

CONTENTS

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE.....	31
Language Analysis.....	32
GENERAL STATEMENT.....	33
Program Overview	33
FY 2025 President’s Budget Request	35
BUDGETARY RESOURCES	36
Analysis of Changes	37
New Budget Authority and Obligations by Activity	40
New Budget Authority and Obligations by Object.....	41
BACKGROUND	42
Authorizing Legislation	42
Appropriation History	43
FEDERAL BENEFIT PAYMENTS	46
Purpose and Method of Operation	46
Rationale for Budget Request	46
SSI Recipient Population	47
Benefit Payments	49
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.....	51
Purpose and Method of Operation	51
Rationale for Budget Request	52
BENEFICIARY SERVICES.....	53
Purpose and Method of Operation	53
Rationale for Budget Request	54
Additional Information on VR Cost Reimbursement and Ticket to Work Programs.....	55
RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION	58
Purpose and Method of Operation	58
Rationale for Budget Request	60
Related Funding Sources	78
Administration of Our Research Activities.....	80
Research Investment Criteria.....	81

Supplemental Security Income Program

TABLES

Table 2.1—Appropriation Language Analysis	32
Table 2.2—Summary of Appropriations and Obligations	33
Table 2.3—Appropriation Detail	35
Table 2.4—Amounts Available for Obligation	36
Table 2.5—Summary of Changes	38
Table 2.6—Explanation of SSI Budget Changes from FY 2024 to FY 2025.....	39
Table 2.7—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Activity	40
Table 2.8—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Object.....	41
Table 2.9—Authorizing Legislation	42
Table 2.10—Appropriation History	43
Table 2.11—Federal Benefit Payments: New Budget Authority and Obligations.....	46
Table 2.12—SSI Recipients, Actual	47
Table 2.13—SSI Recipients, Projected.....	47
Table 2.14—Blind or Disabled Recipients as a Percentage of Total.....	48
Table 2.15—Maximum Benefit Rates	49
Table 2.16—Average Monthly Benefit Payments.....	49
Table 2.17—Check Payments by Fiscal Year	50
Table 2.18—Administrative Expenses: New Budget Authority and Obligations	51
Table 2.19—Beneficiary Services: New Budget Authority and Obligations	53
Table 2.20—SSI VR Cost Reimbursement and Ticket to Work Payments.....	55
Table 2.21—Research and Demonstration Projects: Budget Authority and Obligations by Funding Authority.....	58
Table 2.22—Research and Demonstration Projects: Obligations by Funding Source	59
Table 2.23—Major Research Areas, Demonstration Obligations and New Budget Authority ...	61
Table 2.24—Current Research Projects Obligations through FY 2023	79

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

For carrying out titles XI and XVI of the Social Security Act, section 401 of Public Law 92-603, section 212 of Public Law 93-66, as amended, and section 405 of Public Law 95-216, including payment to the Social Security trust funds for administrative expenses incurred pursuant to section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act, \$46,555,635,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That any portion of the funds provided to a State in the current fiscal year and not obligated by the State during that year shall be returned to the Treasury: Provided further, That not more than \$91,000,000 shall be available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act, and remain available through September 30, 2027.

For making, after June 15 of the current fiscal year, benefit payments to individuals under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for unanticipated costs incurred for the current fiscal year, such sums as may be necessary.

For making benefit payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act for the first quarter of fiscal year 2026, \$22,100,000,000, to remain available until expended.

Note.—A full-year 2024 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act (Division A of Public Law 118-15, as amended). The amounts included for 2024 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Supplemental Security Income Program

LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

The appropriation language provides us with the funds needed to carry out our responsibilities under the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. This includes the funds needed to pay Federal benefits, administer the program, and provide beneficiary services to recipients. The budget authority for these activities is made available until expended, providing us the authority to carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years. Furthermore, the language includes three-year authority for research and demonstration projects.

In addition, the language includes indefinite authority beginning June 15, in the event Federal benefit payment obligations in FY 2025 are higher than expected, and we do not have sufficient unobligated balances to cover the difference. Consistent with previous years, the appropriation also includes an advance appropriation for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of FY 2026 to ensure the timely payment of benefits in case of a delay in the FY 2026 appropriations bill.

Table 2.1—Appropriation Language Analysis

Language provision	Explanation
<i>“For carrying out titles XI and XVI of the Social Security Act... including payment to the Social Security trust funds for administrative expenses incurred pursuant to section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act, \$46,555,635,000, to remain available until expended.”</i>	Appropriates funds for Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration projects under the SSI program. We may carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years.
<i>"Provided, That any portion of the funds provided to a State in the current fiscal year and not obligated by the State during that year shall be returned to the Treasury."</i>	Ensures that States do not carry unobligated balances of Federal funds into the subsequent fiscal year. Applies primarily to the beneficiary services activity.
<i>“Provided further, That not more than \$91,000,000 shall be available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act, and remain available through September 30, 2027.”</i>	Specifies that not more than \$91 million of the SSI appropriation is available for research and demonstration projects. We may carry over unobligated balances through September 30, 2027, at which point, funds are expired.
<i>"For making, after June 15 of the current fiscal year, benefit payments to individuals under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for unanticipated costs incurred for the current fiscal year, such sums as may be necessary."</i>	Provides an indefinite appropriation to finance any shortfall in the definite appropriation for benefit payments during the last months of the fiscal year.
<i>"For making benefit payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act for the first quarter of fiscal year 2026, \$22,100,000,000, to remain available until expended."</i>	Appropriates funds for benefit payments in the first quarter of the subsequent fiscal year. Ensures that recipients will continue to receive benefits during the first quarter of FY 2026 in the event of a temporary funding delay.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The SSI program guarantees a minimum level of income to financially needy individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled. Title XVI of the Social Security Act authorized the program, and payments began January 1974. It is Federally-administered and funded from general revenues.

Prior to the establishment of the SSI program, the Social Security Act provided means-tested assistance through three separate programs—Old-Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, and Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled. Federal law only established broad guidelines, with each State largely responsible for setting its own eligibility and payment standards. The SSI program was established to provide uniform standards across States.

Table 2.2—Summary of Appropriations and Obligations¹
(in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	<i>Change</i>
Appropriation	\$64,209,338	\$64,209,338	\$68,255,635	+\$4,046,297
Obligations	\$65,408,367	\$62,172,415	\$68,356,008	+\$6,183,593
First Quarter Advance Appropriation for Subsequent Fiscal Year	\$15,800,000	\$21,700,000	\$22,100,000	+\$400,000

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Eligibility Standards

As a means-tested program, individuals must have income and resources below specified levels to be eligible for benefits. Program rules allow some specific categories of income and resources to be either totally or partially excluded.² The process of evaluating eligibility and payment levels for the SSI program and addressing the accuracy of payments is inherently complex due to the program rules.

An individual's benefit payment is reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of his or her "countable income"—income less all applicable exclusions—in a given month. Income in the SSI program includes "earned income," such as wages and net earnings from self-employment and "unearned income," such as Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, deemed income from a spouse or parent, and the value of in-kind support and maintenance, such as shelter. Different exclusion rules apply for different types of income.

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) appropriation.

² The ABLE Act of 2014 created a new type of tax-advantaged account that has a limited effect on an individual's eligibility for the SSI program and other Federal means-tested programs.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Benefit Payments

We estimate we will pay \$63.1 billion in Federal benefits to about 7.3 million SSI recipients in FY 2025. Including State supplementary payments, we expect to pay a total of \$66.6 billion and administer payments to over 7.4 million recipients.

Federal benefit payments represent approximately 92 percent of Federal SSI spending. Administrative expenses represent about 7 percent of spending; beneficiary services and research and demonstration projects make up the remaining less than half a percent.

Incentives for Work and Opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation

The SSI program is designed to help recipients with disabilities achieve independence by encouraging and supporting their attempts to work. The program includes a number of work incentive provisions that enable recipients who are blind or disabled to work and retain benefits. The program also includes provisions to help disabled beneficiaries obtain vocational rehabilitation and employment support services. These provisions were revised by legislation establishing the Ticket to Work program, which is discussed in more detail in the Beneficiary Services section.

State Supplementation

Supplementation is mandatory for certain recipients who were on State rolls just prior to the creation of the Federal program on January 1, 1974. Otherwise, States are encouraged to supplement the Federal benefit and may elect to have us administer their State supplementation program. States that choose to have us administer their program reimburse us in advance and we make the payment on behalf of the State. Participating States also reimburse us for the cost of administering their program, based on a user fee schedule established by the Social Security Act. The user fee is \$14.78 per SSI check payment in FY 2024 and is expected to increase to \$15.22 in FY 2025. The Department of the Treasury receives the first \$5.00 of each fee and we retain, as part of our LAE budget, the amount over \$5.00. Additional information regarding State supplementation can be found within the LAE section.

Coordination with Other Programs

We play an important role in helping States administer Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Provisions in the SSI statute ensure that payments made by States or under the Social Security program are not duplicated by SSI benefits.

Generally, SSI recipients are categorically eligible for Medicaid. States may either use SSI eligibility criteria for determining Medicaid eligibility or use their own, provided the criteria are no more restrictive than the State's January 1972 medical assistance standards.

SSI recipients may also qualify for SNAP. Pursuant to section 11 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (P.L. 88-525, as amended through P.L. 116-260), we work with SSI applicants and recipients in a variety of ways to help them file for SNAP, including informing them of their potential benefits, making applications available to them, and in some cases helping them complete their applications in our field offices. We also share applicant data with a number of States in support of SNAP.

Supplemental Security Income Program

FY 2025 PRESIDENT’S BUDGET REQUEST

The SSI appropriation includes funds for Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration projects. In total, the FY 2025 President’s Budget request is \$68,255,635,000. However, this includes \$21,700,000,000 requested for the first quarter of FY 2025 in the FY 2024 President’s Budget. The appropriation language provides us with our remaining appropriation for FY 2025, \$46,555,635,000—the total amount requested for FY 2025 less the first quarter advance.

Similarly, in addition to the amount above, the request includes an advance appropriation of \$22,100,000,000 for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of FY 2026. This advance is to ensure recipients continue to receive their benefits at the beginning of the subsequent fiscal year in case there is a delay in passing that year’s appropriation.

Table 2.3—Appropriation Detail^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate³	FY 2025 Estimate	Change
Advance for Federal Benefits ⁴	\$15,600,000	\$15,800,000	\$21,700,000	
Regular for Federal Benefits	\$43,630,213	\$43,677,435	\$41,408,000	
Subtotal Federal Benefits	\$59,230,213	\$59,477,435	\$63,108,000	+\$3,630,565
Base Administrative Expenses	\$3,333,420	\$3,018,584	\$3,353,410	+\$334,826
Program Integrity (Base)	\$221,292	\$242,000	\$265,000	+\$23,000
Program Integrity (Adjustment)	\$1,214,413	\$1,261,319	\$1,294,225	+\$32,906
Subtotal Administrative Expenses	\$4,769,125	\$4,521,903	\$4,912,635	+\$390,732
Beneficiary Services	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$144,000	+\$20,000
Research and Demonstration	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$91,000	+\$5,000
Subtotal Advanced Appropriation	\$15,600,000	\$15,800,000	\$21,700,000	
Subtotal Regular Appropriation	\$48,609,338	\$48,409,338	\$46,555,635	
Total Appropriation	\$64,209,338	\$64,209,338	\$68,255,635	+\$4,046,297
Advance for Subsequent Year	\$15,800,000	\$21,700,000	\$22,100,000	+\$400,000

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplementary user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ The FY 2025 President’s Budget assumes the Fiscal Responsibility Act (P.L. 118-5) level for the program integrity cap adjustment in FY 2024.

⁴ Amount provided or requested in the previous year’s appropriation bill.

Supplemental Security Income Program

BUDGETARY RESOURCES

The SSI annual appropriation consists of a regular appropriation made available by the current year's appropriation bill and an advance made available by the prior year's appropriation. This advance is for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of the subsequent fiscal year to ensure recipients continue to receive their benefits in case there is a delay in passing that year's appropriation bill. The FY 2025 President's Budget is \$68,255,635,000, including \$21,700,000,000 requested in the FY 2024 President's Budget.

