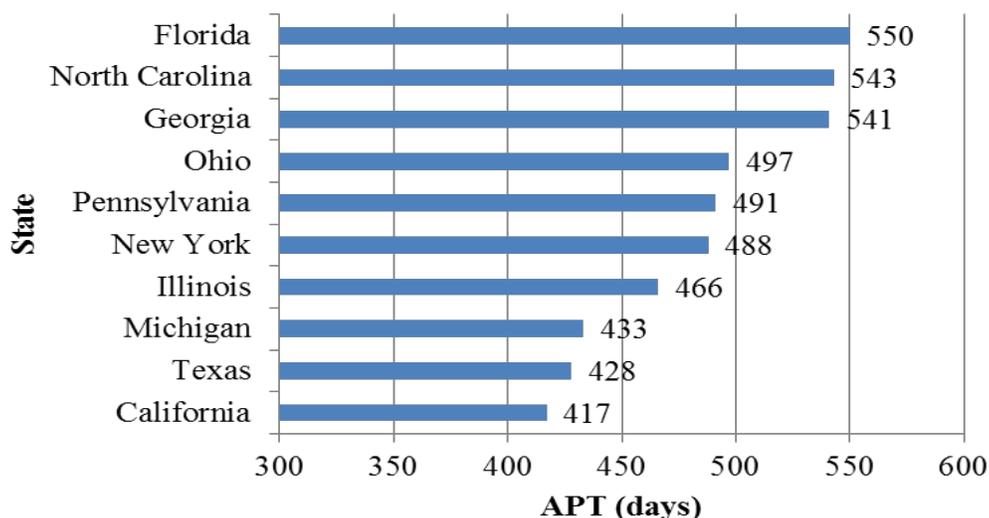
We focused on the 10 most populous States based on 2014 U.S. Census data to identify variances.¹⁴ These 10 States represented 54 percent of the U.S. population. California had the lowest APT in May 2015,¹⁵ whereas Florida had the highest APT (see Figure 5).¹⁶

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2014* (NST-EST2014-01), December 2014.

¹⁵ In its technical comments to this report, the Agency stated that there are a variety of reasons why States vary in their processing times relative to other States. For example, the California hearings workload was impacted by furloughs of the Disability Determination Services staff during the last recession. For more information, see SSA OIG, *The Social Security Administration's Response to State Furloughs Impacting its Disability Programs* (A-01-11-11116), March 2011, and *Quick Response Evaluation: Impact of State Employee Furloughs on the Social Security Administration's Disability Programs* (A-01-09-29137), March 2009.

¹⁶ See Appendix C for a complete list of APT by State and Appendix D for additional workload figures for hearing offices in the 10 most populous States.

**Figure 5: FY 2015 APT for the 10 Most Populous States
(as May 2015)**



We reviewed APT variances in May 2015 and found 15 of the 17 offices in California had an APT better than the national average, whereas all 8 offices in Florida had an APT worse than the national average.¹⁷ For example, the Orange Hearing Office had an APT of 354 days while the Miami Hearing Office had an APT of 654 days (see Table 2). As a result, someone living in Miami, Florida, would have to wait about 300 days longer—or about 10 additional months—for a hearing than someone living in Orange, California.¹⁸

**Table 2: FY 2015 as of May 2015 Workload Statistics for the
Miami and Orange Hearing Offices**

Hearing Office	APT	Receipts	Dispositions	Pending per ALJ	ALJ Productivity
National	463	504,246	439,462	720	2.10
Miami	654	1,904	2,208	1,040	1.56
Orange	354	2,838	2,817	687	2.34

Note: ALJ productivity relates to the number of dispositions per day per ALJ.

