OVERVIEW OF OUR FISCAL YEAR 2021 GOALS AND RESULTS

HOW WE MANAGE PERFORMANCE

Our Performance Framework: The *Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010* (GPRMA) describes how agency strategic plans and goals should align with presidential terms and broader Federal efforts.

Setting goals and measuring our performance is vital to our success. We define our performance framework in the *Fiscal Years* (FY) *2018–2022 Agency Strategic Plan* (ASP) (www.ssa.gov/asp). Our ASP defines our Strategic Goals and details underlying Strategic Objectives, strategies, and relevant risks and mitigation plans.

Our Strategic Goals are:

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver Services Effectively;

Strategic Goal 2: Improve the Way We Do Business; and

Strategic Goal 3: Ensure Stewardship.

Our Planned Performance: In January 2021, we published our *Annual Performance Report for FY 2020*, and in May 2021, we published our *Annual Performance Plan for FY 2022 and Revised Performance Plan for FY 2021* (www.ssa.gov/agency/performance) as part of the *President's FY 2022 Budget Request* (www.ssa.gov/budget/). These plans and report outline our tactical plans for achieving the Strategic Goals and Objectives in our ASP, finalizes our performance commitments for FY 2022, and describes how we ensure data integrity of our performance information. The budgeted workloads published in our Annual Performance Report (APR) correspond to the key workload measures contained in the *FY 2021 Operating Plan* (www.ssa.gov/budget/FY21Files/2021OP.pdf).

Our Actual Performance and Program Results: We update the APR after the close of the fiscal year to provide performance results for the previous fiscal year. We will publish the final APR containing our actual FY 2021 results in February 2022. The final APR will be available on our *Annual Performance Plan* and *Annual Performance Report* website (www.ssa.gov/agency/performance/).

This *Agency Financial Report* summarizes our key initiatives, overall performance results, and financial activities to carry out our mission in FY 2021. The following table shows our operating expenses by Strategic Goal and Objective.

FY 2021 Operating Expenses by Strategic Goal and Strategic Objective
(Dollars in Millions)

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver Services Effectively	**$8,508**
Strategic Objective 1.1: Improve Service Delivery	$7,561
Strategic Objective 1.2: Expand Service Delivery Options	$947
Strategic Goal 2: Improve the Way We Do Business	**$2,052**
Strategic Objective 2.1: Streamline Policies and Processes	$267
Strategic Objective 2.2: Accelerate Information Technology Modernization	$1,785
Strategic Goal 3: Ensure Stewardship	**$2,695**
Strategic Objective 3.1: Improve Program Integrity	$1,939
Strategic Objective 3.2: Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities	$65
Strategic Objective 3.3: Improve Workforce Performance and Increase Accountability	$530
Strategic Objective 3.4: Improve Organizational Effectiveness and Reduce Costs	$161

Our Priorities: In support of the GPRMA, we established three Agency Priority Goals (APG), which are 24-month goals reflecting our top priorities. We routinely review our progress and take actions to improve our outcomes, promote innovation, and deliver favorable results.

For FYs 2020–2021, our APGs were:

1. Improve customer service in the hearings process by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing decision.
2. Improve the integrity of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program by focusing our efforts on reducing overpayments.
3. Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number.

Learn more about APGs on the Performance.gov website (www.performance.gov/SSA/), and see how we focus leadership priorities, set outcomes, and measure results to drive significant progress and change.