Table 2.4—Amounts Available for Obligation^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Regular Appropriation	\$48,609,338	\$48,409,338	\$46,555,635
Advanced Appropriation from prior FY	\$15,600,000	\$15,800,000	\$21,700,000
Total Annual Appropriation	\$64,209,338	\$64,209,338	\$68,255,635
Federal Unobligated Balance	\$4,629,711	\$3,801,599	\$5,838,522
Recovery of Prior-Year Obligations	\$370,917	\$0	\$0
Subtotal Federal Resources	\$69,209,966	\$68,010,937	\$74,094,157
State Supp. Reimbursements	\$3,117,544	\$3,383,000	\$3,481,000
State Supp. Unobligated Balance	\$11,528	\$5,910	\$248,910
Total Budgetary Resources	\$72,339,038	\$71,399,847	\$77,824,067
Federal Obligations	\$65,408,367	\$62,172,415	\$68,356,008
State Supp. Obligations	\$3,123,162	\$3,140,000	\$3,475,000
Total Obligations	\$ 68,531,529	\$65,312,415	\$71,831,008
Federal Unobligated Balance	\$3,801,599	\$5,838,522	\$5,738,149
State Supp. Unobligated Balance	\$5,910	\$248,910	\$254,910
Total Unobligated Balance	\$3,807,509	\$6,087,432	\$5,993,059

The SSI annual appropriation was \$64.2 billion in FY 2023 and estimated to be the same in FY 2024. We have the authority to carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years for Federal benefit payments and administrative expenses, and beneficiary services because the amounts appropriated are made available until expended. We carried over approximately \$3.8

¹ Does not include State supplementary user fees; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

billion in Federal unobligated balances into FY 2024. We expect to carry over approximately \$5.8 billion into FY 2025.

In addition to these appropriated amounts, we have spending authority in the amount of the advance reimbursement we receive from States to pay their State supplementary benefits. Because States reimburse us in advance, we carry over the amount received for the October 1 payment, reimbursed at the end of September in the prior fiscal year, for use in the subsequent fiscal year.

ANALYSIS OF CHANGES

The FY 2025 request represents an increase of approximately \$4 billion from the FY 2024 level, which is primarily due to having 12 Federal benefit payments instead of 11 in FY 2024. We plan to use unobligated balances to partially fund administrative expenses, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration projects in FY 2024 and FY 2025. In total, we plan to use approximately \$208 million in unobligated balances and recoveries in FY 2024 and \$100 million in unobligated balances and recoveries in FY 2025.

Federal Benefit Payments

The FY 2025 request for Federal Benefit payments is approximately \$3.6 billion more than the FY 2024 level. We increased the FY 2025 request for Federal Benefit payments mainly due to one more benefit payment in FY 2025. The increase is partially offset by the January 2025 COLA and bolstered by the impact of Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) COLAs on concurrent SSI/OASDI recipients. Since OASDI benefits are counted as income in the SSI program, the annual OASDI COLA decreases the SSI benefit payment for concurrent recipients.

We estimate the first quarter advance for FY 2026 will be \$400 million more than the first quarter advance for FY 2025. Monthly SSI benefit payments are made on the first of the month, unless the first falls on a weekend or Federal holiday. In that case, the payment is made on the prior business day at the end of the previous month. When October 1 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the payment is made in the prior fiscal year at the end of September. This timing of payments results in 11, 12, or 13 payments in a given fiscal year, and three or four in a given quarter. The first quarter in FY 2025 and the first quarter in FY 2026 will have four benefit payments.

Administrative Expenses

The FY 2025 request for administrative expenses is approximately \$400 million more than the FY 2024 level, including a \$1.3 billion of the \$1.6 billion cap adjustment funding for program integrity work in the SSI program. We expect to use \$140 million in carryover funds in FY 2024 and approximately \$66 million in carryover funds in FY 2025 to cover estimated obligations. For details about program integrity funding and activities, please refer to the Program Integrity exhibit in the LAE section.

Beneficiary Services

We are requesting \$144 million in new authority for FY 2025. This is \$20 million more than our FY 2024 level. Our estimate reflects an increased level of vocational rehabilitation reimbursement awards, and Ticket payments to Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work program. The FY 2025 request funds an estimated 2 percent increase in obligations above the

Supplemental Security Income Program

FY 2024 level. We expect to use \$39 million in carryover funds in FY 2024 and \$23 million in carryover funds in FY 2025 to cover our estimated obligations.

Research and Demonstrations

The FY 2025 request for research and demonstration projects is \$5 million more than the FY 2024 level. We expect to use carryover funds in FY 2024 and FY 2025 in addition to our requested appropriation to cover our estimated obligations. For more information, please see the *Research and Demonstration* exhibit.

Table 2.5—Summary of Changes^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	<i>Change</i>
Appropriation	\$64,209,338	\$68,255,635	<i>+4,046,297</i>
Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balances and Recoveries	\$0	\$100,373	<i>+\$100,373</i>
Estimated Federal Obligations	\$62,172,415	\$68,356,008	<i>+\$6,183,593</i>

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Table 2.6—Explanation of SSI Budget Changes from FY 2024 to FY 2025
(in thousands)

	FY 2024 Obligations	<i>Change</i>
Federal Benefit Payments	\$59,477,435	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COLA – 2.8% beginning January 2025 Net change due to annualized closings and awards October FY 2024 payment obligated during FY 2023 Effect of OASDI COLA for concurrent SSI/OASDI Recipients 		+\$2,386,000 -\$332,000 +\$4,417,000 -\$598,000
Federal Benefit Payments – Carryover	-\$2,242,435	
Administrative Expenses	\$4,521,903	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in base funding 		+\$390,732
Administrative Expenses – Carryover	\$140,097	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2025 		-\$74,507
Beneficiary Services	\$124,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in base funding 		+\$20,000
Beneficiary Services – Carryover	\$39,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2025 		-\$16,000
Research and Demonstration	\$86,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in base funding 		+\$5,000
Research and Demonstration – Carryover	\$26,415	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2025 		-\$14,632
Total Obligations Requested, Net Change	\$62,172,415	+\$6,183,593

Supplemental Security Income Program

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS BY ACTIVITY

The table below displays budget authority and obligations for the five main SSI activities – Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, program integrity, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration.

Table 2.7—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Activity^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate^{3,4}	FY 2025 Estimate¹³
<u>Federal Benefit Payments</u>			
Appropriation	\$59,230,213	\$59,477,435	\$63,108,000
Obligations	\$60,417,888	\$57,235,000	\$63,108,000
Monthly Check Payments	12	11	12
<u>Base Administrative Expenses</u>			
Appropriation	\$3,333,420	\$3,018,584	\$3,353,410
Obligations	\$3,325,244	\$3,161,000	\$3,419,000
<u>Program Integrity (Base)</u>			
Appropriation	\$221,292	\$242,000	\$265,000
Obligations	\$221,292	\$242,000	\$265,000
<u>Program Integrity (Adjustment)</u>			
Appropriation	\$1,214,413	\$1,261,319	\$1,294,225
Obligations	\$1,214,413	\$1,259,000	\$1,294,225
<u>Beneficiary Services</u>			
Appropriation	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$144,000
Obligations	\$137,215	\$163,000	\$167,000
<u>Research and Demonstration</u>			
Appropriation	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$91,000
Obligations	\$92,316	\$112,415	\$102,783
Total Appropriation	\$64,209,338	\$64,209,338	\$68,255,635
Total Federal Obligations	\$65,408,368	\$62,172,415	\$68,356,008

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ We expect to use carryover of prior year unobligated balances and recoveries for FY 2024 and FY 2025 obligations.

⁴ The FY 2025 President's Budget assumes the Fiscal Responsibility Act (P.L. 118-5) level for the program integrity cap adjustment in FY 2024.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS BY OBJECT

In the table below, “Other Services” includes administrative expenses, program integrity, and beneficiary services.

Table 2.8—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Object ^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
<u>Other Services</u> ³			
Appropriation	\$4,893,125	\$4,645,903	\$5,056,635
Obligations	\$4,898,164	\$4,825,000	\$5,145,225
<u>Federal Benefits and Research</u>			
Appropriation	\$59,316,213	\$59,563,435	\$63,199,000
Obligations	\$60,510,204	\$57,347,415	\$63,210,783
Total Appropriation	\$64,209,338	\$64,209,338	\$68,255,635
Total Obligations	\$65,408,368	\$62,172,415	\$68,356,008

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ The administrative portion of these services includes the SSI’s prorated share of unobligated LAE money that has been converted into no-year IT funds. It is not part of the annual administrative appropriation.

Supplemental Security Income Program

BACKGROUND

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The SSI program is authorized by Title XVI of the Social Security Act. Section 1601 of the Act authorizes such sums as are sufficient to carry out the Title.

Table 2.9—Authorizing Legislation

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	FY Amount Authorized
Title XVI of the Social Security Act, Section 401 of P.L. 92-603 and Section 212 of P.L. 93-66, as amended, and Section 405 of P.L. 92-216 ¹	\$64,209,338,000	\$64,209,338,000	\$68,255,635,000	<i>Indefinite</i>
First Quarter Advance Appropriation for Subsequent Fiscal Year	\$15,800,000,000	\$21,700,000,000	\$22,100,000,000	---

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

APPROPRIATION HISTORY

The table below displays the President's Budget request, amounts passed by the House and Senate, and the actual amount appropriated, for the period FY 2014 to FY 2023. Indefinite budget authority is requested when actual Federal benefit payments exceed the amounts available for Federal benefit payments in a given fiscal year.

Table 2.10—Appropriation History¹

Fiscal Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Committee Passed	Senate Committee Passed	Enacted Appropriation
Q1 Advance	\$19,700,000,000		\$19,700,000,000	\$19,700,000,000
Current Year	\$40,927,000,000			\$41,232,978,000 ²
2015 Total	\$60,627,000,000			\$60,932,978,000 ³
Q1 Advance	\$19,200,000,000			\$19,200,000,000
Current Year	\$46,422,000,000	\$46,232,978,000 ⁴	\$46,110,777,000 ⁵	\$46,305,733,000 ⁶
2016 Total	\$65,622,000,000	\$65,432,978,000	\$65,310,777,000	\$65,505,733,000 ⁷
Q1 Advance	\$14,500,000,000			\$14,500,000,000
Current Year	\$43,824,868,000	\$43,162,469,000 ⁸	\$43,618,163,000 ⁹	\$43,618,163,000 ¹⁰
2017 Total	\$58,324,868,000	\$57,662,469,000	\$58,118,163,000	\$58,118,163,000 ¹¹
Q1 Advance	\$15,000,000,000			\$15,000,000,000
Current Year	\$38,557,000,000	\$38,591,635,000 ¹²	\$38,450,927,000 ¹³	\$38,487,277,000 ¹⁴
2018 Total	\$53,557,000,000	\$53,591,635,000	\$53,450,927,000	\$53,487,227,000 ¹⁵
Q1 Advance	\$19,500,000,000			\$19,500,000,000
Current Year	\$41,208,000,000	\$41,251,000,000 ¹⁶	\$41,390,721,000 ¹⁷	\$41,366,203,000 ¹⁸
2019 Total	\$60,708,000,000	\$60,751,000,000	\$60,890,721,000	\$60,866,203,000 ¹⁹
Q1 Advance	\$19,700,000,000			\$19,700,000,000
Current Year	\$41,832,000,000	\$41,938,540,000 ²⁰	-- ²¹	\$41,714,889,000 ²²
2020 Total	\$61,532,000,000	\$61,638,540,000		\$61,414,889,000 ²³
Q1 Advance	\$19,900,000,000			\$19,900,000,000
Current Year	\$40,308,177,000	\$40,172,492,000 ²⁴	-- ²⁵	\$40,158,768,000 ²⁶
2021 Total	\$60,208,177,000	\$60,072,492,000		\$60,058,768,000 ²⁷

Table Continues on the Next Page

Supplemental Security Income Program

Fiscal Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Committee Passed	Senate Committee Passed	Enacted Appropriation
Q1 Advance	\$19,600,000,000			\$19,600,000,000
Current Year	\$46,210,256,000	\$46,167,573,000 ²⁸	-- ²⁹	\$45,913,823,000 ³⁰
2022 Total	\$65,810,256,000	\$65,767,573,000		\$65,513,823,000 ³¹
Q1 Advance	\$15,600,000,000			\$15,600,000,000
Current Year	\$48,828,722,000	\$48,713,576,000 ³²	-- ³³	\$48,609,338,000 ³⁴
2023 Total	\$64,428,722,000	\$64,313,576,000		\$64,209,338,000 ³⁵
Q1 Advance	\$15,800,000,000			\$15,800,000,000
Current Year	\$45,717,853,000	\$45,455,426,000 ³⁶	\$45,561,145,000 ³⁷	
2024 Total	\$61,517,853,000	\$61,255,426,000	\$61,361,145,000	-- ³⁸
Q1 Advance	\$21,700,000,000			
Current Year	\$46,555,635,000			
2025 Total	\$68,255,635,000			
Q1 Advance	\$22,100,000,000			
Current Year				
2026 Total				

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).