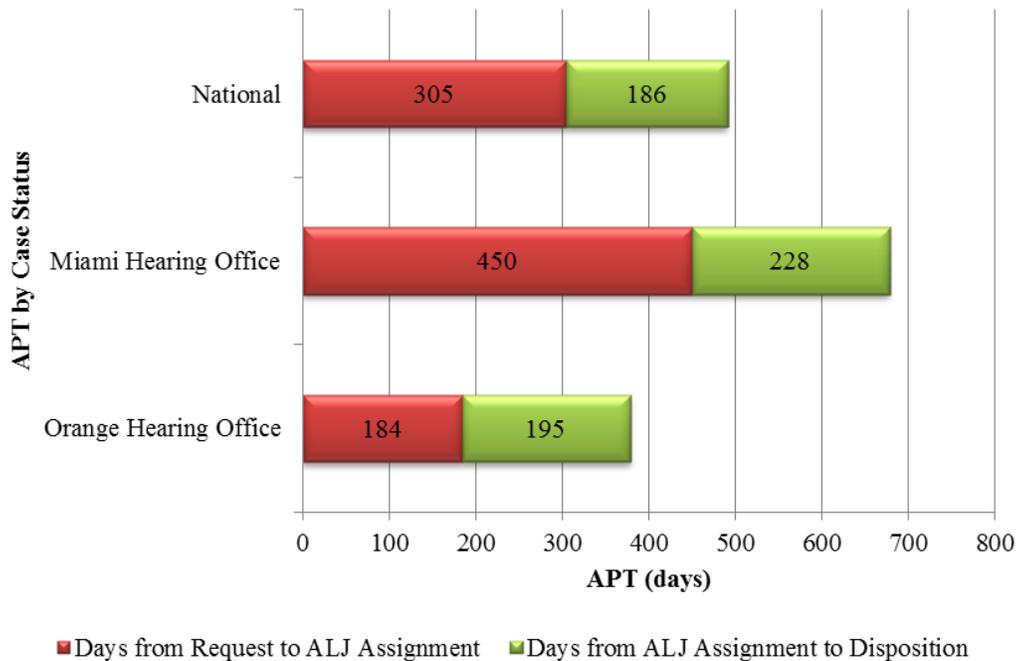
While the Miami and Orange Hearing Offices had a similar volume of dispositions, the Orange Hearing Office had more receipts and fewer pending cases per ALJ. In addition, the ALJs in the Orange Hearing Office were 50 percent more productive than the ALJs in the Miami Hearing Office. Agency data for May 2015 also indicated cases in the Miami Hearing Office were not assigned to ALJs in the first 450 days after the hearing request was filed, which is longer than the

¹⁷ As a result, the office in California with the worse APT for the State was better than the office in Florida with the best APT for that State.

¹⁸ In FY 2007, the APT difference between both hearing offices was comparable at 303 days.

national average of 305 days (see Figure 6). In the Orange Hearing Office, cases were generally assigned to ALJs about 184 days after the hearing request, or 121 days faster than the national average and more than twice as fast as the Miami Hearing Office.¹⁹

Figure 6: APT by Case Status for the Month Ending May 29, 2015



Note: Unlike Table 2, the figures above are for the month of May only.

AGENCY ACTIONS TO REDUCE AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME

ODAR managers said they had a number of tools to address APT issues at hearing offices, including (1) case adjudication assistance, (2) case pulling and decision writing assistance, (3) other workload sharing resources, and (4) expanded hearing capacity.

Case Adjudication Assistance

SSA used video hearings to address the hearings backlog and reduce case processing time by increasing adjudicatory capacity.²⁰ SSA developed the NHCs to assist targeted backlogged

¹⁹ As noted in Table 2, the ALJs in the Miami Hearing Office had a higher number of pending cases per ALJ than the ALJs in the Orange Hearing Office.

²⁰ SSA stated that video technology can “. . . increase efficiency and improve customer service. . . Specifically, it will enable us to balance workloads across the country, reduce the need for (and the costs for) our ALJs and other hearing office staff to travel between offices and to remote sites to hold hearings, and reduce the need for claimants to travel long distances to hearing offices.” See SSA, *Agency Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2014-2018*.

hearing offices using videoconferencing equipment. The Office of the Chief Administrative Law Judge (OCALJ) allocates NHC hearing assistance to heavily backlogged hearing offices on a rolling basis. At any one time, workload for each NHC location consists of cases from 3 to 10 targeted hearing offices.²¹ The NHCs issued approximately 29,000 dispositions in FY 2014 and have issued about 22,000 dispositions in FY 2015 through June 2015.

NHC managers stated they considered several workload indicators, including receipts, cases pending per ALJ, and average age, to determine what offices to assist. In addition to the available resources at NHCs, managers consider video capacity in the offices assisted.

