



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Releases *Open Government* Plan

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today announced that the agency has released its *Open Government* plan. The plan, available at www.socialsecurity.gov/open, reflects the agency's commitment to increase transparency, expand opportunities for citizen participation and collaboration, and make open government sustainable at Social Security. Three flagship initiatives are highlighted in the plan -- the Spanish-Language Retirement Estimator, Online Service Enhancement, and an Online Life-Expectancy Calculator. These initiatives support the agency's mission, goals, and objectives, as well as showcase the value of open government principles.

"I applaud President Obama's commitment to opening the federal government to the people it serves and I am especially proud of the three flagship initiatives we have chosen to implement by the end of this year," said Commissioner Astrue. "These initiatives signify Social Security's ongoing commitment to transparency, citizen participation, and collaboration as we improve the services we provide to the public."

Social Security's Spanish-language *Retirement Estimator* will be the agency's and the federal government's first-ever non-English interactive Internet application -- a tool that furthers transparency by offering the Spanish-speaking public an opportunity to get instant, personalized estimates of future retirement benefits. Last year, over three million people used the English-language version of this popular online service available at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

As part of its Online Service Enhancement initiative, Social Security will unveil a new service-channeling tool that will help people more easily find the information and services they seek on the agency's website www.socialsecurity.gov. A key feature will be the opportunity to go online to schedule an in-office appointment for those who are unable to use our online services to conduct all of their business. This idea was submitted by Christie Dickson, an employee of Social Security, and was one of the finalists for the President's SAVE award. In developing this tool, the agency will collaborate with members of the public as well as with industry experts.

The agency also is developing an Online Life-Expectancy Calculator -- a simple, but important tool to assist the public with retirement planning. Many people substantially underestimate life expectancy, and this new online service will add a measure of accuracy to retirement planning by

providing average life expectancies at different ages based on the person's gender and date of birth, and drawing on assumptions provided in the annual Social Security Trustees' report.

"I look forward to continuing to translate the values of open government into lasting improvements in the way the agency makes decisions, solves problems, and addresses its challenges," said Commissioner Astrue. "Social Security's flagship initiatives will improve our services and further break down barriers between the American people and their government."

Social Security encourages feedback on its *Open Government* plan. To view the plan and share your comments and ideas, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/open.

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