³ Of this amount, not more than \$48,000,000 is for research and demonstrations and not more than \$35,000,000 is for early intervention demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

⁴ H.R. 3020.

⁵ S. 1695

⁶ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113).

⁷ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

⁸ H.R. 5926.

⁹ S. 3040.

¹⁰ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31).

¹¹ Of this amount, not more than \$58,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

¹² H.R. 3358.

¹³ S. 1771.

¹⁴ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141).

¹⁵ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

¹⁶ H.R. 6470.

¹⁷ S. 3158.

¹⁸ Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245).

-
- ¹⁹ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ²⁰ H.R. 2740.
- ²¹ The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which mirrored the FY 2020 President's Budget request for \$41,832,000,000.
- ²² Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94)
- ²³ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ²⁴ H.R. 7614.
- ²⁵ The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill but provided a draft showing \$40,136,324,000.
- ²⁶ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260)
- ²⁷ Of this amount, not more than \$86,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ²⁸ H.R. 4502.
- ²⁹ The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill but provided a draft showing \$46,122,423,000.
- ³⁰ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103)
- ³¹ Of this amount, not more than \$86,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ³² H.R. 8295.
- ³³ The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill but provided a draft showing \$48,644,795,000.
- ³⁴ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328)
- ³⁵ Of this amount, not more than \$86,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ³⁶ H.R. 5894. The House bill was passed at the subcommittee level and did not go to the full committee.
- ³⁷ S. 2624.
- ³⁸ A full-year appropriation for FY 2024 was not enacted at the time the FY 2025 President's Budget was prepared. All FY 2024 figures for except for program integrity assume funding at the annualized funding level provided in the Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328). The FY 2025 President's Budget assumes the Fiscal Responsibility Act (P.L. 118-5) level for the program integrity cap adjustment in FY 2024.

Supplemental Security Income Program

FEDERAL BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Authorizing Legislation: Section 1602, 1611, and 1617 of the Social Security Act.

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

The SSI program was established to pay low-income aged, blind, and disabled individuals a minimum level of income through Federally-administered monthly cash payments. In many cases, these payments supplement income from other sources, including Social Security benefits and State programs. In FY 2025, we estimate benefit payments will total approximately \$63 billion for approximately 7.3 million Federal SSI recipients.

Table 2.11—Federal Benefit Payments: New Budget Authority and Obligations¹
(in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	<i>Change</i>
Appropriation	\$59,230,213	\$59,477,435	\$63,108,000	+\$3,630,565
Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balance and Recoveries	<i>\$1,187,675</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Obligations	\$60,417,888	\$57,235,000	\$63,108,000	+\$5,873,000
Advance for subsequent fiscal year	\$15,800,000	\$21,700,000	\$22,100,000	+\$400,000

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

In FY 2025, we are requesting \$63 billion in new budget authority for Federal benefit payments, and \$22.1 billion in an advance appropriation for the first quarter of FY 2026. We estimate benefit payments based on a number of interrelated factors including the number of SSI recipients, number of applications, award and termination rates, cost-of-living adjustments, maximum benefit rates, average payment amounts, and number of payments per fiscal year.

¹ Federal benefit numbers reflect the most recent estimates from our Office of the Chief Actuary.

SSI RECIPIENT POPULATION

The number of Federal SSI recipients has decreased from 7.9 million in FY 2020 to an estimated 7.3 million in FY 2024, and is expected to stay steady at 7.3 million in FY 2025. We estimate the number of SSI recipients by analyzing a number of factors including applications, as well as award and termination rates. Please refer to the Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility exhibit in the LAE section for additional information on how we are investigating this trend.

Table 2.12—SSI Recipients, Actual¹
(average over fiscal year, in thousands)

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Aged	1,109	1,076	1,069	1,095
Blind or Disabled	6,802	6,666	6,450	6,287
Total Federal	7,911	7,742	7,519	7,382
<i>Year-to-Year Change</i>	<i>-0.6%</i>	<i>-2.1%</i>	<i>-2.9%</i>	<i>-1.8%</i>
State Supplement Only	146	137	133	134
Total Federally Administered	8,057	7,879	7,652	7,516

In addition to Federal SSI recipients, we currently administer State supplementary payments for 20 States and the District of Columbia. We administer payments for approximately 1.4 million State supplement recipients, of which 135,000 do not receive a Federal SSI benefit and only receive the State supplementary payment.

Table 2.13—SSI Recipients, Projected¹
(average over fiscal year, in thousands)

	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	<i>Change</i>
Aged	1,113	1,127	+1.3%
Blind or Disabled	6,192	6,146	-0.7%
Total Federal	7,304	7,273	-0.4%
State Supplement only	135	137	+1.5%
Total Federally Administered	7,440	7,411	-0.4%

¹ Totals may not add due to rounding.

Supplemental Security Income Program

SSI Disabled vs. Aged Recipient Population

The number of Federal blind or disabled SSI recipients as a percentage of all Federal SSI recipients remained steady at about 86 percent from FY 2020 to FY 2022, dropped to about 85 percent in FY 2023, and is projected to remain steady at about 85 percent in FY 2024 and FY 2025.

Table 2.14—Blind or Disabled Recipients as a Percentage of Total ¹
(average over fiscal year, in thousands)

Fiscal Year	Total Federal	Aged	Blind or Disabled	Blind or Disabled as % of Total
2020	7,911	1,109	6,802	86.0%
2021	7,742	1,076	6,666	86.1%
2022	7,519	1,069	6,450	85.8%
2023	7,382	1,095	6,287	85.2%
2024 Estimate	7,304	1,113	6,192	84.8%
2025 Estimate	7,273	1,127	6,146	84.5%

Concurrent SSI/OASDI Recipients

SSI recipients also receiving Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) or DI benefits have their SSI benefit reduced, less applicable exclusions, by the amount of their OASDI benefit. Approximately 34 percent of all SSI recipients (including those only receiving a State supplement) also receive Social Security benefits. Approximately 58 percent of the SSI aged and 29 percent of the SSI blind and disabled populations receive concurrent payments.

¹ Totals may not add due to rounding.

BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Maximum Monthly Federal Payments

The maximum monthly Federal benefit rate (FBR) is increased each January when there are increases in the cost-of-living. There is a 3.2 percent cost of living increase in calendar year (CY) 2024. An increase of 2.8 percent is projected for CY 2025. The FBR increased from \$914 for an individual and \$1,371 for a couple for CY 2023 to \$943 for an individual and \$1,415 for a couple in CY 2024. We estimate the FBR will increase to \$969 for an individual and \$1,454 for a couple in CY 2025. The COLA was effective in January 2024, raising the maximum benefit rate to higher levels than the first 3 months of the fiscal year.

Table 2.15—Maximum Benefit Rates

	FY 2024		FY 2025	
	First 3 Months	Last 9 Months	First 3 Months	Last 9 Months
Individual	\$914	\$943	\$943	\$969
Couple	\$1,371	\$1,415	\$1,415	\$1,454

Average Monthly Benefit Payments

The amount actually paid to a recipient can vary from the FBR based on their income received (e.g., earnings and Social Security benefits) and the living arrangement of the recipient (e.g., residence in one's own home, the household of another person, or in a nursing home which meets Medicaid standards). The average monthly benefit is expected to increase from \$667 in FY 2023 to \$695 in FY 2024 and \$715 in FY 2025. The increase in the average benefit payment is driven by COLAs and recipient population characteristics.

Table 2.16—Average Monthly Benefit Payments

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Aged	\$485	\$508	\$526
Blind or Disabled	\$698	\$728	\$749
All SSI Recipients	\$667	\$695	\$715

Supplemental Security Income Program

Cost of Living Adjustments

When applicable, COLAs increase both the maximum and average monthly benefit payment. However, for concurrent SSI/OASDI recipients, increases in SSI benefit payments are partially offset by increases in Social Security benefits resulting from the same COLA. Social Security benefits are counted as income in the SSI program. Therefore, any increase in Social Security benefits resulting from the annual COLA increases countable income in the SSI benefit computation.

Program Integrity Funding

Annual benefit payment estimates factor in results from our legally-required SSI CDRs and redeterminations. Specifically, in FY 2025, we estimate we will conduct approximately 371,000 SSI CDRs and 2,482,000 non-medical redeterminations using dedicated program integrity funds. For details about program integrity funding and activities, please see the Program Integrity exhibit within the LAE section of this Congressional Justification.

Timing of Monthly Benefit Payments

Monthly SSI benefit payments are made on the first of the month, unless the first falls on a weekend or Federal holiday. In that case, the payment is made on the prior business day at the end of the previous month. When October 1 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the payment is made in the prior fiscal year at the end of September. This timing of payments results in 11, 12, or 13 payments in a given fiscal year.

Table 2.17—Check Payments by Fiscal Year

	Number of Check Payments	Federal Benefit Obligations
FY 2016	13	\$59,044,228,391
FY 2017	12	\$54,729,471,841
FY 2018	11	\$50,949,421,097
FY 2019	12	\$55,590,534,196
FY 2020	12	\$56,161,567,718
FY 2021	12	\$55,717,174,588
FY 2022	13	\$60,910,067,748
FY 2023	12	\$60,417,887,895
FY 2024	11	\$57,235,000,000
FY 2025	12	\$63,108,000,000

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Authorizing Legislation: Sections 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act.

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

Administrative expenses for the SSI program are funded from general revenues. Section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act provides that administrative expenses for the SSI program, including Federal administration of State supplementary payments, may be financed from the Social Security trust funds with reimbursement, including any interest lost, to the trust funds from general revenues.

This appropriation funds the SSI program share of administrative expenses incurred through the LAE account. Amounts appropriated are available for current year SSI administrative expenses, as well as for prior year administrative expenses that exceeded the amount available through this account for the prior year. If those excess prior year amounts were paid out of the Social Security trust funds, then current year SSI funds must be used to reimburse these trust funds with interest.

The legislative history of the 1972 amendments (which established this funding mechanism) indicates a desire to obtain economy of administration by giving us the responsibility for the SSI program because of its existing field office network and its administrative and automated data processing facilities. Because of the integration of the administration of the SSI and Social Security programs, it was desirable to fund them from a single source (the LAE account). This process requires that the trust funds and the SSI account pay their appropriate shares to the LAE account, which in turn manages the administrative expenses on behalf of the paying accounts. The determination is based on a Government Accountability Office-approved method of cost analysis of the respective expenses of the SSI and Social Security insurance programs, and statute mandates a final settlement by the end of the subsequent fiscal year.

**Table 2.18—Administrative Expenses: New Budget Authority and Obligations
(in thousands)**

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	<i>Change</i>
Total Appropriation	\$4,769,125	\$4,521,903	\$4,912,635	+\$390,732
Obligations Funded from Prior- Year Unobligated Balance	\$0	+\$140,097	+\$65,590	-\$74,507
Obligations	\$4,760,949	\$4,662,000	\$4,978,225	+\$316,225

Supplemental Security Income Program

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

Our administrative budget is driven by the programs we administer – both in terms of the amount of work performed and the number of people needed to process it – and by our continuing efforts to improve service, stewardship, and efficiency.

The FY 2025 request for SSI administrative expenses is approximately \$5 billion. This appropriation is used to reimburse the trust funds for the SSI program’s share of administrative expenses. This amount includes about \$1.6 billion specifically for FY 2025 SSI program integrity activities.

These amounts exclude funding made available in the LAE account from State user fees for our expenses for administering SSI State supplementary payments. The LAE account assumes funding of up to \$170 million in FY 2025 to administer SSI state supplementary payments.

BENEFICIARY SERVICES

Authorizing Legislation: Sections 1148 and 1615(d) of the Social Security Act

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

Beneficiary services consist of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Cost Reimbursement and Ticket to Work (TTW) programs. The objective of the programs is to assist disabled individuals in returning to work. The trust funds and general revenues fund beneficiary services. Section 222(d)(1) of the Social Security Act authorizes transfers from the OASI and DI trust funds to reimburse for reasonable and necessary costs of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals. The OASI and DI trust funds also fund payments to Employment Networks (EN) as part of the TTW program. Beneficiary services funded through the trust funds do not require appropriation. The general revenues fund beneficiary services for disabled Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients as described below.