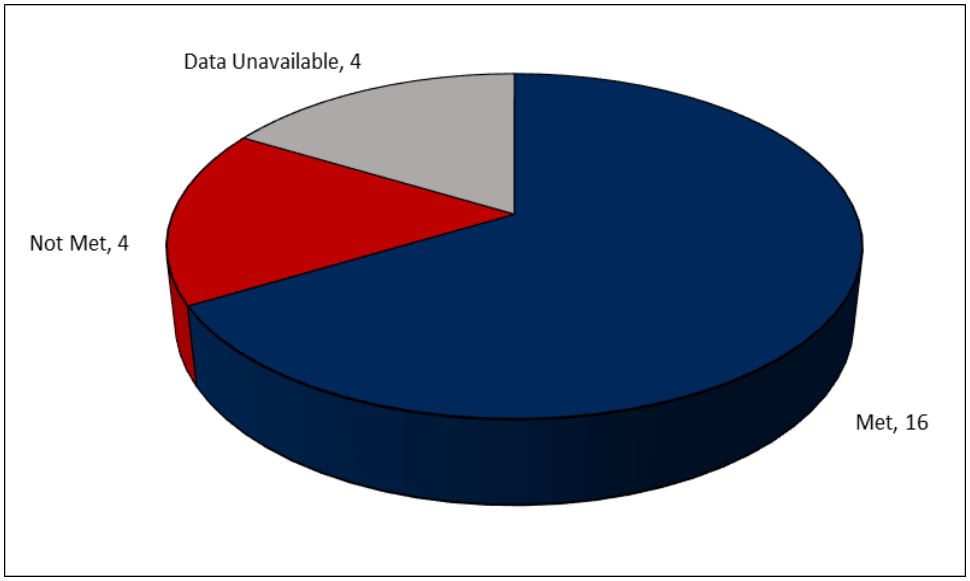
SUMMARY OF FISCAL YEAR 2021 PERFORMANCE

We highlight the approaches we used to achieve our FY 2021 performance measures; outline some of the challenges we faced meeting these goals; and provide an analysis of our performance. We base our planned performance measures and targets on the President's Budget request. If necessary, we adjust our resources to ensure we can complete our budgeted workloads and agency goals within our budget.

We had a total of 24 performance measures (including three APGs) that we used to track agency progress towards meeting our Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives. Overall, we met our targets for 16 of the 20 performance measures for which data were available. Final data for 4 of the performance measure targets were not available at the time we published this report.

We will publish final data for all performance measures in our *Annual Performance Plan for FY 2023, Revised Performance Plan for FY 2022, and Annual Performance Report for FY 2021* in February 2022.

Summary of Our FY 2021 Performance Measure Results



STRATEGIC GOAL 1: DELIVER SERVICES EFFECTIVELY

Strategic Objectives

- Improve Service Delivery
- Expand Service Delivery Options

Create an account:
www.ssa.gov/myaccount

Our goal is to deliver our services effectively whether they are online, on the phone, or in-person. We interact with the public every day and our employees experience firsthand the impact of our programs. We understand that doing our work well matters. We also know that advancements in technology provide opportunities to do business differently, and often more efficiently and conveniently.

The following is a summary of progress toward accomplishing our Strategic Goal and Objectives:

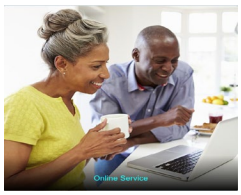
- *my* Social Security is our online portal that provides over 62 million registered users with a convenient, safe option to conduct business with us or view their *Social Security Statement* (*Statement*). *my* Social Security offers a broad range of services including changing an address or direct deposit information, getting personal retirement benefit estimates, and requesting a replacement Social Security Number (SSN) card. In FY 2021, we expanded user features for individual representative payees by adding a standardized benefit verification letter and the ability to request a Medicare Replacement card. We also enhanced the ability to track claim status.
- Millions of our customers depend on our National 800 Number technicians to answer important questions. We will continue improving service and reducing wait times through targeted hiring, improved training methods, and additional automated services. In FY 2021, our agents handled more than 31 million calls, over 1 million more calls than in FY 2020. We hired and trained 1,000 additional agents to improve our ability to address 800 Number callers efficiently.
- Individuals most commonly visit our field offices to replace SSN cards. We have been expanding digital service options so adult U.S. citizens who meet certain criteria may apply for a replacement card using our internet Social Security Number Replacement Card online application, which can be accessed with a *my* Social Security account. Forty-four States and the District of Columbia have this option. In FY 2021, we continued to expand service options to reduce the need for members of the public to visit an office for this service.
- Video service delivery (VSD) allows us to provide a video face-to-face service option in over 800 convenient locations across the country such as our field offices, hospitals, libraries, community centers, American Indian tribal centers, homeless shelters, and other government agencies. However, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic reduced customers' ability to access these VSD locations. While VSD requires individuals to go into specific locations that offer VSD service, our videoconferencing platform allows the public to engage in face-to face video service with our employees from any location, using their smart phone, tablet, or computer. In FY 2021, we deployed videoconferencing to 100 percent of our frontline employees. We also implemented videoconferencing for several workloads, including conducting video hearings with Administrative Law Judges, and contractors conducting representative payee reviews.

- Eliminating the hearings backlog and reducing the time it takes to get a hearing decision remain our most critical priorities. In FY 2021, the average wait time of 326 days is at the lowest level since FY 2001. We expect to eliminate the hearings backlog in FY 2022.