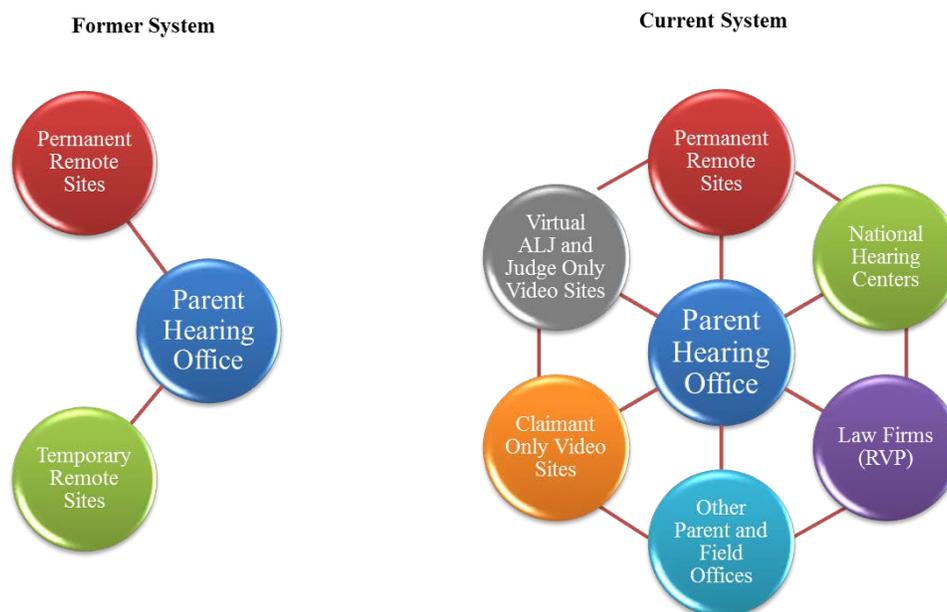
As Figure 7 shows, the video-enabled hearing arrangements that the Agency has at its disposal provide flexibility in addressing APT and backlogged offices. As a result, in addition to the NHCs helping individual hearing offices, hearing offices can assist one another with adjudication duties. For example, a permanent remote site assigned to Hearing Office A can be shifted to ALJs in Hearing Office B while the ALJs in Hearing Office A catch up on the rest of the workload. Moreover, since video hearings require two hearing sites—one for the ALJ and one for the claimant—the expansion of claimant-only video sites, judge-only video (JOV) sites,²² and video sites at claimant representatives offices, called the Representative Video Project (RVP),²³ alleviates some of these video capacity bottlenecks. We discuss ODAR’s plans to expand hearing capacity later in this report.

²¹ Start-up assistance to these hearing offices requires 3 months of preparation time for the transferring office cases to be prepared, scheduled, and held. At the conclusion of the assistance, the NHCs may take 3 to 6 months to close out the pending caseload.

²² The JOV sites are a relatively new initiative. During our audit, ODAR managers told us they had five JOV sites and were adding more.

²³ SSA OIG, *Representative Video Project* (A-05-09-19101), August 2011.

Figure 7: Hearing Office Access Points



Note: SSA moved away from temporary remote sites over the years to establish additional permanent remote sites as well as other types of video locations.

We reviewed NHC assistance to hearing offices in California and Florida since FY 2012. As Table 3 reflects, the NHCs assisted only one hearing office in California²⁴ but assisted six of the eight hearing offices in Florida.²⁵ ODAR management indicated that the San Francisco Region had capacity to assist its own offices as well as other offices nationwide during most of this period, while the Atlanta Region faced a large backlog and required assistance from outside the region for most of this same period.

Table 3: NHC Assistance to Hearing Offices in California and Florida (FY 2012 Through May 2015)

State	Offices Assisted	Number of Offices in State	Percent of Total Offices in State
California	1	17	6%
Florida	6	8	75%

As noted earlier, ALJs remotely assisted other regions with case adjudication as was the case of an ALJ in the Boston Region that assisted the Atlanta Region by holding video hearings to assist the Miami Hearing Office. By leveraging video-enabled hearing arrangements, ODAR has greater flexibility in balancing its workloads among offices.

²⁴ This California hearing office was assisted during part of FY 2015.

²⁵ The NHCs assisted five of these six Florida hearing offices during all 4 FYs.

Case Pulling and Decision Writing Assistance

In addition to adjudication, ODAR offices assist one another with other duties, such as case preparation, also referred to as pulling cases, and writing decisions. For example, ODAR established NCACs in Baltimore, Maryland, and St. Louis, Missouri, as a support network to address various ODAR backlog initiatives. Both NCACs assist hearing offices and NHCs with case pulling and decision writing. The NCACs work with OCALJ's Division of Workload Management, which determines which regions receive assistance. ODAR managers told us they reassess workloads monthly and adjust them as needed weekly. The NCAC goal is to pull cases and write decisions within 14 days. NCACs receive cases weekly and work on a first-in, first-out basis.