Table 2.19—Beneficiary Services: New Budget Authority and Obligations (in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	<i>FY 2024 to FY 2025 Change</i>
Appropriation	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$144,000	<i>+\$20,000</i>
Prior-Year Unobligated Balances and Recoveries	\$125,525	\$112,310	\$73,310	<i>-\$39,000</i>
Total Budgetary Resources	\$249,525	\$236,310	\$217,310	<i>-\$19,000</i>
Obligations	\$137,215	\$163,000	\$167,000	<i>+\$4,000</i>

Under the VR cost reimbursement program, we repay VR agencies for the reasonable and necessary costs of services that successfully help disabled recipients return to work. VR agencies are successful when a disabled recipient performs substantial gainful activity (SGA) for a continuous period of 9 out of 12 months.¹

Under the TTW program, authorized by the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-170), we pay ENs for providing vocational rehabilitation, employment, and other support services to disabled SSI recipients. The recipients select an EN, and when EN services result in prescribed work milestones and outcomes that may reduce reliance on Federal cash benefits, we pay ENs.

¹ In 2024, we consider non-blind and blind disabled beneficiaries to be performing SGA if they earn more than \$1,550 and \$2,590 per month, respectively.

Supplemental Security Income Program

VR agencies can serve as ENs in the TTW program or receive payments under our VR cost reimbursement program. Ticket payments, unlike VR cost reimbursement payments, are not based on the costs of specific services provided by the EN. We pay ENs using either an outcome-milestone payment method or an outcome-only payment method.

We base Ticket payment amounts for SSI recipients on the prior year's average disability benefit payable under Title XVI. While we previously made Ticket payments only upon request, we now also initiate payments to ENs when information in our records indicates the recipient has achieved the prerequisite earnings and all other requirements qualifying the EN for a payment are met.

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are requesting \$144 million in new budget authority for beneficiary services in FY 2025. The FY 2025 forecast is based on an econometric model which uses prior payments to predict future spending. This model creates separate estimates for EN and VR payments using quarterly unemployment data from OMB and TTW participation and beneficiary characteristics data from our administrative records through the Disability Analysis File (DAF). We also review various additional factors when budgeting, such as considering the possible impact of upcoming policy or business process changes on the budget and factor in any current trends in our spending. While the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the expected growth of TTW payments, our TTW payments continue to increase each fiscal year as employed Ticketholders remain in the workforce. As a result, we expect the amount of TTW payments to continue to increase in FY 2024 and FY 2025. The FY 2025 budget request funds an estimated two percent increase in obligations above the FY 2024 level.

The integration of VR payments into the internet Ticket Operations Provider Support System (iTOPSS) in FY 2017 resulted in an increase in the number of claims submitted by VR agencies, which led to an increase of backlogged claims awaiting payment. In August 2022, we achieved two major milestones: we transferred the VR payment workload to the Ticket Program Manager (TPM) contractor and eliminated the backlog. SSA employees have transitioned to performing quality assurance reviews of the contractor, continually monitoring the payments made by contractor staff, and providing additional guidance and training as necessary. As a result, all payments are processed within 30 days of receipt.

In FY 2023, we saw a 20 percent increase in claims from VRs. While VR agencies can submit their claims electronically, supporting documentation must be sent via fax. Only 57 percent of all submissions were payable, which is a decrease of 9 percentage points from the 66 percent payment rate in FY 2022. We reimburse VR agencies when payment claims are submitted within a 12-month period after a VR client completes their ninth month of SGA, for services that fall within the scope of reasonable and necessary services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Social Security regulations. We deny reimbursement claims when the VR services provided do not meet our criteria. We also deny payment when VR agencies are late in submitting reimbursement claims, or a VR client has not completed the required nine months of SGA, meaning the VR agency submitted the claim too soon.

Supplemental Security Income Program

We expect VR claims receipts to increase as we work with VR agencies to ensure timely and accurate submission of payment claims. This will lead to an increase in the percentage of payable claims.

In addition, we expect more beneficiaries will return to work, and estimate an increase in VR cost reimbursement payments and an increase in the number of TTW milestone and outcome payments in FY 2025. We continue our efforts to improve management and oversight of the VR cost reimbursement and TTW programs to ensure effectiveness. These efforts are solidified in the current EN agreements and include ongoing quality reviews of VR reimbursement claims and internal reviews of the agency's payment process.

Table 2.20—SSI VR Cost Reimbursement and Ticket to Work Payments¹
(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
<u>Vocational Rehabilitation</u>			
SSI Only Reimbursement Payments	7,503	9,000	9,178
SSI/DI Concurrent Reimbursement Payments	4,334	5,199	5,301
Total Reimbursement Awards	11,837	14,199	14,479
VR Obligations	\$116,914	\$140,000	\$143,000
<u>Ticket to Work</u>			
SSI Only Milestone Payments	6,481	7,165	7,649
SSI Only Outcome Payments	24,650	27,252	29,093
SSI/DI Concurrent Milestone Payments	7,860	8,690	9,277
SSI/DI Concurrent Outcome Payments	8,249	9,120	9,736
Total Ticket Payments	47,240	52,227	55,755
Ticket Obligations	\$20,301	\$23,000	\$24,000
Total VR Reimbursements & Ticket Payments	59,077	66,426	70,234
Total Obligations	\$137,215	\$163,000	\$167,000

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON VR COST REIMBURSEMENT AND TICKET TO WORK PROGRAMS

Each VR may decide on a case-by-case basis whether to receive compensation under the VR cost reimbursement payment option or one of the two TTW payment methods described below. VRs

¹ Totals may not add due to rounding.

Supplemental Security Income Program

have 90 days after they open a case (ticket assignment) to decide if they want to be reimbursed for their expenses under the Cost Reimbursement program or if they want to be paid under the TTW program. Regardless of the payment method the VR chooses, the beneficiary must have agreed to assign their Ticket with the VR for the agency to be eligible for either type of payment.

There are two TTW payment methods: Outcome-Milestone and Outcome-Only

Outcome-Milestone Payment Method:

- There are two phases of outcome-milestone payments. Phase I allows 4 payments, and Phase II allows 18 payments.
- We begin paying the EN when the recipient successfully achieves certain predetermined work-related milestones while still receiving Federal benefits.
- We stop paying milestone payments and begin outcome payments when the recipient's monthly Federal cash benefits are not payable because of work and earnings.

Outcome-Only Payment Method:

- Outcome payments are payable for a maximum of 60 months (consecutive or otherwise).
- We begin issuing monthly outcome payments after the individual's monthly Federal cash benefit payments cease and the individual earns above the SGA level in a month.
- The dollar amounts of the monthly outcome payments are larger when the EN elects not to receive milestone payments while the recipient still receives benefits.

When a VR provides services to a recipient under the Cost Reimbursement program, and the recipient later seeks support services from an EN, we may pay the VR and the EN for sequential periods of service. However, the EN is not eligible for Phase I Ticket payments, since the VR would have provided initial services.

We continue to take steps to reduce overpayments incurred by all beneficiaries who work, such as enabling beneficiaries to report earnings and submit work activity reports online. SSI recipients may report earnings and submit paystubs through a mobile app. We are developing a modernized system to process Disability Insurance (DI) work activity and reduce manual keying of data. TTW participants are subject to the same reporting requirements as all other beneficiaries, but have additional opportunities for training and reminders. For example, they often receive benefits counseling which explains how earnings affect their Social Security and other benefits and includes reminders on the importance of reporting their earnings to SSA. Work Incentive Seminar Events teach participants about work incentives and the effects of work on benefits.

In FY 2023, we completed a study in response to a recent Government Accountability Office recommendation that SSA identify the root causes of overpayments to TTW participants and take appropriate actions as necessary.¹ We found that TTW participants have overpayments

¹ See: Government Accountability Office. (2021). Social Security Disability: Ticket to Work Helped Some

Supplemental Security Income Program

similar to non-participants. We are working to reduce overpayments and improve the integrity of our programs. For information on our efforts to decrease overpayments, please see the Program Integrity and Improper Payment exhibits in the LAE section.

Participants, but Overpayments Increased Program Costs. (GAO Publication No. 22-104031). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-22-104031>.

Supplemental Security Income Program

RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION

Authorizing Legislation: Sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

We conduct extramural research, demonstrations, and outreach under Sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act (Act).

**Table 2.21—Research and Demonstration Projects: Budget Authority and Obligations by Funding Authority¹
(in thousands)²**

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate	<i>Change from FY 2024 to FY 2025</i>
Appropriation³	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$91,000	\$5,000
Prior Year Unobligated Balance and Recoveries	\$56,244	\$49,928	\$23,513	-\$26,415
Total Budgetary Resources	\$142,244	\$135,928	\$114,513	-\$21,415
Obligations by Authority⁴				
FY 2021-2023 Authority ⁴	\$805	\$0	\$0	
FY 2022-2024 Authority	\$41,338	\$295	\$0	
FY 2023-2025 Authority	\$50,173	\$35,827	\$0	
FY 2024-2026 Authority	N/A	\$73,893	\$12,106	
FY 2025-2027 Requested Authority	N/A	N/A	\$87,677	
No-Year Authority	\$0	\$2,400	\$3,000	
TOTAL Obligations	\$92,316	\$112,415	\$102,783	-\$9,632
Total Unobligated Balance	\$49,928	\$23,513	\$11,730	-\$11,783

¹ Please note, the exhibit does not include a narrative for projects that are using prior year funds.

² Totals may not add up due to rounding.

³ These amounts include \$7,000,000 in base research funding classified as mandatory.

⁴ We are authorized to expend research funds within three years of an enacted appropriation. We have a small balance of prior no-year funding authority that we are carrying over until expended. The FY 2024 and FY2025 break out is our current projection for how the funds will be obligated.

**Table 2.22—Research and Demonstration Projects: Obligations by Funding Source
(in thousands)¹**

	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Obligations by Source			
Section 1110	\$90,630	\$110,694	\$101,062
Section 1144	\$1,685	\$1,721	\$1,721
TOTAL Obligations	\$92,316	\$112,415	\$102,783

Section 1110 of the Act authorizes the Commissioner of Social Security to conduct broad, cross-programmatic projects for the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability (OASDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. This section provides for waiver authorities for the SSI program, as well as projects dealing with specific SSI issues. Under Section 1110, we fund a range of extramural projects: disability and retirement policy research, demonstration projects to test creative and effective ways to promote greater labor force participation among people with disabilities (including early intervention rehabilitation strategies), evaluations of proposed or newly enacted legislative changes, and projects to maintain and improve basic data about our programs and beneficiaries.

We currently fund a range of Section 1110 projects designed to:

- Help us keep pace with advancements in medicine and technology;
- Modernize our vocational rules;
- Test work support models;
- Assess barriers to program participation;
- Gauge the public’s understanding of the program; and
- Measure the impact of program changes.

Many of our Section 1110 projects support our [FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda](#) and our annual [Evaluation Plans](#) that are required under the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018. Our Learning Agenda describes our evidence-building roadmap to support the goals in our FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan (ASP). We identified 10 priority questions for our Learning Agenda that correspond to the ASP goals. The priority questions include short-term and long-term questions related to our mission, strategic plans, and agency operations. We expect that answers to our priority questions will provide valuable information about our agency’s performance and promote evidence-based decision-making, informing our efforts to improve service delivery, enhance the customer experience, and advance equity. Our FY 2025 Annual Evaluation Plan describes the most significant program evaluations and evidence-building activities that we will complete during the fiscal year. We define significant activities as those that are required by law, address the President’s priorities, or support the goals in our ASP. Performance documents are available here: [Agency Strategic Plan | SSA](#)

¹ Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Section 1144 requires us to conduct outreach to individuals with Medicare who are potentially eligible for State-administered Medicaid programs or Medicare prescription drug subsidies under Medicare Part D. We identify these potential beneficiaries, inform them about these programs, and notify State Medicaid agencies. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, within Health and Human Services (HHS), oversee both the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Section 1115 provides the Secretary of HHS with the funding and authority to waive compliance with Medicaid requirements to enable States to participate in our specific research and disability demonstration projects. There are currently no research projects funded under this section.

In prior years, we received Section 234 authority to conduct research and demonstration projects testing alternative Disability Insurance (DI) benefit rules. We used trust fund dollars to conduct various demonstration projects, including projects that examined alternative program rules for treating work activity of individuals entitled to SSDI benefits. Section 234 covered both applicants and current beneficiaries of the program. Our authority to conduct projects under Section 234 expired on December 31, 2022.

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are committed to improving the quality, consistency, and timeliness of our disability decisions; maximizing efficiencies throughout the disability program; and enhancing employment support programs to create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to the workforce. Our research activities are critical to our efforts in all three areas.

In FY 2025, we are requesting \$91 million in new budget authority for traditional research activities under Sections 1110 and 1144.

