

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

May 2009



Objective

To assess the Social Security Administration's controls and procedures for administering the economic recovery payments authorized under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA).

Background

ARRA provides for a one-time economic recovery payment of \$250 to certain adult Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries. Individuals eligible for benefits for November 2008, December 2008, and January 2009 may receive the one-time payment. If individuals receive both OASDI and SSI, they will receive only one \$250 payment. The one-time payments will be issued beginning in May 2009.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-09-09-29143.pdf>

Quick Response Evaluation: Economic Recovery Payments for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Beneficiaries (A-09-09-29143)

Our Findings

SSA had made considerable progress toward administering the economic recovery payments mandated under ARRA. However, at the time of our review, we identified the following matters that SSA needed to address: (1) SSA's system to identify, select, and certify the economic recovery payments to Treasury and its related policies and procedures have not been fully developed, tested, or documented; (2) Treasury may not always reclaim improper economic recovery payments to deceased beneficiaries and representative payees who die before SSA certified the payments; (3) policy had not been established for economic recovery payments issued to deceased beneficiaries and representative payees who died after SSA's certification but before the receipt of the payments; (4) missing Social Security numbers (SSN) for beneficiaries increases the risk of erroneous and duplicate economic recovery payments; and (5) reporting guidance should be improved for representative payees who receive economic recovery payments on behalf of the beneficiaries in their care.

Matters for Consideration

To ensure SSA has the necessary controls and procedures in place to prevent duplicate or erroneous payments and further mitigate instances of fraud, waste, and abuse, we believe SSA needs to address the following issues.

- Complete and document all systems requirements and related policies and procedures necessary for administration of the economic recovery payments.
- Seek Treasury authority to initiate reclamation activity or take other appropriate actions to recover economic recovery payments issued to deceased beneficiaries and representative payees who died before SSA certified the payments.
- Establish policy for economic recovery payments issued to deceased beneficiaries and representative payees who died after SSA certified the payments but before they were received.
- Reduce the potential for duplicate or improper payments to beneficiaries without SSNs.
- Notify representative payees about how to report the economic recovery payments.