NCAC managers stated they assisted offices with about 41,000 cases in FY 2014 and about 58,000 through June 2015. ODAR plans to open two writing unit NCACs in Richmond, California, and Louisville, Kentucky, to support additional hearing capacity. With respect to NCAC assistance to hearing offices in California and Florida, we found the majority of hearing offices in both States received NCAC assistance for multiple years since FY 2012 (see Table 4).

Table 4: FY 2015 NCAC Assistance to Hearing Offices in California and Florida (FY 2012 Through May 2015)

State	Offices Assisted	Number of Offices in State	Percent of Total Offices in State
California	15	17	88%
Florida	8	8	100%

Some regional offices have their own case pulling and/or decision-writing units to balance workloads at the regional level. For instance, the ODAR San Francisco Region has its management team assess capacity every day and transfer cases throughout the week to the offices that can assist other hearing offices in the region. In addition, OCALJ established regional pulling and writing units in San Bernardino and Stockton, California, and in Phoenix, Arizona, to assist the San Francisco Region.

Other Workload Sharing

OCALJ is responsible for monitoring and implementing Service Area Realignments (SAR) between regions. OCALJ uses SARs to redirect field office workloads from one hearing office to another to reduce receipts at a backlogged office.²⁶ The hearing offices receiving the cases are

²⁶ In our September 2009 report *Aged Claims at the Hearing Level* (A-12-08-18071), we reported that OCALJ implemented the SAR initiative in FY 2007 as a two-phased strategy. The first phase included permanent interregional transfer of claims, which ODAR stated was designed to decrease aged pending workloads of heavily impacted offices between regions. Once the flow of transfer claims began, phase two involved realigning specific SSA field offices in high workload regions to hearing offices in lower workload regions. This meant that new claims would be processed and heard in hearing offices in a different part of the country from where the claimant lived.

responsible for all hearing duties—case pulling, adjudication, and decision writing. ODAR management indicated that, although there were no recent SARs between regions, the Regional Chief Administrative Law Judges have implemented SARs within their regions, which they continually monitor and adjust. ODAR management stated that five regions had intra-regional SARs in place in FY 2015 to temporarily or permanently assist hearing offices. According to Agency data we obtained for this review, the San Francisco and Atlanta Regions did not use SARs in FY 2015. However, other regions were using intra-regional SARs to assist hearing offices, particularly the Dallas Region.

Another tool ODAR used in FY 2015 involves office realignments to help balance regional management workloads. For example, in early FY 2015, ODAR began realigning offices in West Virginia (then in the Philadelphia Region) and Kentucky (then in the Atlanta Region) to the Kansas City Region.

Expanding Hearing Capacity

SSA plans to create additional hearing capacity to address increasing workloads as well as to house more case pulling and writing resources needed to support the added hearing capacity. For example, ODAR managers stated they planned to expand video capacity in FY 2015 with 160 new video units and an additional 150 new video units in FY 2016.²⁷ In Florida, ODAR is considering the addition of new hearing space, including hearing offices, permanent remote sites, claimant-only video sites, and JOVs. ODAR also planned to hire between 200 and 250 ALJs as well as related support staff in FY 2015 to process more hearing cases. These efforts will expand ODAR's ability to use virtual ALJs in parts of the country with capacity to assist offices in areas with higher pending cases and APT.

SUMMARY

Hearing office APT has been worsening since FY 2012, with national APT increasing to 463 days in May 2015. APT ranged widely by region, State, and hearing office, with some hearing offices more than 300 days apart in their processing times. ODAR managers said they have a number of tools to address APT issues at hearing offices. The Agency is also in the process of expanding its hearing capacity through additional hiring and new offices.



Steven L. Schaeffer, JD, CPA, CGFM, CGMA
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

²⁷ In its technical comments to this report, the Agency stated that in addition to the new units, ODAR refreshed 262 video units in FY 2015 and plan to refresh 393 video units in FY 2016.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

To complete our review, we:

- Reviewed prior Office of the Inspector General audits.
- Met with Agency managers in the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Office of Disability Adjudication and Review to discuss hearing office workload trends and strategies for realigning resources, such as national and regional assistance.
- Obtained management information on hearing office average processing time (APT) for Fiscal Years (FY) 2007 through May 2015.
- Analyzed APT and other hearing workload data for FYs 2007 through May 2015.
- Obtained National Hearing Center and National Case Assistance Center workload data for FYs 2014 and 2015 through June 2015.
- Obtained U.S. Census Bureau data to identify the 10 most populous States in 2014. We then compared various workload statistics among the 10 States, including APT.
- Calculated the percentage change in APT from FYs 2012 to 2015 through May 29, 2015 at the national, regional, State, and hearing office levels.
- Compared various workload statistics at the Miami, Florida, and Orange, California, hearing offices.
- Shared a draft of our report with Agency managers for their comments.

