FISCAL YEARS 2018 - 2022 AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

Approximately 62,000 Federal employees and 15,000 State employees serve the public from a network of offices across the country and around the world. Most of our employees serve the public directly or provide support to employees who do. We administer our programs and services through a network of more than 1,200 field offices.

Each day, approximately 170,000 people visit and 250,000 call one of our field offices nationwide for various reasons, such as to file claims, ask questions, or update their information. Our National 800 Number handles over 30 million calls each year. Callers can conduct a variety of business transactions by speaking directly with an agent or through our 24-hour automated services, which include requesting benefit verification letters, ordering replacement Medicare cards, and obtaining claim status updates. Our processing centers (PC) handle complex Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability claims, as well as provide support to our National 800 Number. State agencies make disability determinations for initial claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews. Administrative law judges in our hearings offices and administrative appeals judges in our Appeals Council decide appealed cases. For more information about our organization and its functions, visit our organizational structure webpage at www.ssa.gov/org.

Contents

Social Security Administration (SSA)

Stakeholder(s):

Nancy A. Berryhill :
Acting Commissioner

SSA Programs :
We administer three programs under the Social Security Act: the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) program, the Disability Insurance (DI) program, and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. These programs provide vital support to some of the most vulnerable members of our society, including people with disabilities, surviving family members, retirees, and the blind and disabled with limited income and resources. In fiscal year (FY) 2018, we expect to pay more than $1 trillion to an average of 711 million individuals each month.

Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) Program :
Created in 1935, the OASI program provides retirement and survivors benefits to qualified workers and their family members. In FY 2018, we will pay about $851 billion in OASI benefits to an average of 53 million beneficiaries a month, including 88 percent of the population aged 65 and over.

Disability Insurance (DI) Program :
Established in 1956, the DI program provides benefits for workers who become disabled and their families. In FY 2018, we will pay about $149 billion in DI benefits to an average of 11 million disabled beneficiaries and their family members a month.

Security Income (SSI) Program :
Established in 1972, the SSI program provides financial support to aged, blind, and disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. In FY 2018, we will pay approximately $54 billion in Federal benefits and State supplementary payments to an average of 8 million recipients a month.

Other Programs :
In addition, we support national programs administered by other Federal and State agencies, as required by law, such as Medicare, Employees Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, Coal Act, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps), Help America Vote Act, State Children's Health Insurance Program, E-Verify, Medicaid, and Federal Benefits for Veterans.

Mission

Deliver quality Social Security services to the public.

1. Services

Deliver Services Effectively

We must be able to deliver our services effectively to the people who come to us for assistance, regardless of whether it is in-person, on the telephone, or online. As we interact with the public every day, our employees experience firsthand the impact of our programs. We understand that doing our work well matters. We also know that our programs are not stagnant and that advancements in technology provide opportunity to do business differently, and often more efficiently and conveniently.

1.1. Delivery

Improve Service Delivery

Over 1 million people are waiting an average of 605 days for an answer on their hearing request. Although in FY 2017 we began reducing the hearings backlog, these wait times remain unacceptable. Therefore, one of our top priorities will be to reduce the hearings backlog and the time it takes get a hearing decision. Our processing centers (PC) handle actions that arise after we determine benefit eligibility and support our field and hearing offices by handling appeals decisions, collecting debt, correcting records, performing program integrity work, and processing other complex benefit claims. In January 2016, the number of actions pending in the PCs hit an all-time high. We will improve service delivery by further prioritizing work and enlisting automation to reduce the PC backlog. Even as we tackle the backlogs in our hearing offices and PCs, we will continue to enhance our online services. In FY 2018, the public will conduct over 190 million transactions through our online services. As we continue to expand service options and functionality, we expect more people to take advantage of the convenience of online services. To improve service delivery, we will continue to educate the public about our secure online service options.

