

Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits to Individuals Removed from the United States

A-13-17-34105



December 2017

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objectives

Our objectives were to determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) (1) took timely and appropriate actions in response to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deportation alerts; (2) paid Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) benefits to individuals DHS reported as deported from the United States and were not lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the country; and (3) paid OASDI benefits to individuals DHS reported to SSA as deported from the United States after July 31, 2010 and who did not meet criteria for continued benefit eligibility.

Background

DHS deports certain noncitizens from the United States in accordance with the provisions of the *Immigration and Nationality Act*. The removal of a deportable noncitizen or, in certain limited situations, an inadmissible noncitizen, may result in nonpayment of benefits under Title II of the *Social Security Act* (Act). The Act prohibits the numberholder on a Social Security record from receiving his/her retirement and/or disability benefits when SSA receives notice from DHS that it removed the numberholder from the United States.

Findings

SSA improperly paid some beneficiaries DHS removed from the United States. Further, the Agency did not always timely suspend benefits to removed individuals, resulting in overpayments.

Each month, DHS provides SSA an electronic list of individuals it deported from the United States. SSA matches these data against its records and generates systems alerts for staff to review specific records. Using data SSA maintains on individuals DHS reported to SSA as deported, we identified beneficiaries who were listed as deported but continued receiving OASDI benefits. We selected 247 records for review in 3 sampling frames based on our 3 objectives.

- Of 24 beneficiaries in our first sampling frame, we determined SSA overpaid \$180,930 in OASDI benefits to 14.
- Of the 68 beneficiaries in our second sampling frame, SSA potentially overpaid one beneficiary \$43,460 and overpaid four beneficiaries \$188,850 in OASDI benefits who were not lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States according to SSA's payment records.
- Of the 155 beneficiaries in our third sampling frame, we determined SSA overpaid six beneficiaries \$247,397 in OASDI benefits in OASDI benefits who were deported after July 31, 2010 and did not meet criteria for continued eligibility.

Recommendations

We made two recommendations. We recommended that SSA consider case development for 1,746 beneficiaries who are still receiving benefits and remind staff to comply with SSA policies when developing deportation cases.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.