We are also interested in working with Congress to renew Section 234 authority.

The table and discussion that follow provide more details on the research and outreach efforts we plan to fund in FY 2025.

Supplemental Security Income Program

**Table 2.23—Major Research Areas, Demonstration Obligations and New Budget Authority
(in thousands)^{1,2}**

	Obligations ³		
	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Optimize the Experience of SSA’s Customers	\$48,550	\$63,508	\$56,527
Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)*	\$0	\$900	\$900
Behavioral Insights Studies	\$0	\$2,000	\$0
Blanket Purchase Agreement for Time-Sensitive Research Projects	\$942	\$2,400	\$2,000
Census Surveys*	\$750	\$750	\$765
Data Development*	\$1,107	\$1,166	\$1,166
Data Development in an Enterprise Business Platform (EBI)	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Disability Analysis File (DAF)	\$1,297	\$1,510	\$1,314
Disability Research Survey*	\$0	\$10,000	\$9,000
Health & Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement*	\$4,575	\$4,575	\$4,575
Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)*	\$12,084	\$9,084	\$15,084
Medicare Outreach (1144)	\$1,685	\$1,721	\$1,721
National Beneficiary Survey (NBS)	\$199	\$0	\$0
New and Emerging Research	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
SSI Outreach Evaluation*	\$0	\$7,000	\$0
Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC)*	\$12,000	\$14,400	\$12,000
Ticket to Work Evaluation*	\$6,732	\$0	\$0
Understanding America Study (UAS) Enhancements*	\$5,000	\$5,002	\$5,002
Working Disability Functional Assessment Battery (WD-FAB) Data Collection	\$179	\$0	\$0
Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs	\$43,766	\$48,907	\$46,256
Advisory Services to Assist SSA with Disability Issues*	\$5,282	\$3,849	\$3,945
National Institutes of Health Research on Data Analytics and the Functional Assessment Battery Development	\$4,223	\$4,595	\$0
Occupational Information Systems (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT)	\$34,261	\$40,463	\$42,311
Total Research Obligations	\$92,316	\$112,415	\$102,783
New Budget Authority	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$91,000

¹ Totals may not add up due to rounding.

² Projects marked with an asterisk support our implementation of Executive Order 13985, [*Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*](#).

³ This amount includes obligations funded from prior-year unobligated balances.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Optimize the Experience of SSA's Customers

Update for Projects with Funding Requested

Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)

The ARDRAW program supports young and emerging scholars pursuing careers in public policy research who have a special interest in our beneficiaries' quality of life and disability program issues, challenges, and outcomes. We recruit graduate students, faculty, and administrators of accredited programs with an academic emphasis in public health, social work, economics, occupational medicine, vocational and rehabilitation counseling, public policy and administration, sociology, psychology, education, medicine, and law.

We extended the ARDRAW grant agreement from five to six years due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In FY 2022, we awarded the sixth and final ARDRAW cohort and received final project papers from the fourth and fifth ARDRAW cohorts. In FY 2023, we received final project papers from the sixth ARDRAW cohort and closed out the existing ARDRAW grant agreement.

Over the six cohorts of the ARDRAW grant program, we provided stipends for 85 graduate student projects. Some students participated in more than one cohort, conducting additional research that built on the previous year's project. Many students either presented the results of their ARDRAW research at professional conferences or published their ARDRAW research in peer-reviewed journals. Several have continued to do research in the disability field, including projects associated with the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC).

In FY 2023, we conducted a competition for a grants management organization to oversee ARDRAW. We did not receive any viable applications and were unable to make an award for a new grant management organization. We will recompet the grant in FY 2024, incorporating funding changes identified during market research. We plan to make the award for a new grant management organization in the fourth quarter of FY 2024. In FY 2025, we will conduct start up activities for the new grant agreement and request applications for the first cohort of the new program. In FY 2026, we will receive final project papers from the first cohort of the new program and request applications and award the second cohort of the new program.

The renewed ARDRAW will support young and emerging scholars who have a research interest in our beneficiaries' quality of life and disability program issues, with additional emphasis on access and equity challenges. We will increase outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Institutions Serving Students of Color (ISSC) to encourage participation, including working with the *White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities*.

Behavioral Insights Studies

Since 2015, we have tested new notices to determine the effects of mailings and alternative language (e.g., encouraging wage reporting in the SSI program and alerting OASDI seniors about potential SSI eligibility). In FY 2024, we will begin new studies that use behavioral insights to improve the information we provide beneficiaries. We are working with stakeholders to prioritize the notices for our efforts. It is included as an evidence-building activity under priority question 4 of our FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda.

Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for Time-Sensitive Research Projects

Early in FY 2024, we awarded a 5-year BPA contract, through a full and open competition among research contractors, including small and disadvantaged research firms. The competitive market research for the firms is in support of [Executive Order \(EO\) 13985](#), *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, [EO 14091](#), *Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, and our [Equity Action Plan 2023 Update](#). The BPA will allow us to more quickly award multiple research projects simultaneously to support policy and program assessments and studies related to social science, medical, or vocational rehabilitation topics. The BPA will produce research papers, evidence, and relevant data analysis informed by our researchers' expertise and content knowledge.

In FY 2023, BPA contractors conducted research for two FY 2022-funded studies:

- The Functional Limitations project provides medical and vocational experts insight into identifying evidence that supports findings of extreme limitations in functional abilities required for most work in the national economy (as indicated by the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)).
- A review of the Quick Disability Determination (QDD) predictive model that screens disability applications and identifies cases for which a favorable disability determination is highly likely and medical evidence is readily available. The purpose of this study was to identify any potential bias in the QDD predictive model. We are including relevant recommendations in our FY 2024 re-estimation of the QDD models.

In FY 2024, BPA contractors are conducting research for a FY 2023-funded study:

- Our Work Smart process identifies Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries whose earnings put them at risk of receiving overpayments. Contractors will assess whether our process is helping us achieve our goals of identifying at-risk earnings earlier and reducing and preventing improper payments.

In FY 2024, we plan to fund the following projects in support of [EO 13985](#) and [EO 14091](#):

- Legal Assistance During the Age-18 Redetermination Technical Expert Panel (TEP) – to secure expert insight on the policy, resource, and evaluation needs for a study of legal

Supplemental Security Income Program

representation during the age-18 redetermination process outcomes. The TEP's report would help to plan future research and would be accessible to organizations developing Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP) proposals or other potential demonstrations.

- Analysis of the Mental Requirements for Wave 2 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) – to update the mental and cognitive demands of unskilled work based on Federal sources of occupational information to establish the mental requirements of entry-level of work in the national economy.
- Program Data Quality Rules – Content Development: The goal of this initiative will be to develop quality assurance and control standards based on the data quality framework of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methods and consistency with the Evidence Act requirements. These rules govern how statistical micro and macro data products may be shared with non-SSA colleagues or disseminated to the public (e.g., summary statistics, charts, public use files) along with relevant documentation consistent with metadata standards. The rules will cover data utility, objectivity, and integrity as well as metadata documentation for public release and archiving. These rules must account for any steps taken during the disclosure risk production and their impact on data quality, to include guidelines for quality standards; checklists to be used by data producers, developers and reviewers; relevant examples; and training. This effort will replace informal steps taken by different groups with established, methodized, and clear data quality standards to be used across offices to streamline and promote a consistent process throughout SSA, benefiting all SSA Programs.

In FY 2025, we are planning research topics to support [EO 13985](#) and [EO 14091](#) and our [Equity Action Plan 2023 Update](#).

- Evaluation of Partnership Plus Agreements between Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and Employment Networks on Beneficiary Work and Earnings Outcomes – to assess whether beneficiaries receiving Partnership Plus services have better work and earnings outcomes versus beneficiaries who receive only Employment Network or Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- Program Data Disclosure Review (PDDR) – Content Update: The goal of this initiative will be to evaluate the effectiveness of privacy-preserving techniques currently in place and expand the disclosure protection rules accordingly to be more comprehensive across micro and macro-data towards strengthening the privacy protection protocols. We will update the PDDR rules and an intake form to account for different rules and scenarios. These documents will demonstrate the required set of diagnostic and data files (disclosure protection evidence) that must be turned over to the PDDR Board along with examples and formulas (as needed). The proposal is to strengthen privacy guidance via use of these rules to guide disclosure review work throughout our review process covering all possible privacy and disclosure rules. This is an effort to support the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act](#).

Census Bureau Surveys

The Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is foundational for our policy analysis and modeling efforts. We support efforts to improve the quality and content of the Census Bureau's SIPP data to facilitate matching SIPP data to our administrative data on benefits and earnings. We rely upon SIPP data matched to our records to study Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI), SSDI, SSI, and related programs and to analyze the effect of changes to these programs on individuals, the economy, and program solvency.

Supporting SIPP gives SSA the opportunity to include concepts that are relevant to our programs. For example, observing whether marriages lasted for ten years is necessary when estimating benefits for divorced spouses. We developed new questions including questions on marriage length, which the Census Bureau integrated into existing SIPP content beginning in 2021.

Data Development

One of the main objectives of our extramural research program is to provide information for decision-makers on the OASI, SSDI, and SSI programs. We develop and maintain a series of detailed, statistical databases drawn from our major administrative data systems and prepare a broad range of statistical tables. We also prepare and publish [statistical and research products](#) and develop internal information for research, evaluation, and modeling that uses survey data collected by our agency, other Federal agencies, and Federally sponsored institutions.

In FY 2021, we entered into a new agreement with the Census Bureau for the "Ask US" Panel (i.e., Census Address-and Probability-Based Online Panel). The focus of the interagency agreement is to collaborate on an address-based, probability-based, online research panel that will be available for the Federal Statistical System to conduct robust public opinion and methodological research. The Census Bureau has entered into a cooperative agreement with RTI International to build this panel. In FYs 2023–2025, we will support the Census Bureau's efforts to implement and use the panel. Our partnership will facilitate longitudinal probability-based research that many Government agencies are interested in conducting.

Quality programmatic data on race and ethnicity for research are essential for our assessment of structural barriers that may limit access to our programs, a focus in our [Equity Action Plan 2023 Update](#). In FY 2022, we assessed the quality of our data, developed metrics and thresholds for reliability, and published statistics and research on those segments of our populations for which we have adequate data on race and ethnicity. In FY 2023, we explored data enhancements through statistical imputation and refined the imputation models. In FYs 2024 and 2025, we plan to refine models by birth cohort and geographic area, and we will assess possible bias in our initial predictions. We are exploring options for increasing collection of demographic data. For more information on our equity efforts, please see the Advancing Equity, including Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Workforce, and Outreach to People Facing Barriers exhibit in the Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) section.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Data Development in an Enterprise Business Intelligence (EBI) Platform

EBI provides advanced analytics and data integration tools for efficient access and analysis of our records to support data-driven decision making. Section 1110 funds support a subset of activities to enhance research and statistical functions, primarily publishing statistics from administrative records.

We generate reports and data files monthly, quarterly, yearly, and on an *ad hoc* basis. Some of the legacy systems we use for producing statistics still require significant manual intervention. We are improving the report and data production efficiency and accuracy by modernizing and automating the application processes that we use to create statistical data, tables, and reports for research.

FY 2023 work focused on:

- Modernizing and automating Cell Suppression methods for OASDI and SSI files.
- Computerizing end-to-end validation processes of OASDI and SSI statistical publication tables and reports using modern Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) statistical tools.
- Maintaining and upgrading the publication process for: Windfall Elimination Provision-Government Pension Offset (WEP-GPO), SSI, Earnings Geography (GEO), Earnings Publications, and Representative Payee data from SAS 9.4 M5 version to SAS 9.4 M7/SAS Viya.
- Using EBI tools to support the production of statistics or data extracts for ongoing publications and critical, *ad hoc* research projects.

In FY 2024, we will strengthen the integrity of our research and statistical reports by:

- Maintaining and upgrading software for the publication of WEP-GPO, SSI, GEO, Earnings Publications, and Representative Payee data.
- Replacing obsolete data collecting methodologies in the SAS.
- Assessing the inclusion of non-Reporting Tax Year (RTY) data into the current GEO automation process.
- Evaluating Earnings Publications automated processes to generate the annual earnings publication tables.
- Developing and implementing Earnings Publications automated applications to support *ad hoc* requests.

In FY 2025, we plan to strengthen the integrity of our research and statistical reports by:

- Maintaining and upgrading software for the publication of WEP-GPO, OASDI, SSI, GEO, Earnings Publications, and Representative Payee data.
- Computerizing end-to-end processes of non-RTY data into the current GEO automation process using modern Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) Data Integration Studio statistical tools.