We relied on management representations regarding workload volumes and assistance when we could not obtain data from existing management information systems. Based on our limited testing, we found the APT management information were sufficiently reliable for this review. The performance period for this review was from May to July 2015 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency’s *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*.

Appendix B – FISCAL YEARS 2012 THROUGH 2015 AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME BY HEARING OFFICE OR SATELLITE

Table B–1: Fiscal Years 2012-2015 Average Processing Time by Hearing Office or Satellite (Through May 2015)

Office	Region	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015 ¹	Percent Change (2012-2015)	FY 2015 APT Ranking
Akron OH	Chicago	364	401	486	501	37.6%	122
Albany NY	New York	337	364	430	467	38.6%	90
Albuquerque NM	Dallas	414	425	444	495	19.6%	118
Alexandria LA	Dallas	270	301	314	305	13.0%	2
Anchorage AK	Seattle	267	304	319	375	40.4%	18
Atlanta Downtown GA	Atlanta	393	462	528	568	44.5%	156
Atlanta North GA	Atlanta	346	422	522	525	51.7%	137
Augusta GA	Atlanta	327	378	410	-	N/A ²	N/A ²
Baltimore MD	Philadelphia	404	477	530	553	36.9%	152
Billings MT	Denver	343	294	344	419	22.2%	42
Birmingham AL	Atlanta	448	450	462	499	11.4%	119
Boston MA	Boston	345	354	349	388	12.5%	24
Bronx NY	New York	332	363	433	484	45.8%	108
Brooklyn NY	New York	380	478	527	621	63.4%	162
Buffalo NY	New York	435	426	494	555	27.6%	153
Charleston SC	Atlanta	326	368	428	443	35.9%	62
Charleston WV	Philadelphia	349	424	492	469	34.4%	92
Charlotte NC	Atlanta	351	449	516	535	52.4%	145
Charlottesville VA	Philadelphia	297	407	491	486	63.6%	111
Chattanooga TN	Atlanta	260	390	475	528	103.1%	142
Chicago IL	Chicago	346	379	474	512	48.0%	129

Office	Region	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015 ¹	Percent Change (2012-2015)	FY 2015 APT Ranking
Cincinnati OH	Chicago	392	407	460	540	37.8%	146
Cleveland OH	Chicago	259	312	422	519	100.4%	133
Colorado Springs CO	Denver	366	322	334	386	5.5%	22
Columbia MO	Kansas City	361	423	478	458	26.9%	80
Columbia SC	Atlanta	402	432	480	525	30.6%	137
Columbus OH	Chicago	349	348	398	475	36.1%	101
Covington GA	Atlanta	352	387	465	526	49.4%	140
Creve Coeur MO	Kansas City	393	438	495	475	20.9%	101
Dallas Downtown TX	Dallas	347	376	416	436	25.6%	58
Dallas North TX	Dallas	307	328	390	435	41.7%	56
Dayton OH	Chicago	394	377	399	462	17.3%	85
Denver CO	Denver	361	374	355	366	1.4%	15
Detroit MI	Chicago	295	362	403	429	45.4%	51
Dover DE	Philadelphia	375	464	466	505	34.7%	126
Elkins Park PA	Philadelphia	349	395	461	513	47.0%	130
Eugene OR	Seattle	465	461	429	472	1.5%	95
Evanston IL	Chicago	373	397	459	479	28.4%	104
Evansville IN	Chicago	387	429	360	380	-1.8%	21
Fargo ND	Denver	326	317	316	358	9.8%	11
Fayetteville NC	Atlanta	384	471	529	576	50.0%	157
Flint MI	Chicago	304	327	408	447	47.0%	66
Florence AL	Atlanta	390	337	400	431	10.5%	53
Fort Myers FL	Atlanta	402	511	681	699	73.9%	164
Fort Smith AR	Dallas	276	270	329	353	27.9%	7
Fort Wayne IN	Chicago	326	345	360	417	27.9%	40
Fort Worth TX	Dallas	278	325	379	388	39.6%	24