The following dashboard shows our FY 2021 performance measures status, including the Strategic Goal and Objectives:

FY 2021 Performance at a Glance

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver Services Effectively		
Strategic Objective 1.1: Improve Service Delivery	Performance Measure 1.1a: Improve customer service in the hearings process by prioritizing those individuals who have waited the longest for a hearing decision (APG)	**Not Met**
	Performance Measure 1.1b: Improve the customer experience by reducing the Average Speed of Answer on the National 800 Number (APG)	**Met**
	Performance Measure 1.1c: Improve customer service by reducing the number of actions pending at the processing centers	**Met**
	Performance Measure 1.1d: Expand video service delivery	**Met**
Strategic Objective 1.2: Expand Service Delivery Options	Performance Measure 1.2a: Redesign our website to enhance the user's online experience	To Be Determined
	Performance Measure 1.2b: Maintain customer satisfaction with our online services above Verint ForeSee's Threshold of Excellence (80)	**Not Met**
	Performance Measure 1.2c: Increase the number of successfully completed online transactions	**Met**



Did You Know? You Can Access Our Services Online

We are constantly expanding our online services to give you freedom and control when conducting business with Social Security. You can apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter, and more – from anywhere and from any of your devices! (www.ssa.gov/onlineservices/)

STRATEGIC GOAL 2:
IMPROVE THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS

Strategic Objectives

- Streamline Policies and Processes
- Accelerate Information Technology Modernization

Social Security Benefit Verification Letter

Available online at:
www.ssa.gov/myaccount/

Our goal is to deliver services effectively to the public. We continuously evaluate our policies and business processes using data and modern methods to ensure we meet service demands and reinforce efficient and effective service. We recognized our technology infrastructure and existing business systems did not allow us to serve the public the way we want or the way they expect. In response, we developed and updated a plan to modernize our information technology (IT) systems. This multi-year modernization effort is fundamental to our overall ability to improve service to the public.

The following is a summary of progress toward accomplishing our Strategic Goal and Objectives:

- We modernized the *Statement*, which provides users with their earnings records, Social Security and Medicare taxes paid, and future benefit estimates, along with access and links to retirement planning tools, calculators, supplemental fact sheets, and other applicable information. In FY 2021, we launched nine supplemental fact sheets, to accompany the *Statement* and present information based on the user's age and earnings history.
- We are improving disability case processing through our enterprise-wide efforts to develop and implement modern, national claims processing systems that will seamlessly interact with each other from initial claim filing through a final appeal decision. We are working to integrate the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS2), Hearings and Appeals Case Processing System, and the Quality Review Case Processing System across our offices and State disability determination services (DDS). We are bringing decision support tools using artificial intelligence technologies, machine learning, and predictive analytics to many aspects of the disability determination process to improve decisional accuracy and policy compliance. In FY 2021, we deployed DCPS2 to 4 additional DDSs, bringing the total to 49 of the 52 DDSs supported in production.
- Expanding the use of electronic medical evidence makes it easier for medical providers to submit evidence, allows disability adjudicators to efficiently navigate the record to identify pertinent information, and improves the disability determination process through use of data analytics. In FY 2021, we onboarded 12 new partners to exchange medical records electronically. Additionally, more than half of the evidence we received from medical providers was submitted electronically.

- Four years ago, we began a multi-year IT Modernization Plan (www.ssa.gov/open/materials/IT-Modernization-Plan.pdf), supported by $415 million in dedicated appropriations. In 2020, we updated our plan (www.ssa.gov/open/materials/IT-Modernization-Plan-2020-Update.pdf), emphasizing service modernization, which includes building additional digital services; improving and expanding automated services available through our National 800 Number; and providing additional self-service and expedited services in our field offices. In FY 2021, we implemented and enhanced software to enable more efficient document review for disability claims, improve our claimant's ability to view and track the status of their claims, and better manage wage data.

The following dashboard shows our FY 2021 performance measures status, including the Strategic Goal and Objectives:

FY 2021 Performance at a Glance

Strategic Goal 2: Improve the Way We Do Business		
Strategic Objective 2.1: Streamline Policies and Processes	Performance Measure 2.1a: Implement a New Framework for the Acquisition of Electronic Medical Evidence	Met
	Performance Measure 2.1b: Increase the percentage of beneficiaries whose successful work outcomes within three years of assignment resulted in a payment to an Employment Network (EN) or State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency	Met
	Performance Measure 2.1c: Update the Listing of Impairments	Met
Strategic Objective 2.2: Accelerate Information Technology Modernization	Performance Measure 2.2a: Expand Self-Service for Claims Status Inquiries	Met
	Performance Measure 2.2b: Provide uninterrupted access to our systems during scheduled times of operations	Not Met
	Performance Measure 2.2c: Maintain effective cybersecurity and privacy programs	Met

