

# Fiscal Year 2018 Inspector General's Statement on the Social Security Administration's Major Management and Performance Challenges

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Office of Audit Report Summary

### Objective

To summarize and assess the most serious management and performance challenges facing the Social Security Administration (SSA).

### Background

The *Reports Consolidation Act of 2000* requires that Inspectors General summarize and assess the most serious management and performance challenges facing agencies and the agencies' progress in addressing those challenges.

In Fiscal Year 2018, we focused on the following management and performance challenges: Improve Administration of the Disability Programs; Reduce Improper Payments and Increase Overpayment Recoveries; Improve Customer Service; Modernize Information Technology Infrastructure; Secure Information Systems and Protect Sensitive Data; Strengthen the Integrity and Protection of the Social Security Number; and Strengthen Planning, Transparency, and Accountability.

### Challenges

SSA faced the following challenges in Fiscal Year 2018.

- The Agency still faces challenges with pending disability hearings and appeals. Continued focus is necessary to simplify work incentive regulations and create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to work.
- Given the large overall dollar amounts involved in SSA's payments, even the slightest error in the overall process can result in millions of dollars in over- or underpayments.
- SSA faces challenges as it pursues its mission to deliver quality services that meet the public's changing needs, including growing workloads as experienced employees are expected to retire.
- SSA must modernize its information technology to accomplish its mission despite budget and resource constraints.
- SSA must ensure its information systems are secure and sensitive data are protected.
- Protecting the Social Security number and properly posting the wages reported under Social Security numbers are critical to ensuring eligible individuals receive the full benefits they are due.
- Failure to plan properly to meet its mission and challenges will lessen the Agency's ability to provide its services efficiently and effectively now and in the future. Similarly, mismanagement and waste as well as a lack of transparency for citizens on Government operations, can erode trust in SSA's ability to tackle the challenges it faces.