



Report Summary

Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General



The Program of Requirements for the Social Security Administration's New Data Center (Limited Distribution) (A-14-11-11144)

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* provided the Social Security Administration (SSA) \$500 million to replace the National Computer Center (NCC). We were tasked with providing oversight for the development and implementation of the NCC replacement. As part of our oversight function, we initiated this review to determine whether the General Services Administration (GSA)/SSA followed best practices in developing the overall Program of Requirements (POR) for SSA's new Data Center. The POR provides the minimum design requirements that will assist qualified design-build contractors in generating and presenting conceptual designs, budgets, and schedules for complete turnkey construction of the new Data Center. We contracted with Strategic e-Business Solutions, Inc. (SeBS) and its subcontractor, Fortress International Group, to assist with this review.

SeBs found that in general, the GSA/SSA team had developed a comprehensive list of requirements. The team was thorough in creating a document that effectively communicated the needs of the new Data Center and did an impressive job of conveying the expected performance requirements.

However, SeBs did identify two notable design issues.

1. The structural design limits for wind speed force were lower than expected for best practice standards.
2. The information related to the redundancy requirements for the air-handling units is not clearly defined to ensure a consistent understanding by bid contractors.

SeBs recommended that SSA, working with GSA, should (1) consider upgrading the specification for wind speed design loads to exceed the minimum code requirements, perhaps raising the designation to 120 miles per hour (MPH) from the current requirement of 90 MPH and (2) provide further details about the methods for calculating and validating the minimum requirement for air handlers in the data center spaces. SSA agreed with Recommendation 2 and revised the POR. SSA did not agree with Recommendation 1, stating that current specification for wind speed of 90 MPH meets International Building Code Standards, and it is unnecessary to exceed these standards any further.

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