Did You Know? You Can Apply for Disability Benefits Online

You can apply for disability benefits as soon as you become disabled. The Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs provide disability assistance. You may be able to file online for SSI at the same time you file for DI benefits. (www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/)

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ENSURE STEWARDSHIP

Strategic Objectives

- Improve Program Integrity
- Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities
- Improve Workforce Performance and Increase Accountability
- Improve Organizational Effectiveness and Reduce Costs

Antifraud facts:
www.ssa.gov/antifraudfacts/

Our goal is to ensure stewardship and the efficient administration of our programs, by focusing our efforts in three major areas: improving program integrity, enhancing our fraud prevention and detection activities, and improving workforce performance and increasing accountability.

The following is a summary of progress toward accomplishing our Strategic Goal and Objectives:

- Changes in a person's work and wages are a leading cause of improper payments in the DI and SSI programs. We developed multiple channels to make it easier for DI beneficiaries, SSI recipients, and representative payees to report earnings electronically via *my* Social Security, including the online wage reporting application, myWage Report (myWR) In FY 2021, we shared a training video with the public via digital and social media outlets (e.g., YouTube) to promote the use of telephone wage reporting, mobile wage reporting, and myWR.
- Currently, we use numerous systems to record, track, and manage our Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and SSI overpayments. We started a multi-year initiative to develop a streamlined, modernized enterprise Debt Management System to enable us to more effectively and efficiently post, track, collect, and report on overpayments. In FY 2021, we released a new online remittance option with Department of Treasury (Treasury) Pay.gov, for repaying OASDI and SSI overpayments, implemented a lockbox service with Treasury,[1] and partnered with Treasury to implement Online Bill Pay so our customers can also pay us online through their financial institutions online bank portal. In addition, we released an automated process for writing-off delinquent and unproductive debts.
- We are focusing on a holistic analytical approach to our fraud risk management and prioritizing our anti-fraud efforts consistent with the *Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019* and the Government Accountability Office *Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in the Federal Programs*. Between FYs 2018 and 2020, we completed fraud risk assessments in key areas including disability, electronic services, and the representative payee program. These assessments were consistent with our Enterprise Fraud Risk Management (EFRM) strategy,[2] established in FY 2019. We also developed strategies to mitigate specific risks identified in those assessments. In FY 2021, we initiated additional risk assessment activities in areas such as employee fraud and the Title II program,[3] consistent with our EFRM strategy. We will continue

[1] Through the lockbox program, the Department of the Treasury agrees to let certain financial institutions process individual payments.
[2] Enterprise Fraud Risk Management is a systematic process to identify possible fraud risks, determine what controls are in place to reduce the likelihood or impact of those risks, and then determine the significance of the residual (remaining risks).
[3] The Title II program is also referred to as the Federal old-age, survivors, and disability insurance (OASDI) benefits program. While the Title II program includes benefits administered for disability insurance, the Title II fraud risk assessment does not cover disability. We completed the DI risk assessment separately in December 2017.

our 5-year project to enhance our fraud allegation referral process, providing additional user functionality and enhancing management information.

- We partner with the Office of the Inspector General, State DDSs, and State and local law enforcement divisions to operate cooperative disability investigations (CDI) units. Generally, these units investigate suspected fraud before we award benefits and during the CDR process. We currently have 49 CDI units covering 47 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands. In FY 2021, we added CDI coverage to Maine, Vermont, and Connecticut.
- We provide SSN verifications and exchange birth, death, prisoner, and benefit payment information, as permitted under law, with Federal, State, and private partners. Our data exchanges improve organizational effectiveness and reduce costs by providing reliable data to determine benefits and improve administrative processes, which in turn saves costs and reduces improper payments. In FY 2021, we identified technical solutions for transferring data to support a computer-matching agreement with the Department of Homeland Security to process U.S. citizen and non-citizen foreign travel data. We continue to analyze the technical solutions for implementing systems functionality to exchange computer-matching data.
- We properly train our managers and supervisors so that they are better positioned to train and manage the performance of their staff, enhance employee engagement, increase productivity, and improve retention. In FY 2019, we launched and updated our National Leadership Essentials for New Supervisors curriculum to train new managers and supervisors on management laws and responsibilities, in conjunction with the Office of Personnel Management's policies and procedures. In FY 2020, we began developing Leadership Fundamentals, a new multi-year online and self-paced curriculum that provides sequential training for managers within the first three years of their supervisory role. In FY 2021, we developed online lessons that encompass the first full year of the Leadership Fundamentals curriculum.
- Our goal is to increase the proficiency of our leadership cadre and pipeline to enhance their readiness to fill potential gaps in leadership and critical positions. In FY 2020, we announced selectees for the National Leadership Development Program (NLDP). We are also developing an automated enterprise-wide approach to succession planning. In FY 2021, we began assignments for our inaugural NLDP Track 1 (GS 15) and Track 2 (GS 12–14) selectees. We also announced selections, completed competency baselines, and began assignments for Track 3 (GS 8–11) selectees. Additionally, we finalized configuration of our succession planning tool.

