

The Social Security Administration's Use of Amazon Web Service Connect for Telephone Services

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Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) complied with Federal regulations when it (1) selected, administered, and oversaw its blanket purchase agreement (BPA) for Amazon Web Services (AWS) Connect for telephone services and (2) incorporated quality standards or performance incentives into the BPA.

Background

In February 2020, SSA signed a contract with its previous contractor to support its Next Generation Telephony Project (NGTP). SSA leadership later determined the NGTP platform could not meet SSA's needs and resulted in increased call wait times and disconnected or unanswered calls. As a result, SSA transitioned to a different platform in August 2024 and did not renew the NGTP contract.

In August 2024, SSA used an existing BPA with a contractor to acquire AWS Connect for telephone services. SSA originally established the BPA in December 2020, using the General Service Administration's (GSA) Federal Supply Schedules program, to purchase various cloud information technology services, such as platforms or storage.

On July 30, 2025, Congressman Ron Estes, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means, requested we conduct this review.

Results

SSA complied with Federal regulations when it selected a contractor for its BPA for AWS Connect for telephone services. However, SSA did not always administer or oversee the BPA in accordance with Federal regulations. Specifically, SSA did not comply with the Federal Acquisition Regulation when it

- did not perform sufficient annual reviews of the BPA to fully determine whether the BPA still represented the best value to the Agency and therefore may have missed opportunities for additional discounts;
- modified the scope of the BPA beyond the original established term; and
- did not consistently monitor and assess contractor performance.

Additionally, SSA included limited quality standards and performance incentives in its BPA. Although SSA generally experienced improved telephone service platform performance under AWS Connect, we identified other areas where SSA could have identified solutions and addressed its needs more promptly if the Agency had stronger performance measures and methods to monitor performance in the BPA.

Conclusion

SSA must take steps to ensure it can adequately support its vital telephone services for the public. Additionally, as a steward of public funds, SSA must comply with Federal acquisition laws and best practices and pursue cost savings so the Government receives the best value for its expenditures. By strengthening its acquisition and BPA oversight processes, SSA can ensure the Agency complies with applicable regulations and safeguards taxpayer resources.

Recommendations

We made five recommendations for SSA to improve its administration and oversight of the BPA for AWS Connect for telephone services. SSA agreed to implement our recommendations.