

**Observations and Recommendations for the Disability Case Processing System
A-14-15-50008**

May 2015

Office of Audit Report Summary**Objective**

Our objective was to gain a better understanding of the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS) and its security controls as well as obtain feedback from users.

Background

DCPS is a nation-wide SSA initiative to bring greater consistency to disability determination services (DDS) and the disability determination process. The Social Security Administration is creating DCPS to be a common case processing system all DDSs will use. DCPS would simplify system support and maintenance, improve the speed and quality of the disability process, and reduce the overall growth rate of infrastructure costs.

The Agency is in the early testing stages of implementing the system. As of the date of this review, three DDSs were using DCPS Beta version 4.1: Illinois, Missouri, and Idaho.

Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Grant Thornton, LLP staff visited the Illinois DDS in August 2014 for a first-hand demonstration of DCPS and solicit user feedback. In addition, OIG staff interviewed the DDS administrators in Idaho and Missouri to obtain additional feedback regarding DCPS. SSA also demonstrated and discussed DCPS with OIG and Grant Thornton at SSA Headquarters.

Results

All three DDS administrators interviewed identified issues with the DCPS application and development process but expressed their continued support of DCPS and optimism about the project.

Each DDS will be responsible for account management controls in DCPS. SSA needs to further refine DCPS to ensure appropriate access controls and separation of duties. DDSs can also customize the current version of DCPS through hundreds of configurable settings, which may impact claims integrity.

DDS administrators at all three Beta sites required quality assurance reviews of all cases processed through DCPS. In addition, we noted that the standardized language in DCPS can offer the opportunity to improve data analysis for quality assurance.

Recommendations

1. Continue efforts to emphasize user engagement in developing DCPS and incorporating feedback into the system and development processes.
2. Require implementation of a comprehensive DCPS access control process for each DDS that enforces least-privilege and segregation of duties for all accounts, including vendors.
3. Require implementation of a comprehensive DCPS configuration management process for each DDS.
4. Develop a DCPS configuration guide that clearly defines all configurable settings, establishes minimum requirements, and provides additional configuration-related guidance.
5. Ensure new DCPS releases clearly identify changes and, unless deliberately changed, roll forward previous security configurations.

The Agency agreed with our recommendations.