The following dashboard shows our FY 2021 performance measures status, including the Strategic Goal and Objectives:

FY 2021 Performance at a Glance

Strategic Goal 3: Ensure Stewardship		
Strategic Objective 3.1: Improve Program Integrity	Performance Measure 3.1a: Improve the integrity of the Supplemental Security Income program by focusing our efforts on reducing overpayments (APG)	Results available summer 2022
	Performance Measure 3.1b: Maintain a high payment accuracy rate by reducing overpayments, in the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program	Results available summer 2022
	Performance Measure 3.1c: Ensure the quality of our decisions by achieving the State disability determination services decisional accuracy rate for initial disability decisions	Results available summer 2022
	Performance Measure 3.1d: Modernize our Debt Management System	**Met**
Strategic Objective 3.2: Enhance Fraud Prevention and Detection Activities	Performance Measure 3.2a: Expand our Cooperative Disability Investigations coverage	**Met**
	Performance Measure 3.2b: Mature the Enterprise Fraud Risk Management Program	**Met**
Strategic Objective 3.3: Improve Workforce Performance and Increase Accountability	Performance Measure 3.3a: Strengthen manager accountability for effective performance management	**Met**
	Performance Measure 3.3b: Enhance the leadership pipeline through a modernized national leadership development program	**Met**
	Performance Measure 3.3c: Ensure new supervisors receive timely training to improve their leadership skills and competencies	**Not Met**
Strategic Objective 3.4: Improve Organizational Effectiveness and Reduce Costs	Performance Measure 3.4a: Reduce our real property footprint	**Met**
	Performance Measure 3.4b: Implement the electronic Consent Based Social Security Number Verification Service	**Met**

LOOKING FORWARD – FACING OUR CHALLENGES

Social Security programs affect nearly every member of the public at some point in their lives. We are with you from birth, when you start work, if you become disabled or lose a loved one, and when you reach retirement age. We strive to improve access to Social Security services by eliminating systemic barriers to full and equitable participation in our programs by optimizing customer experience; building an inclusive, engaged, and empowered workforce; and ensuring stewardship of our programs.

We are continuing to invest in modern technology and business processes that will help us provide better service to the public and reduce operating costs. We are executing our IT Modernization Plan (www.ssa.gov/open/materials/IT-Modernization-Plan-2020-Update.pdf), which is replacing our legacy systems and enhancing our ability to serve the public accurately and timely. Building on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, we will offer more digital service options for the many customers who prefer to do business with us online or by phone.

While we must expand our digital service options, some individuals need in-person service. We must ensure that our programs and services are reaching underserved communities, including individuals facing homelessness, with low income, with limited English proficiency, or with mental and intellectual disabilities. We are working to ensure our SSI program is accessible and to understand why fewer people applied for SSI during the COVID-19 pandemic. We established liaisons in our field offices to work with community-based groups to help us reach people who face barriers accessing our services. We will continue our SSI outreach work, including collaborating closely with other government agencies and third-party organizations in local communities to help members of the public understand possible benefit eligibility and assure convenient access to our services.

The knowledgeable, dedicated, and talented workforce that administers our complex programs is essential to our success. We will invest in our employees, as we eliminate barriers to hiring and advancement to foster an inclusive workforce. We will also treat our employees equitably and support them in their chosen career paths. We are investing in our employees through additional training, including inclusive leadership development; increased workplace flexibilities; and advancements in technology that provide better tools to do the job.

We will prioritize employee and public health and safety with new operating approaches. We are also strengthening our Federal hiring policies so that we can attract, recruit, and retain top talent.

We are working to better serve millions of people while maintaining strong stewardship and rigorous oversight of the programs we administer.

Did You Know? Scammers Are Pretending to be Government Employees

DO NOT BE FOOLED! IF YOU RECEIVE A SUSPICIOUS CALL:

Hang up!

DO NOT give them money or personal information!

Report the scam at oig.ssa.gov!

For more information, visit our website (www.ssa.gov/antifraudfacts/).