Office	Region	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015 ¹	Percent Change (2012-2015)	FY 2015 APT Ranking
Franklin TN	Atlanta	361	353	394	473	31.0%	99
Fresno CA	San Francisco	384	367	391	472	22.9%	95
Fort Lauderdale FL	Atlanta	399	438	510	583	46.1%	160
Grand Rapids MI	Chicago	460	405	335	405	-12.0%	31
Greensboro NC	Atlanta	460	489	530	577	25.4%	158
Greenville SC	Atlanta	299	388	511	552	84.6%	150
Harrisburg PA	Philadelphia	381	414	475	475	24.7%	101
Hartford CT	Boston	347	387	438	449	29.4%	69
Hattiesburg MS	Atlanta	335	417	458	481	43.6%	106
Honolulu HI	San Francisco	296	267	261	362	22.3%	14
Houston North TX	Dallas	244	306	351	348	42.6%	5
Houston-Bissonnet TX	Dallas	269	303	364	399	48.3%	26
Huntington WV	Philadelphia	357	406	454	547	53.2%	148
Indianapolis IN	Chicago	364	360	443	500	37.4%	121
Jackson MS	Atlanta	297	364	455	426	43.4%	49
Jacksonville FL	Atlanta	365	440	529	580	58.9%	159
Jericho NY	New York	270	286	349	461	70.7%	83
Jersey City NJ	New York	323	381	443	472	46.1%	95
Johnstown PA	Philadelphia	343	361	422	484	41.1%	108
Kansas City MO	Kansas City	427	377	415	464	8.7%	88
Kingsport TN	Atlanta	265	338	339	354	33.6%	8
Knoxville TN	Atlanta	327	406	498	552	68.8%	150
Lansing MI	Chicago	296	332	327	359	21.3%	12
Las Vegas NV	San Francisco	329	349	363	451	37.1%	75
Lawrence MA	Boston	375	365	448	491	30.9%	114
Lexington KY	Atlanta	297	343	422	461	55.2%	83

Office	Region	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015 ¹	Percent Change (2012-2015)	FY 2015 APT Ranking
Little Rock AR	Dallas	349	358	399	406	16.3%	32
Livonia MI	Chicago	293	355	411	450	53.6%	72
Long Beach CA	San Francisco	271	321	384	458	69.0%	80
Los Angeles Downtown CA	San Francisco	267	278	306	371	39.0%	16
Los Angeles West CA	San Francisco	295	326	348	412	39.7%	37
Louisville KY	Atlanta	359	368	419	460	28.1%	82
Macon GA	Atlanta	452	506	544	591	30.8%	161
Madison WI	Chicago	288	314	304	361	25.3%	13
Manchester NH	Boston	327	361	388	401	22.6%	29
Mayaguez PR	New York	180	317	356	91	-49.4%	1
McAlester OK	Dallas	303	393	417	433	42.9%	54
Memphis TN	Atlanta	378	409	414	445	17.7%	63
Metairie LA	Dallas	251	292	271	321	27.9%	3
Miami FL	Atlanta	395	497	588	654	65.6%	163
Middlesboro KY	Atlanta	291	322	381	425	46.0%	48
Milwaukee WI	Chicago	388	459	501	533	37.4%	144
Minneapolis MN	Chicago	385	389	373	399	3.6%	26
Mobile AL	Atlanta	411	440	450	490	19.2%	113
Montgomery AL	Atlanta	421	445	429	438	4.0%	60
Moreno Valley CA	San Francisco	366	298	328	437	19.4%	59
Morgantown WV	Philadelphia	365	396	498	526	44.1%	140
Mt. Pleasant MI	Chicago	373	349	384	479	28.4%	104
Nashville TN	Atlanta	415	437	487	503	21.2%	123
New Haven CT	Boston	335	340	381	424	26.6%	47
New Orleans LA	Dallas	271	326	396	407	50.2%	33
New York NY	New York	288	328	393	467	62.2%	90

