



Press Release

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Media Inquiries: <https://oig.ssa.gov>
oig.press@ssa.gov

Audit Finds the Social Security Administration's Newborn Social Security Number Assignment Is 99.997% Accurate

The Social Security Administration (SSA), Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released a new audit examining whether SSA assigned more than one Social Security number (SSN) to the same infant through the Enumeration at Birth (EAB) program.

Of the approximately 13.9 million SSNs the Agency issued through EAB between January 2021 and September 2024, SSA correctly assigned only one SSN per infant at a rate of 99.997 percent. SSA OIG identified 420 infants (.003 percent) for whom it appeared SSA assigned more than one SSN and had not cross-referenced the associated records.

Under the EAB program, parents may request an SSN for their newborn on the birth registration worksheet at a hospital, at a birthing center, or with a licensed midwife. Facility staff, or the midwife, enters this information into the state's Electronic Birth Registration system. Each state's Bureau of Vital Statistics receives the birth information, assigns a birth certificate number (BCN), and registers the birth in accordance with state law. The state transmits birth information on a daily or weekly basis to SSA through secure electronic interfaces. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico participate in EAB.

SSA depends on each state's Bureau of Vital Statistics to submit accurate and complete EAB birth registration data. SSA does not create or modify state birth information and processes the records as received.

SSA should assign an infant a single, unique SSN. If SSA mistakenly assigns multiple SSNs to the same infant, the individual could later claim and receive federal or state benefits under more than one identity. For example, they might obtain Supplemental Security Income under one SSN and later receive SSI or Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance benefits under a second. They could also receive other benefits—such as supplemental nutrition assistance or state-administered programs like unemployment insurance—using different SSNs.

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“While SSA’s accuracy at 99.997 is notable, the goal always is to prevent issuing individuals multiple SSNs through EAB,” said Michelle L. Anderson, Assistant Inspector General for Audit as First Assistant. “When SSA assigns more than one SSN to the same infant, and does not properly cross-reference the records or designate the additional SSN(s) as retired, this increases the risk of improper payments.”

Recommendation

SSA OIG recommended SSA review the 420 infants potentially assigned multiple SSNs, to the extent sufficient information is available, and take appropriate action that may include cross-referencing the records and designating the additional SSNs as retired. SSA agreed to implement the recommendation.

Read the full report [here](#).

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