Strategy 1.1.1. CARES

Advance and update the Compassionate And REsponsive Service (CARES) plan to address the number of pending hearing decisions and lengthy wait times

Strategy 1.1.2. PC Actions

Implement a comprehensive approach to reduce the number of pending PC actions

Strategy 1.1.3. Online Services

Increase the use of online services

1.2. Options

Expand Service Delivery Options

Our biennial survey of future customers shows an increasing preference for conducting business with us online or by telephone. We continue to expand our suite of automated and online service options. We are pleased that 7 of our 8 online applications earned scores of at least 80 out of 100 in the Foresee E-Government Satisfaction Index. These high scores help us confirm that we are providing services people want to use. (Note: A score of 80

or higher is considered the threshold for excellence.) Since it launched in 2012, my Social Security, a convenient and safe option for many people who want to handle certain business with us online, has registered more than 32 million users and consistently ranks as one of the top 10 in customer satisfaction for all Federal websites. Over the next five years, we will continue to expand my Social Security's capabilities by adding additional services for both individual and third party users and improving existing options.

Strategy 1.2.1. Connections & Experiences

Respond to customer feedback on how we connect with the public and improve the customer experience

Strategy 1.2.2. Login & Registration

Strengthen and enhance the my Social Security login and registration process

Strategy 1.2.3. Services

Add additional services to my Social Security

2. Processes

Improve the Way We Do Business

Improving the way we do business is imperative to delivering services effectively to the public. We must continuously evaluate our policies and business processes using data and modern methods to ensure we meet service demands and reinforce efficient and effective service. Recognizing that our current technology infrastructure and existing business systems would not allow us to serve the public the way we wanted or the way they expected us to, we developed a plan to modernize our information technology (IT) systems. This modernization effort is foundational to our overall ability to improve service to the public.

2.1. Policies & Processes

Streamline Policies and Processes

Over the last 80 years, our programs have expanded and our policies have evolved creating a level of complexity that can be difficult to fully understand. To improve our accuracy and efficiency, create opportunities to implement technology, and ensure the public understands their options, responsibilities, and rights, we must streamline our policies, processes, and procedures. We are also using data analytics to identify opportunities to improve our business processes.

Strategy 2.1.1. Medical Evidence

Expand our use of electronic medical evidence

Strategy 2.1.2. Employment Support

Strengthen employment support programs

Strategy 2.1.3. Rules & Practices

Explore policy and program areas where rules and agency practices need to be modernized

Strategy 2.1.4. Social Security Statements

Modernize the Social Security Statement to increase the public's understanding of our programs

2.2. IT

Accelerate Information Technology Modernization

We maintain the benefit, earnings items, and certain vital records of nearly every member of the public on systems designed over 30 years ago. Technological change is accelerating at a relentless pace and offers us remarkable opportunities to change, transform, and greatly improve the way we serve the public. Yet, these newer technologies can also be disruptive to legacy systems, business processes, and ultimately to the way we work. Our dated IT infrastructure has grown increasingly fragile, costlier to maintain, and more challenging to secure, and it does not efficiently meet current demands for our services. Our IT Modernization Plan describes a

thoughtful and deliberate multi-year agency initiative to modernize Social Security's major systems, using modern architectures, agile software engineering methods, cloud provisioning, and shared services. We are embarking on an initiative to transform the way we design and build systems and ultimately the way we work and how we serve the public. Our IT modernization vision is to establish a fully integrated IT and Business team that delivers modern business platforms that improve our ability to respond more rapidly to changing needs at a manageable cost. We will provide an enhanced customer experience for millions of beneficiaries across an expanded mix of service options in a cost-effective and secure manner. Recent breaches at other Federal and State agencies underscore the importance of securing networks and sensitive data. While our cybersecurity program is comparable to that of other Federal agencies, it remains costly and difficult to integrate with our current legacy systems. We use knowledge of the threat landscape, advanced technologies, and skilled cyber professionals to secure our networks from threats, both foreign and domestic. Cyberattacks are ever changing, and we must remain vigilant to prevent any intrusion on our networks.

Strategy 2.2.1. Infrastructure

Modernize IT infrastructure to respond to evolving business needs

Strategy 2.2.2. Applications

Build modern applications that improve the customer and employee experience

Strategy 2.2.3. Cybersecurity

Strengthen our cybersecurity program and modernize our cybersecurity infrastructure

Strategy 2.2.4. Disability Cases

Modernize disability case processing

3. Stewardship

Ensure Stewardship

We are committed to being good stewards of taxpayer dollars to ensure the public has confidence that we manage their tax dollars wisely. We take the stewardship of our programs seriously, and we will continue to demonstrate a commitment to sound management practices. To ensure stewardship and the efficient administration of our programs, we will focus our efforts in three major areas: improving program integrity; enhancing our fraud prevention and detection activities; and improving workforce performance and increasing accountability.