- Computerizing end-to-end validation process of Earnings Publications including non-RTY data to generate the annual earnings publication tables using modern SAS Data Integration Studio statistical tools.
- Incorporating enhanced EBI tools to support the production of statistics or data extracts for ongoing publications and critical, *as-needed* research projects.

Disability Analysis File (DAF)

Administrative data are critical to our understanding of beneficiaries with disabilities by providing details on the entire population and enabling analysis of small subpopulations, which we cannot generally study with survey data based on population samples. The DAF takes data from our 10 most relevant administrative files and creates an annual, formatted database that is ready for analysis, easy to use, and well-documented. We create two versions of the DAF each year—a restricted use version for our staff, grantees, contractors, and Federal partners, and a de-identified public use file (PUF) version available to the public through our website. The DAF focuses on data needed to answer questions about disability and work. It complements the National Beneficiary Survey (NBS), which provides information that is not available from our administrative sources, such as veterans status, interest in work, barriers to work, hours of work, wages, and how disability affects activities. When combined, the DAF and NBS provide a complete picture of demographics, benefits, work, and work attitudes for all SSI and SSDI beneficiaries with disabilities.

We use the DAF for internal research, to support demonstration development and evaluation, and to answer other questions that may arise. We also use the DAF to inform the Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB), our Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, the Government Accountability Office, and others. Additionally, we allow non-SSA researchers to use the DAF, primarily through the RDRC, and through the PUF available at data.gov.

Since we first published public use data from the DAF in November 2018, there has been significant interest in using this file, generally around 45-50 data downloads per month. Since its launch, the DAF-PUF documentation has consistently been a popular data download. In the last year, downloads of the DAF documentation averaged almost 180 downloads per month. As a point of reference, downloads of documentation for the NBS averaged almost 70 per month over the same period. Eleven research papers were published in 2022, utilizing either the public or restricted versions of the DAF for their analysis.

We awarded a competitive contract in FY 2022 to continue building the DAF over FYs 2022–2026. Under this contract, we expect to complete five annual DAF files under five task orders. Over this period, we are also implementing a transition from mainframe storage and processing to a cloud server environment for DAF construction, storage, and processing. Testing and developing cloud server processing for the DAF began in FY 2022 and continued in FY 2023. In FY 2023, we completed Task Order 1 for the DAF for 2021 and continued construction of the DAF for 2022 under Task Order 2. In FY 2024, we will complete the DAF for 2022 and award Task Order 3 for construction of the DAF for 2023. We will also begin implementation of our transition to cloud computing for the DAF and will explore opportunities for using cloud

Supplemental Security Income Program

processing to streamline the DAF construction process or shorten the DAF construction timeline. We are developing two extensions to the DAF: adding data from the SSDI and SSI disability application processes; and extending the variables available in the PUF file. We expect to complete our data development and implementation of these two extensions to the DAF in FY 2024. In FY 2025, we will complete the DAF for 2023 and award Task Order 4 for construction of the DAF for 2024.

Disability Research Surveys (DRS)

In FY 2021, we developed a new survey platform, the DRS, to broaden the scope of information we collect about beneficiaries. The DRS included three separate surveys. We identify evidence-building activities using the DRS in our description of priority question 2 in our FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda.

The first of the three DRS surveys was an additional round of the NBS. We awarded the NBS task order in FY 2022, began fielding the NBS in FY 2023, and expect to conclude the task in FY 2026.

The second survey, the New Applicant Survey, is to better understand SSDI and SSI applicants' experiences, their use of services, and the pathways they take before and after application. This work supplements other customer experience efforts by providing additional perspectives on the applicant experience not captured by customer satisfaction surveys. We awarded the task order for the New Applicant Survey in FY 2022. In FY 2023, we began designing the survey instruments, which we will complete in FY 2024. We will field the survey in FY 2025. The final survey will be publicly available to researchers for long-term analyses.

We will award the task order for the third survey on children and youth in late FY 2024. We will begin designing and testing of the survey instrument in FYs 2025-2026, and fielding the survey in FY 2027.

In FY 2025, we will award a new DRS contract and begin work on the next round of the NBS.

Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement

The University of Michigan's HRS surveys more than 22,000 Americans over the age of 50 every two years and provides an ongoing source of longitudinal data for research on retirement and aging. The study provides data on health and economic well-being after retirement not available in our program data. HRS data helps us assess a wide range of issues, including pre-retirement saving, health insurance, employment and retirement patterns, and projected benefits of disabled and retired workers. Through jointly financed cooperative agreements with the National Institute on Aging (NIA), we have supported the HRS from its inception.

We use the HRS for research by our staff or for projects funded through the RDRC regarding disability, pension participation, differences in contributions to tax-deferred savings accounts among different birth cohorts, and retirement income resources of near-retirees. For example, in FY 2022, our researchers used the HRS to examine the difference in retirement preparedness between black and white individuals during the pre-retirement period. Research in FYs 2023–

2024 will use the HRS to study the accuracy of our *Income of the Aged Population* publications and total retirement resources by race and ethnicity. The HRS data we support are also available for external researchers to understand the American population aged 50 and older. In FY 2023, RDRC researchers used the HRS to analyze the wealth of the late boomer and early Generation X population, and used questions related to COVID-19 added in the 2020 HRS survey to examine the effects of COVID-19 excess mortality on Social Security outlays. In FYs 2024–2025, we expect that HRS will provide data for RDRC researchers and internal staff to study retirement income, as well as a number of equity issues.

Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)

The ICAP encourages employment of individuals with disabilities, through cooperative agreements with States, private foundations, and other stakeholders who have an interest in and ability to identify, operate, evaluate, and partially fund interventional research. It is included as an evaluation in our FY 2025 Evaluation Plan and as an evidence-building activity under priority question 2 of our FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda.

The research and interventions under this program support efforts to promote equity. Via ICAP, we can systematically review demonstration proposals from outside organizations and enter into cooperative agreements to collaborate with non-Federal entities on demonstration research. ICAP is distinct from our other research grant programs in that it focuses on experimental demonstration research. The projects have a 5-year period of performance, requiring renewal after the first year based on completion of startup activities.

In FY 2021, we awarded our first two cooperative agreements to the Kessler Foundation and the State of Georgia’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The Kessler Foundation is conducting the Vocational Resource Facilitator Demonstration (VRFD), a randomized controlled trial of an early intervention employment intervention for rehabilitation patients who have experienced recent neurotrauma. The State of Georgia’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council is conducting the SSI and SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) model in Georgia County Jails Pilot (SGCJP), a feasibility study of the implementation of the SOAR model in county jails with incarcerated people with serious and persistent mental illness across the State.

In FY 2022, we conducted start-up activities with the initial FY 2021 awardees. We solicited applications for additional projects in FY 2022 and issued awards in the first quarter of FY 2023 to Mathematica and Westat. Mathematica will conduct the Transition Exploration Demonstration (TED), a randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of an employment intervention for youth with disabilities who are transitioning into the adult workforce. Westat will conduct the Supportive Housing and Individual Placement and Support (SHIPS) study, a randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of combining supportive housing with Individual Placement and Support, which are supported employment services for recently homeless people experiencing a range of disabilities and mental health conditions.

In FY 2023, we completed start-up activities for each of the initial projects. We also began conducting start-up activities for the second round of projects and solicited applications for the third round of projects. We issued awards for the third round of projects in the fourth quarter of FY 2023 to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and to the University

Supplemental Security Income Program

of Chicago’s Inclusive Economy Lab (IEL). CDLE will conduct the Interagency Cooperative Action Network (ICAN) demonstration, a randomized assignment trial to test the impact on income and benefit receipt of assisting potentially eligible individuals in acquiring SSA Disability Benefits (whether SSDI, SSI, or both types of benefits) while they are concurrently working and seeking employment. The IEL will conduct the Developing Opportunities for ABLE Account Holders (DOABLE) demonstration, a randomized study aimed at promoting the take-up and use of Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts and provide information on how ABLE accounts impact employment-related outcomes.

In FY 2024, we begin implementation, enrollment, and evaluation activities for the initial two ICAP projects awarded in 2021, VRFD and SGCJP. We will complete start up activities for the second round of ICAP projects (TED and SHIPS) and begin their implementation and evaluation phase. We will also conduct start up activities for the third round of ICAP projects (ICAN and DOABLE) and solicit applications for the fourth round of projects.

In FY 2025, we will continue implementation and evaluation activities for the initial and second round of ICAP projects, VRFD, SGCJP, TED and SHIPS. We will complete start up activities for the third round of ICAP projects (ICAN and DOABLE) and begin the implementation and evaluation phases of each of those projects. We will also conduct start up activities for the fourth round of ICAP projects and solicit applications for the fifth round of projects.

Medicare Outreach – Section 1144

We send outreach letters to income-tested, Medicare-eligible beneficiaries and those who have experienced a decrease in income.¹ These letters provide help with “traditional” Medicare and include information about Extra Help, when appropriate.

We annually notify 20 percent of those who previously received an outreach letter, have not received the benefits, and meet the income test. In FY 2023, we mailed approximately 1.3 million outreach letters to those who potentially qualified for Medicare Savings Program or Extra Help. In FYs 2024–2025, we anticipate mailing a similar number of outreach letters each year. We factor in a contingency amount for possible increases in enrollment, for beneficiaries who experience a decrease in income, and other expected costs such as an increase in postage. In addition, we share lists of individuals potentially eligible for cost sharing with State Medicaid agencies. The major objective of these projects is to increase the enrollment of eligible low-income individuals into programs that assist Medicare beneficiaries with their out-of-pocket medical expenses, including prescription drug coverage premiums. HHS fully reimburses our costs in an amount not exceeding \$3 million per year.

Outreach efforts outlined in this section are part of our work under Section 1144 only. For more information on our broader outreach efforts, please see the Advancing Equity, Including DEIA in

¹ The Medicare Prescription Drug, Modernization, and Improvement Act of 2003, P.L. 108-173 expanded outreach requirements of Section 1144. The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, P.L. 110-275 deemed every Extra Help application filed with our agency to be a protective filing for the State-administered Medicare Savings Program, unless the claimant objects.

the Workforce, and Conducting Outreach to People Potentially Facing Barriers exhibit in the LAE section.

National Beneficiary Survey (NBS)

The NBS collects data from a nationally representative sample of SSDI beneficiaries and SSI recipients on a wide range of topics not available in our administrative data or in other public databases. The data include health and functional status, health insurance coverage, interest in work, barriers to work, use of services, work history, income, and experience with Social Security programs. These data improve our ability to conduct useful analysis regarding factors that facilitate SSDI beneficiary and SSI recipient employment and conversely, factors that impede their efforts to maintain employment.

Our researchers and analysts, along with researchers at other Federal agencies, research organizations, and academic institutions, use NBS data extensively to evaluate the Ticket to Work program and other SSDI and SSI work incentive programs and policies.

The NBS gathers information through three samples:

- A nationally representative sample of SSDI beneficiaries and SSI recipients called the Representative Beneficiary Sample, which collects information on health and well-being, employment-related goals and activities, and use of programs and services.
- The Successful Workers Sample (SWS), which focuses on beneficiaries who have attained sufficient earnings to have their benefits suspended due to work.
- A longitudinal sample of successful workers who were part of the 2017 SWS.

In FY 2023, we developed the final data files and documentation covering all rounds of the NBS and closed out the contract. Future rounds of the NBS are included in the DRS project.

Reports and public use files containing data from prior rounds of the NBS are available on our website at: ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/nbs.html.

New and Emerging Research (formerly known as New and Emerging Research – Disability)

Given the size and scope of our research agenda, this category allows us the flexibility to cover unanticipated cost increases and new research projects to respond to changes in laws, regulations, policy, and agency or administration priorities. Projects under this category typically include studies of program policy issues and the identification of trends in the disability program.

“New and Emerging Research” covers the costs of small initiatives or initial project development for larger initiatives. Larger, multi-year initiatives receive their own funding in future budget planning depending on project scope, duration, and cost.

Supplemental Security Income Program

In FYs 2023–2024, we will seek input from beneficiaries and service providers on their understanding, preferences, and use of work incentive policies. We also anticipate using this funding for new research to support operational activities and equity initiatives in FYs 2024–2025. We will explore opportunities to obtain ongoing feedback on updates to notices, forms, and processes from beneficiaries, claimants, and other individuals with lived experience. For example, we will evaluate and provide information for improvements to our Disability Starter Kits.