Office	Region	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015 ¹	Percent Change (2012-2015)	FY 2015 APT Ranking
Newark NJ	New York	371	385	432	491	32.3%	114
NHC Albuquerque NM	N/A	401	388	443	443	10.5%	N/A ³
NHC Baltimore MD	N/A	414	502	524	465	12.3%	N/A ³
NHC Chicago IL	N/A	457	429	369	439	-3.9%	N/A ³
NHC Falls Church VA	N/A	405	420	429	482	19.0%	N/A ³
NHC St. Louis MO	N/A	429	401	399	473	10.3%	N/A ³
Norfolk VA	Philadelphia	287	375	385	469	63.4%	92
Norwalk CA	San Francisco	373	447	445	472	26.5%	95
Oak Brook IL	Chicago	400	374	394	462	15.5%	85
Oak Park MI	Chicago	269	334	395	450	67.3%	72
Oakland CA	San Francisco	374	337	383	450	20.3%	72
Oklahoma City OK	Dallas	383	430	482	492	28.5%	116
Omaha NE	Kansas City	376	383	435	433	15.2%	54
Orange CA	San Francisco	326	306	313	354	8.6%	8
Orland Park IL	Chicago	351	314	406	452	28.8%	77
Orlando FL	Atlanta	304	381	431	484	59.2%	108
Paducah KY	Atlanta	302	349	400	464	53.6%	88
Pasadena CA	San Francisco	361	352	366	454	25.8%	78
Peoria IL	Chicago	364	380	391	409	12.4%	36
Philadelphia PA	Philadelphia	374	429	476	522	39.6%	135
Philadelphia East PA	Philadelphia	370	385	435	544	47.0%	147
Phoenix AZ	San Francisco	343	372	439	482	40.5%	107
Phoenix North AZ	San Francisco	363	304	351	440	21.2%	61
Pittsburgh PA	Philadelphia	411	404	443	494	20.2%	117
Ponce PR	New York	280	329	372	423	51.1%	46
Portland ME	Boston	356	344	400	462	29.8%	85

Office	Region	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015 ¹	Percent Change (2012-2015)	FY 2015 APT Ranking
Portland OR	Seattle	433	444	461	505	16.6%	126
Providence RI	Boston	369	311	281	355	-3.8%	10
Queens NY	New York	357	375	440	474	32.8%	100
Raleigh NC	Atlanta	344	416	464	516	50.0%	131
Reno NV	San Francisco	352	285	302	422	19.9%	45
Richmond VA	Philadelphia	361	413	493	448	24.1%	67
Rio Grande Valley TX	Dallas	200	300	470	518	159.0%	132
Roanoke VA	Philadelphia	432	443	434	486	12.5%	111
Rochester NY	New York	377	427	499	519	37.7%	133
Sacramento CA	San Francisco	316	312	339	408	29.1%	34
Salt Lake City UT	Denver	350	354	378	448	28.0%	67
San Antonio TX	Dallas	298	368	448	504	69.1%	124
San Bernardino CA	San Francisco	350	282	345	402	14.9%	30
San Diego CA	San Francisco	396	443	454	449	13.4%	69
San Francisco CA	San Francisco	323	400	363	408	26.3%	34
San Jose CA	San Francisco	323	328	363	379	17.3%	20
San Juan PR	New York	320	311	327	400	25.0%	28
San Rafael CA	San Francisco	313	362	379	451	44.1%	75
Santa Barbara CA	San Francisco	394	346	345	413	4.8%	38
Savannah GA	Atlanta	349	454	474	504	44.4%	124
Seattle WA	Seattle	323	317	362	387	19.8%	23
Seven Fields PA	Philadelphia	359	394	410	418	16.4%	41
Shreveport LA	Dallas	197	245	306	351	78.2%	6
South Jersey NY	New York	329	366	441	528	60.5%	142
Spokane WA	Seattle	338	402	481	556	64.5%	154
Springfield MA	Boston	355	380	358	328	-7.6%	4

Office	Region	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015 ¹	Percent Change (2012-2015)	FY 2015 APT Ranking
Springfield MO	Kansas City	467	375	376	421	-9.9%	43
St. Louis MO	Kansas City	492	518	454	421	-14.4%	43
St. Petersburg FL	Atlanta	420	462	493	499	18.8%	119
Stockton CA	San Francisco	300	277	284	372	24.0%	17
Syracuse NY	New York	339	356	413	446	31.6%	65
Tacoma WA	Seattle	388	367	389	428	10.3%	50
Tallahassee FL	Atlanta	423	463	511	567	34.0%	155
Tampa FL	Atlanta	387	446	487	524	35.4%	136
Toledo OH	Chicago	367	411	443	445	21.3%	63
Topeka KS	Kansas City	329	340	416	429	30.4%	51
Tucson AZ	San Francisco	282	287	355	435	54.3%	56
Tulsa OK	Dallas	335	324	351	377	12.5%	19
Tupelo MS	Atlanta	437	444	517	525	20.1%	137
Valparaiso IN	Chicago	347	376	414	508	46.4%	128
Washington DC	Philadelphia	367	381	470	550	49.9%	149
West Des Moines IA	Kansas City	381	415	420	457	19.9%	79
White Plains NY	New York	327	337	385	449	37.3%	69
Wichita KS	Kansas City	424	356	403	416	-1.9%	39
Wilkes Barre PA	Philadelphia	335	366	419	469	40.0%	92

Note 1: Data for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 ran from September 27, 2014 through May 29, 2015.