3.1. Integrity

Improve Program Integrity

In FY 2017, we paid more than $82 billion in Federal benefits on average across our programs each month. As good stewards of the programs entrusted to us, we must ensure that we pay individuals the correct amount — neither overpaying nor underpaying them. Making the right payment to the right person at the right time has always been one of our priorities. We conduct ongoing stewardship reviews to confirm individuals receive the benefits they are due and to monitor our performance. In the coming years, we will remain focused on the integrity of our programs, including minimizing improper payments, particularly in the SSI program where program complexities pose challenges. We are also committed to continuing our efforts to achieve high payment accuracy while using all available tools to recover overpayments.

Strategy 3.1.1. Collaboration

Collaborate with partners to address improper payments

Strategy 3.1.2. Root Causes

Address the root causes of improper payments to prevent their recurrence

Strategy 3.1.3. Debt

Modernize our debt management and debt collection business processes

3.2. Fraud

Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities

We take seriously our responsibility to prevent and detect fraud. We centrally manage our anti-fraud efforts and are developing consistent anti-fraud policies; refining employee training; and solidifying relationships with other Federal, State, and private partners to identify individuals who wrongfully obtain Social Security and SSI payments. We plan to expand the use of data analytics and predictive modeling to enhance fraud prevention and detection in our programs. We will integrate data from multiple sources and use industry-proven predictive analytics software to identify high-risk transactions for further review. With these models, we will better identify suspicious and evolving patterns of activities in our workloads and prevent fraudulent actions from occurring.

Strategy 3.2.1. Partnerships & Data Analytics

Expand the use of data analytics and increase internal and external partnerships

Strategy 3.2.2. Fraud

Develop and conduct regular fraud risk assessments of our programs

3.3. Performance & Accountability

Improve Workforce Performance and Increase Accountability

Our employees remain our most important asset. We are accountable for ensuring they have the training and technology they need to take timely, quality actions. Feedback, including clear and measurable expectations, is an important tool to ensure our employees know how they are performing. Likewise, our managers need to understand how to maximize employee performance so that we can serve the public. We must support them in that effort by establishing expert teams who will be available to provide information and assistance in real time. We will also be requiring additional management training and working with our managers to help them engage and communicate with employees. While many of our employees are attracted to Federal employment by the benefits and flexibilities we provide, they also specifically choose our agency because they believe in, or have personal experience with, our mission. Our employees have some of the most difficult but also the most rewarding jobs. We must ensure that they remain aware of the importance — to real people in our communities — of a job well done. We must ensure that they know how much we — and the public — value their effort. Therefore, we must be attentive to issues they bring to our attention from requests to simplify policies to demanding that we hold all employees accountable. Our framework for comprehensive human capital management includes three major focus areas: workforce management, succession management, and performance management.

Strategy 3.3.1. Accountability

Enhance accountability for managing performance through program and automation improvements

Strategy 3.3.2. Employee Development

Align employee development with agency succession plans

Stakeholder(s):
SSA Employees

Strategy 3.3.3 . Performance & Conduct Challenges

Invest in training and support for managers to effectively address performance and conduct challenges

Stakeholder(s):
SSA Managers

3.4. Effectiveness & Costs

Improve Organizational Effectiveness and Reduce Costs

Our administrative expenses continue to be less than 1.3 percent of the combined Social Security and SSI benefits we pay. We are taking steps to reduce our real estate footprint and to realign our organization to meet the current demands for our services. We are also leading efforts to improve strategic partnerships with other government and private entities and to expand data sharing opportunities with Federal and State agencies for better public service and operational savings.

Strategy 3.4.1. Real Estate

Align our real estate footprint with current and future business needs

Strategy 3.4.2. Streamlining

Streamline our organization and how we manage our workloads

Strategy 3.4.3. Partnerships

Improve strategic partnerships with other government and private entities

---

Administrative Information
Start Date: 2018-02-28
End Date: 2022-09-30

Publication Date: **2018-04-20**
Source: https://www.ssa.gov/agency/asp/materials/pdfs/SSA_Agency_Strategic_Plan_Fiscal_Years_2018-2022.pdf

Submitter:
Given Name: Owen
Surname: Ambur
Email: Owen.Ambur@verizon.net
Phone: