

Deceased Beneficiaries and Recipients Who Do Not Have Death Information on the Numident

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Office of Audit Report Summary

Objectives

To evaluate the adequacy of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) recently implemented controls to improve the recording of deceased beneficiaries' deaths on the Numident and its plans to address the approximately 1.4 million deceased beneficiaries who have no death information on the Numident.

Background

When SSA receives a report that a beneficiary or recipient has died, it records the date of death on the Master Beneficiary (MBR) or Supplemental Security Record (SSR) and terminates benefits. In addition, SSA's Death Alert, Control, and Update System (DACUS) receives, processes, and records death information on SSA's Numident. SSA uses death information from the Numident to create a record of death information called the Death Master File (DMF), which is available to Federal agencies and the public.

In prior audits, we found that approximately 1.4 million deceased beneficiaries' deaths were not on the Numident and DMF. Our prior audits included several recommendations for corrective action. SSA agreed with our recommendations and stated it was developing a plan to redesign DACUS to correct death discrepancies between the MBR/SSR and Numident.

Findings

SSA has made progress in improving how it records beneficiaries' deaths on the Numident. This includes recently implemented controls to improve the consistency of personally identifiable and death information between the MBR/SSR and Numident. In addition, SSA has a 3-year plan to redesign how its systems process death information. However, SSA's recently implemented controls did not always ensure it recorded deceased beneficiaries' deaths on the Numident. Finally, SSA is determining whether there is a cost-effective method to correct our previously identified 1.4 million deceased beneficiaries who do not have death information on the Numident.

Recommendations

We recommend that SSA:

1. Determine why it did not record death information on the Numident for the 48 beneficiaries who died after September 2012.
2. Include in its Death Processing Redesign project, controls to identify and correct when deceased beneficiaries' deaths are not recorded on the Numident.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.