In FY 2024, we will begin developing a Community Advisory Board (CAB), composed of individuals with lived experiences with OASDI or SSI or who are at risk of interacting with these programs. The CAB will provide early feedback on selected planned activities, such as new research projects, to ensure that we appropriately include the views of people impacted by our research, policies, notices, and other activities. The CAB will be available for topics across the agency, particularly to the customer experience team, to include topics relevant to their specific efforts as engagements in the CAB.

In FY 2024, we will also conduct research on the experiences of SSI recipients at risk of payment suspension and support an Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignment to conduct research and analysis described in our [FYs 2022–2026 Learning Agenda](#) and our [Equity Action Plan 2023 Update](#) and other related work.

SSI Outreach Evaluation

We are committed to increasing outreach efforts to ensure that our services are reaching eligible populations, including communities of color and underserved communities. In FY 2024, we will award an evaluation contract to assess the effectiveness of these efforts. We will focus our evaluation on the Third-Party Assistance (TPA) and the electronic SSI Protective Filing Tool (eSPF) initiatives. The TPA involves several outreach activities involving community legal aid organizations, faith-based groups, social services organizations in cooperation with Vulnerable Population Liaisons to mitigate barriers that are hampering applications and enrollments in the SSI program. The eSPF is a public-facing web tool that allows individuals to schedule appointments to file for SSI and records a protective filing date. The evaluation of these two efforts is included in our FY 2025 Evaluation Plan.

The topics and questions we will answer with this evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- **Program Effectiveness:** How much, if at all, did each component within the TPA and eSPF increase SSI applications and approvals? Which components within the TPA and eSPF are most effective in increasing SSI applications and approvals? Which components within the TPA and eSPF are most helpful in increasing SSI applications and approvals? **Customer Characteristics:** Which demographic groups (e.g., sex, race, ethnicity, disability, or geographic) successfully and unsuccessfully utilized each component within the TPA and eSPF?
- **Process Assessment and Opportunities for Improvement:** How well did each component within the TPA and eSPF function, and what are the areas for improvement?

- **Barriers to Application and Process:** What barriers did SSA mitigate by the components that make up the TPA and eSPF for individuals applying for SSI?

In FY 2025, we will begin data collection clearances and activities. For more information about our outreach efforts, please see the Advancing Equity, Including DEIA in the Workforce, and Outreach to People Facing Barriers exhibit in the LAE section.

Retirement and Disability Research Consortium

We awarded the current set of five-year cooperative agreements for the RDRC at the end of FY 2023. The RDRC comprises six competitively selected research centers based at the University of Michigan, Boston College, the National Bureau of Economic Research, University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), City University of New York (CUNY), and the University of Wisconsin. We broadly charge these research centers with planning, initiating, and maintaining a high quality, multidisciplinary research program that covers retirement, disability, and Social Security program issues. The centers perform valuable research and evaluation of retirement and disability policy, disseminate results, provide training awards, and facilitate the use of our program data by outside researchers. We encourage the RDRC centers to conduct research and evaluations that will inform the priority questions in our FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda, and our FY 2025 Evaluation Plan identifies our intent to fund RDRC projects that assess changes to our service delivery.

The RDRC actively supports the agency's equity initiatives, through training, research, funding for research projects by scholars from ISSCs and underserved populations, and projects that focus on topics relating to racial or ethnic disparities. Five of the six centers have an ISSC¹ as a lead (UMBC and CUNY) or have an ISSC or HBCU as a co-director. The sixth center is searching for an ISSC or HBCU to be a co-director. Other RDRC training programs that specifically recruit scholars from underserved populations include Boston College's Undergraduate Fellowship program and a mentorship program through the University of Michigan in collaboration with the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research.

FY 2023 funding supported projects started in FY 2024, with focus areas including the following topics: Disparities by Race and Ethnicity; Decline in SSDI and SSI Applications; Improving Communication and Outreach; Economic Security of SSA Beneficiaries; Improving Service Delivery; Return-to-Office; and Informing Trust Fund Projections. Within each topic, we provided the centers with specific research questions to consider when developing their research proposals. Topics and questions are based on stakeholder feedback from inside and outside the

¹ The 2022 list based on Department of Education criteria are compiled by Rutgers at <https://cmsi.gse.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2022%20MSI%20List.pdf>. The Department of Education's criteria are listed at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>.

Supplemental Security Income Program

agency and are aligned with agency research priorities such as the Learning Agenda and relevant Evaluation Plans.

In FY 2024, we will continue our research on equity issues and disparities by race and ethnicity based on the focal areas in the Request for Applications. We will work with the new RDRC centers to continue to expand funding opportunities for institutions and researchers who may have not typically been funded by the government.

In FY 2025, we expect to continue research on equity issues and disparities by race and ethnicity with more in-depth approaches and mixed methods and leverage growing networks of researchers with a variety of quantitative and qualitative skills from a diverse array of disciplines.

Ticket to Work (TTW) Evaluation

To continue to meet the obligations in the *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999* for ongoing evaluations and to assess the current landscape of the TTW program, we are undertaking an evaluation of the TTW program operations and experiences of TTW users. This evaluation will include consumer and provider experiences for both the Employment Network and the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects and is included as an evaluation in our FY 2025 Evaluation Plan and as an evidence-building activity under priority question 2 of our FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda.

In FY 2023, we awarded a contract to conduct an evaluation using surveys, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, an analysis of program data, and other data collection methodologies, as appropriate. The topics and questions we intend to answer with this evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- **Program Effectiveness and Opportunities for Improvement:** To what extent is the TTW programs working effectively and efficiently? What aspects of these programs work effectively and what areas can be improved? What additional services or program improvements can be helpful to SSA beneficiaries? To what extent are beneficiaries aware of the TTW program? Why do beneficiaries use the TTW program? Why do beneficiaries not use the TTW program? Are there any changes to the role SSA plays in the TTW program that might improve service delivery and program outcomes?
- **Customer Characteristics:** Which demographic groups (e.g., impairment, race, ethnicity, sex, SSI vs. SSDI, or other appropriate delineations) and intersections of these groups are using and not using TTW services? What services are most effective for different demographic groups?
- **Service Provision:** How is technology integrated into TTW service delivery? Does this integration vary across service providers? To what extent are services keeping up with modern technological changes? Who are the effective service providers and what do they

do differently from less effective service providers? How does beneficiary engagement and access vary between in-person and remote services?

- **Service Equity:** Are the TTW services broadly available to everyone or are there disparities between which populations have access to these services? What barriers exist, if any, to service provision, in economically disadvantaged, racially diverse, and rural communities? How do program rules, such as the Ticket payment system, affect service availability? Are there programmatic or other disincentives to service providers in serving specific groups of individuals (based on impairment, education, geographic location, etc.)?

This evaluation will supplement findings from the original TTW evaluation completed in 2013 (https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/twe_reports.htm). In FY 2024, we expect to work with the contractor to finalize the evaluation design and obtain approval for data collection activities. We expect to field the data collection activities in FYs 2025–2026 and expect a final evaluation report in FY 2027.

Understanding America Study (UAS) Enhancements

UAS is an innovative, nationally representative longitudinal internet panel with a sample of over 13,000 U.S. households. It is funded through a jointly financed cooperative agreement with the NIA. Our support will allow the grantee to maintain and expand the sample size to 20,000 panel members over the next five years. The UAS data are used for an assessment in our FY 2025 Evaluation Plan and as an evidence-building activity under priority question 3 of our FYs 2022–2026 Learning Agenda.

In FY 2023, we published [research on public knowledge of disability programs](#), and the grantee administered the revised disability public knowledge survey for its second wave. We conducted analyses of race and ethnicity disparities in disability program participation and researched the utilization of *my Social Security* accounts.

We also published [research](#) on Social Security program knowledge by race and ethnicity.

In FYs 2024 and 2025, we will use the longitudinal data from the UAS to assess whether the redesigned *Social Security Statement* and supplemental fact sheets improve the public's understanding of our programs in the longer-term. We will also use the UAS to leverage the UAS' increasing sample size to provide insights into differences in retirement savings, disability participation, and financial security by race/ethnicity, sex, age, and other characteristics.

Ensure Stewardship of SSA Programs

Advisory Services to Assist SSA with Disability Projects/National Academy of Sciences Multi-Year Contract

In FY 2023, we awarded a new five-year contract with the NAS-HMD to continue their work

Supplemental Security Income Program

conducting research and answering specific questions related to medical and vocational assessment at steps three, four, and five of the sequential disability evaluation process. Information from HMD assures our disability evaluations reflect the latest knowledge and practice in a wide range of medical disciplines and supports data-driven changes to our regulations and policies. The contract provides for Federal Advisory Committee Act-compliant Consensus Committees of medical and other experts to evaluate the effectiveness of our disability programs for adults and children as well as organizing and leading workshops with subject matter experts and outreach conferences with members of the public. Under this contract, we awarded task orders to:

- Create a standing committee of experts to advise SSA on disability issues throughout the five years of the base contract. This secures our continued relationship with leaders and luminaries in the healthcare sector and provides an avenue to receive timely and unbiased guidance on a regular basis.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop bringing together experts on health disparities for people facing barriers to accessing our services. This workshop will offer a synthesis of information on the health consequences of barriers to service from a health science perspective as well as other social determinants of health. This information will allow us to effectively consider systemic issues in the provision of health services that take place prior to our involvement.

In FY 2024, we plan to award task orders to:

- Create a consensus committee on the advancements and challenges in the diagnoses and treatment of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). This information will enable us to examine whether current eligibility rules specific to SCD are both medically appropriate and considerate of equity issues across several domains.
- Create a consensus committee on absenteeism and time-off-task expectations and requirements in the national economy. The collected information would help refine our vocational evaluation process and assure we are making accurate and well-supported disability determinations.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals to discuss management of chronic pain symptoms in outpatient settings outside of active cancer treatment, palliative care, and end-of-life care. This workshop will help us understand the current medical trends and challenges in managing chronic pain symptoms and evaluate claims involving chronic pain.

In FY 2025, we will consider task orders to:

- Create a consensus committee on the medical description and measurement of the personal experience of pain. This information will enable us to provide adjudicators with

updated guidance for comprehensively assessing a claimant's experiences and limitations due to pain.

- Create a consensus committee to discuss the evolving landscape of telemedicine and identify best practices with respect to remote testing or examination. The collected information would help refine our consultative examination guidelines and lower the time and monetary burden on patients to create medical evidence sufficient to allow adjudication of their claims.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals to discuss case prognosis and progression in physical or occupational therapy and how care decisions are made. This workshop will help us understand the drivers behind differences in therapy records and functional reports between claimants with similar underlying impairments.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Research on Data Analytics and the Work Disability-Functional Assessment Battery (WD-FAB)

Under an Interagency Agreement, the NIH Clinical Center provides in-depth analysis of our existing data and supports testing the WD-FAB in our CDR process. The WD-FAB aims to provide uniform information about individuals' self-reported functional ability that we can use to inform our disability data collection and determination processes. The evaluation of the WD-FAB is included in our FY 2025 Evaluation Plan.

In FY 2023, NIH analyzed WD-FAB data collected during the first wave of the project's pilot study. NIH also used longitudinal measures collected during the Supported Employment Demonstration, including WD-FAB results, to compare the effect of medical improvement versus functional improvement on outcomes such as work and beneficiary status. In addition, NIH provided a report that replicated their linking methods used to associate WD-FAB data with work demands as characterized by the Occupational Information Network (O*NET¹) to align WD-FAB and ORS data to support applicability of the linking methods to the SSA context. This exploratory proof of concept's goal was to measure the functional requirements of an occupation using the WD-FAB functional levels to compare an individual's WD-FAB scores to the functional work demands of a job. NIH provided us with a report detailing findings from use of their natural language processing (NLP) methods to identify functional terminology within the unstructured text of medical evidence. Additionally, NIH completed their analyses of additional data sources to identify characteristics of beneficiaries most likely to return to work to help inform ongoing SSA TTW program efforts.

In FY 2024, NIH will finalize and deliver the analysis comparing Wave 1 and Wave 2 WD-FAB data to our CDR predictive model scores, responses to CDR Mailer (Form SSA-455) questions, and CDR full medical review outcomes for participating study beneficiaries. We will use the

¹ O*NET is a career exploration tool established by the Department of Labor that contains detailed descriptions of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and human resources professionals, students, developers, and researchers.

Supplemental Security Income Program

evidence and findings in NIH’s report to evaluate the value and feasibility of incorporating the WD-FAB into our CDR business process. NIH will also explore the use of their NLP methods to identify functional terminology within the unstructured text of medical evidence and conclude this area of research.

In FY 2025, we plan to pause interagency research efforts with NIH to allow us time to review, analyze, and consider NIH’s FY 2024 analysis report on the WD-FAB data collected. During this time, we will determine if the WD-FAB instrument adds value to our medical CDR process and determine the viability of incorporating the WD-FAB into our CDR business process. Based on this and the evaluation of other NIH research, we will determine potential next steps for further research in FY 2026.

Occupational Information System (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT)

We are collaborating with BLS on development of the ORS to collect updated information on the requirements of work in the national economy. We will use the ORS data, along with information from other occupational sources, to create the OIS.

The OIS will classify occupations using the Federally mandated SOC system and include data elements to measure the physical demands, environmental conditions, and mental and cognitive requirements of work, as well as the education and training needed to gain average proficiency in a job. We will house, access, and operationalize the OIS through the VIT, a web-based information technology platform.

BLS determined that a five-year cycle (“Wave”) of data collection is needed for ORS to remain current with changes in the occupational environment. We expect to conduct rulemaking after BLS publishes the ORS Wave 2 final vocational data estimates. We then plan to update our rules as BLS publishes final vocational data estimates for subsequent five-year Waves to ensure our disability adjudications are based on the latest data.

In FY 2023, BLS completed Wave 2 data collection and began data collection for Wave 3. In November 2022, BLS published data from the fourth year of Wave 2. BLS also published the [60-day notice](#) seeking public comments related to the ORS third wave in the Federal Register in December 2022.

In FY 2024, BLS will complete the first year of Wave 3, begin the second year, and publish the final Wave 2 data collection estimates.

In FY 2025, BLS will complete the second year of Wave 3, begin the third year, and publish the first year Wave 3 data estimates.

RELATED FUNDING SOURCES

Section 234 of the Social Security Act gave us the authority to use trust fund monies to conduct research and demonstration projects designed to test SSDI program changes that may encourage disabled beneficiaries to work. Congress extended this authority with the Ticket to Work and

Supplemental Security Income Program

Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. These demonstration projects were not part of our annual research appropriation request. OMB apportionments Section 234 funds. Our authority to initiate such projects ended December 31, 2021, and to carry out such projects ended December 31, 2022. We will not incur additional costs, but for some projects, such as the Ohio Direct Referral Demonstration, we will continue to analyze data and release evaluation reports.

**Table 2.24—Current Research Projects Obligations through FY 2023
(in thousands)**

	Years	Total
Optimize the Experience of SSA’s Customers		\$390,722
Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation and Work: A Small Grant Program (ARDRAW)	2016-2023	\$1,800
Blanket Purchase Agreement for Time Sensitive Research Projects	2018-2023	\$7,279
Census Surveys	2008-2023	\$12,000
Data Development ¹	2008-2023	\$4,599
Data Development in an Enterprise Business Platform	2015-2023	\$15,449
Disability Analysis File	2008-2023	\$19,400
Disability Perceptions Survey	2020-2023	\$1,213
Disability Research Surveys	2022-2023	\$13,213
Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement	2008-2023	\$65,967
Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program	2021-2023	\$16,483
Medicare Outreach (1144)	2008-2023	\$18,991
National Beneficiary Survey	2008-2023	\$20,105
Retirement and Disability Research Consortium ²	2008-2023	\$155,025
Ticket to Work Evaluation	2023	\$6,732
Understanding America Survey	2009-2023	\$30,698
Working Disability Functional Assessment Battery (WD-FAB) Data Collection	2020-2023	\$1,767
Ensuring Stewardship of SSA Programs		\$354,603
Advisory Services to Assist. SSA with Disability Issues	2008-2023	\$40,498
National Institutes of Health – Research on Data Analytics/Functional Assessment Battery Development	2008-2023	\$41,351
Occupational Information System and Vocational Info Tool	2012-2023	\$272,754
Total Section 1110 and 1144 Obligations		\$745,325

¹ The Data Development line reflects total obligations for current research projects.

² The Disability and Research Consortium (DRC) and the Retirement Research Consortium (RRC) were separate grant programs until FY 2017.

ADMINISTRATION OF OUR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Our primary research components are housed within the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy (ORDP). ORDP is responsible for all major activities in the areas of strategic and program policy planning, policy research and evaluation, statistical programs, and overall policy development, analysis, and implementation. Within ORDP, the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support; the Office of Disability Policy; and the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics share the responsibility for administering projects funded under our research appropriation.

Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support (ORDES) - ORDES conducts research and analysis related to the SSDI and SSI programs. ORDES implements demonstration projects to test changes to the disability programs primarily aimed at improving program administration and supporting employment. It also conducts research, analysis, evaluations, and statistical modeling that support our goals to strengthen our disability programs and improve program integrity. The Associate Commissioner for ORDES is our Evaluation Officer.¹

Office of Disability Policy (ODP) - ODP oversees and supports the planning, development, evaluation, and issuance of substantive regulations, policies, and procedures for our disability programs; development and promulgation of policies and guidelines for use by State, Federal, or private contractor providers who implement the disability provisions of the Social Security Act; and evaluation of the effects of proposed legislation and legislation pending before Congress to determine the impact on disability programs. ODP uses research to identify opportunities for policy improvement and for keeping medical, vocational, childhood, disability, and CDR policies up to date.

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (ORES) - ORES is a statistical unit responsible for the production and dissemination of research and data on our programs. ORES produces findings on our retirement, disability, and SSI programs from research and microsimulation projects supported through intramural and extramural programs. As a principal statistical unit of the agency, ORES develops program and survey data to support our research and statistical objectives. In addition, ORES maintains a schedule of research and statistical publications. ORES statisticians and researchers provide reliable data about our key program variables, information about the design of social insurance programs around the world to support comparative research, as well as social and behavioral research related to our programs. ORES also provides policymakers and stakeholders with research on retirement security. The Associate Commissioner for ORES is the agency's Chief Statistical Officer.

¹ As described in [M-19-23](#), the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act of 2018 requires CFO-Act agencies to designate a senior staff member with authority and responsibility for providing leadership over the agency's evaluation and learning agenda activities.

Implementation of the Evidence Act

The *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) of 2018* requires us to develop a Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment. For more information on our implementation of the Evidence Act, please see documents posted on <https://www.ssa.gov/data>.

RESEARCH INVESTMENT CRITERIA

We support research that fosters a better understanding of the socio-economic status and other characteristics of Americans covered by the benefits programs we administer; how changes in demography and the economy might alter the well-being of our customers; the interrelationships between our programs and other private and public programs; and the impact of the programs on the overall economy. Our research also informs many of the priority questions identified in our FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda, and our evaluations are described in our Annual Evaluation Plan. Within this framework, our extramural research program places the best available evidence into the hands of policymakers to inform policy development and program administration. We have established guidelines for developing, managing, and vetting projects for inclusion in our long-term research and demonstration agenda, as presented in our Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, solicitations, and focal areas for the RDRC, ICAP, and ARDRAW. We are implementing our Plan for Increasing Public Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research (Public Access Plan or PAP), in response to the August 25, 2022, Office of Science and Technology Policy Memorandum, “Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research”. Our public access plan defines general requirements for public access to our scientific research publications and scientific research data and expect implementation by end of 2024. The PAP will apply to all published research generated on or after 12/31/2025. We employ a variety of methods to ensure we meet the funding requirements of the sections of the Act that authorize our extramural research and demonstration activities and our extramural research activities meet high standards for relevance, quality, and performance.

Relevance

The primary purpose of our extramural research is to support evidence-building to inform the improvement of our programs, especially for individuals facing barriers to accessing our programs for economic security. We seek to support research and demonstrations that clearly connect with this goal. A fundamental step in our review is assuring that each project responds to issues facing the OASDI and/or SSI programs, with priority towards contemporaneous challenges. In addition to supporting our [FYs 2022-2026 Learning Agenda](#) and our annual [Evaluation Plans](#) required under the Evidence Act, many of our Section 1110 projects will help us achieve the goals of our [Equity Action Plan 2023 Update](#) in agreement with [EO 13985](#).

Our review process includes obtaining the advice and recommendations of researchers with technical expertise, program managers, and agency executives. We also receive input on our research program from the SSAB. Internal reviews help ensure that funded activities reflect our strategic goals and objectives and respond to legislative requirements. Many of our research

Supplemental Security Income Program

activities are directed toward providing policymakers and the public with the analytical and data resources they need to assess our current programs and the implications of reform proposals.

Our budget request reflects our support of the ongoing goals to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to maximize their self-sufficiency through work and to increase the American public's basic financial management skills. For example, through the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network or RETAIN project, we are collaborating with the Department of Labor to test interventions that will improve the ability of individuals to remain in the labor force when they acquire an illness or injury.

We are also working with HHS's Administration for Children and Families to test early intervention and return-to-work services for individuals who may be potential future applicants for SSDI or SSI.

Finally, in support of our commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities, we participate in cross-agency working groups, as appropriate. We are supportive of exploring ways to leverage our data and research portfolio to buttress these efforts.

Quality

Our extramural program provides access to analysts at top research institutions from around the country to produce the best evidence in support of our program. We use a competitive, merit-based, peer-reviewed procurement process to ensure that our extramural research program selects the best qualified individuals and techniques to produce high quality results. We award research projects conducted by private-sector organizations through competitive contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements. Our extramural program features internationally recognized scholars including many that have received significant recognition for their research contributions (e.g., the John Bates Clark Medal).

We use Technical Expert Panels to review projects while they are in progress to provide feedback and suggestions to the agency. These panels include internal experts in relevant disciplines, such as statistics, economics, and survey design. They help ensure that our sponsored research projects are methodologically sound and consistent with professional standards. The research projects we sponsor are often discussed in formal seminars or workshops, as well as published in top peer-reviewed scientific journals.¹ In accordance with the [Office of Scientific and Technology Policy's memo](#), all our scientific research and data

¹ Our extramural partners often publish supported research in scholarly journals. Recent examples include, but are not limited to: Engelhardt, Gary V., Jonathan Gruber, and Anil Kumar (2022). "Early Social Security Claiming and Old-age Poverty: Evidence from the Introduction of the Social Security Early Eligibility Age." *Journal of Human Resource*, <https://ideas.repec.org/a/uwp/jhriss/v57y2022i4p1079-1106.html>; Hou, Wenliang, and Sanzenbacher, Geoffrey T. (2021). "Measuring Racial/Ethnic Retirement Wealth Inequality;" *The Journal of Retirement*, <https://doi.org/10.3905/jor.2020.1.079>; Hudomiet, Péter, Michael D. Hurd, and Susann Rohwedder (2021). "Forecasting Mortality Inequalities in the U.S. based on Trends in Midlife Health." *Journal of Health Economics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2021.102540>; Li, Yang (2022). "Pension Plan Types and Social Security Knowledge: New Survey Evidence." *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2022.2132805>; Knapp, David, and Jinkook Lee (2021). "Institutional Influences on Retirement, Health, and Well-being." *Journal of Pension Economics & Finance*, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474747221000408>.

conducted or funded after December 31, 2025 will be made publicly available to the greatest extent possible. See our [Plan for Increasing Public Access To the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research](#) for more information on our public access plans.

By December 31, 2024, we plan to publish specific policies and requirements to make our research free and accessible to the public consistent with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy memorandum requirements for a Plan for Increasing Public Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research. This plan will be effective for all extramural research awarded after December 31, 2025.¹

Performance

We carry out our extramural research and evaluation projects primarily through contracts, jointly funded cooperative agreements, and grants that identify specific deliverables and timetables. We have sent a strong message to contractors that they must complete projects on time and within budget. Contracting officers, contracting officer's representatives, analysts, and senior executives monitor the progress of all research contracts and agreements. These agreements are also subject to audits by OIG.

Consistent with our encouragement to support evidence-based evaluations, we produce reports and data files for each research and evaluation project in an effort to determine whether existing or proposed programs work as designed. Where appropriate, we make these reports publicly available or announce their availability in the [Social Security Bulletin and online](#). Via the RDRC, we disseminate output at annual meetings, online, and through a variety of publications, workshops, and conferences. Our research projects are widely cited in both peer-reviewed publications and the press. For example, the [Expenditures of the Aged Chartbook](#) was referenced in the February 2, 2023 Bloomberg article, "[Health, Housing Hit Budgets of Older Americans Even Before Covid](#)," and the research paper, "Immigrants' Economic Assimilation: Evidence from Longitudinal Earnings Records," was cited in the journal, *American Sociological Review*.

¹ [08-2022-OSTP-Public-Access-Memo.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.