

Assignment of Nonwork Social Security Numbers

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Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) appropriately assigned Social Security numbers (SSN) to noncitizens with a valid nonwork reason.

Background

SSA assigns nonwork SSNs to noncitizens when a (1) Federal statute or regulation requires that they provide an SSN to receive a benefit or service to which they had otherwise established entitlement or (2) State or local law requires that noncitizens provide an SSN to receive public assistance benefits. SSA assigns a nonwork SSN when noncitizens' evidence supports Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance benefits; Medicare eligibility due to end-stage renal disease; eligibility for Medicaid; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; food stamps; other Federal programs or laws; and/or State or local benefits.

In Fiscal Year 2017, SSA assigned 50,838 original nonwork SSNs. Of those, 6,805 noncitizens had filed claims with SSA for benefits—a legitimate reason for a nonwork SSN. Of the remaining 44,033 nonwork SSNs issued, 35,176 (80 percent) were issued to numberholders based on claims to benefits from the State of Florida according to SSA's records. We randomly selected 100 nonwork SSNs assigned to noncitizens who resided in Florida.

Findings

SSA staff appropriately assigned a nonwork SSN to all 100 sampled noncitizens in our Florida population because each had established, or was establishing, entitlement for, State of Florida/local benefits. We verified with Florida's Department of Children and Families that these noncitizens were entitled, or establishing entitlement, to State or local benefits. These noncitizens needed an SSN to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid, and/or food stamps.

Conclusion

Our sample results indicate SSA appropriately assigned nonwork SSNs for valid nonwork reasons. We made no recommendations.