The Social Security Administration's Vulnerability Management Program
A-14-18-50585

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) had effectively addressed known systems vulnerabilities.

Background

In computer security, a vulnerability is a weakness that can be exploited (for example, by an attacker) to perform unauthorized actions in a computer system.

Vulnerability management is the cyclical practice of identifying, classifying, remediating, and mitigating vulnerabilities. Auditors have identified vulnerability and patch management as components of a significant deficiency in SSA's information technology controls.

We evaluated the vulnerability management process on all the devices connected to the Agency's network. To accomplish our objective, we selected scan results to determine whether SSA remediated vulnerabilities timely.

Findings

SSA needs to more effectively address known systems vulnerabilities.

Although timely vulnerability management poses challenges, SSA must overcome these challenges to protect its systems and its ability to serve the public.

Recommendations

SSA agreed with our recommendations.