Note 2: The Augusta office closed in FY 2015.

Note 3: The Agency did not include National Hearing Centers in its hearing office ranking report for this period.

Note 4: During FY 2015, the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) began realigning offices in West Virginia (from the Philadelphia Region) and Kentucky (from the Atlanta Region) to the Kansas City Region. However, in its technical comments for this report, the Agency stated that it has not yet finalized the formal reorganization and delegations. We did not find these changes reflected in ODAR's management information, so our data reflects the status of the hearing offices before the FY 2015 realignment.

Appendix C – FISCAL YEAR 2015 HEARING OFFICE AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME BY STATE AND U.S. TERRITORIES

**Table C-1: Fiscal Year 2015 Average Processing Times by State
(Through May 2015)**

State/District/Territory	Average Processing Time ¹	Number of Hearing Offices
Alabama	471	4
Alaska	375	1
Arizona	455	3
Arkansas	390	2
California	417	17
Colorado	373	2
Connecticut	436	2
Delaware	505	1
District of Columbia	550	1
Florida	550	8
Georgia	541	5
Hawaii	362	1
Idaho	Not Applicable ²	0
Illinois	466	5
Indiana	466	4
Iowa	457	1
Kansas	421	2
Kentucky	457	4
Louisiana	343	4
Maine	462	1
Maryland	553	1
Massachusetts	395	3
Michigan	433	7
Minnesota	399	1
Mississippi	469	3
Missouri	448	5
Montana	419	1
Nebraska	433	1
Nevada	442	2
New Hampshire	401	1
New Jersey	500	3
New Mexico	495	1

State/District/Territory	Average Processing Time ¹	Number of Hearing Offices
New York	488	10
North Carolina	543	4
North Dakota	358	1
Ohio	497	6
Oklahoma	432	3
Oregon	493	2
Pennsylvania	491	8
Puerto Rico	403	3
Rhode Island	355	1
South Carolina	504	3
South Dakota	Not Applicable ²	0
Tennessee	479	6
Texas	428	7
Utah	448	1
Vermont	Not Applicable ²	0
Virginia	473	4
Washington	443	3
West Virginia	503	3
Wisconsin	479	2
Wyoming	Not Applicable ²	0

Source: The Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) *Hearing Office Workloads by State*, as of May 29, 2015.

Note 1: We did not include American Samoa, Guam, Saipan, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the table since these territories did not have a hearing office.

Note 2: These States did not have a hearing office.

Note 3: During FY 2015, ODAR began realigning offices in West Virginia (from the Philadelphia Region) and Kentucky (from the Atlanta Region) to the Kansas City Region. However, in its technical comments for this report, the Agency stated that it has not yet finalized the formal reorganization and delegations. We did not find these changes reflected in ODAR's management information, so our data reflects the status of the hearing offices before the FY 2015 realignment.

Appendix D – WORKLOAD FIGURES FOR HEARING OFFICES IN THE TEN MOST POPULOUS STATES

**Table D–1: Workload Figures for Hearing Offices in
the Ten Most Populous States
(FY 2015 as of May 2015)**

State	Decisional Allowance Rate	Weighted Pending Cases per ALJ	Weighted Productivity per ALJ ¹	Average Processing Time (in days)
Florida	54.4%	923	2.01	550
North Carolina	57.9%	941	2.06	543
Georgia	57.2%	817	1.95	541
Ohio	50.7%	578	2.05	497
Pennsylvania	53.4%	801	2.08	491
New York	59.7%	831	1.96	488
Illinois	52.8%	617	1.88	466
Michigan	57.2%	584	2.22	433
Texas	46.1%	708	2.34	428
California	55.3%	747	2.00	417
National	53.3%	720	2.10	463

Note 1: The Agency calculates administrative law judge (ALJ) productivity as the number of dispositions per day per available ALJ.

Appendix E – MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

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