

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

June 2009



Objective

Our objectives were to (1) assess the results of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Electronic File Assembly (ePulling) pilot project and (2) determine whether the assessment procedures were effective in deciding when the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review's (ODAR) hearing offices were ready to implement ePulling.

Background

EPulling is one of ODAR's initiatives. ODAR expects file preparation using ePulling to be an improvement over its traditional file preparation process, which requires manual organization of documents in the electronic folder (EF). ODAR is piloting ePulling at the National Hearing Center in Falls Church, Virginia, and Hearing Offices in Tupelo, Mississippi; St. Louis, Missouri; Mobile, Alabama; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Richmond, Virginia.

To view the full report, visit
http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO_BEPDF/A-07-09-19069.pdf

Electronic File Assembly (A-07-09-19069)

Our Findings

Based on our assessment of the results of the ePulling pilot project, ODAR is facing challenges with the accuracy of the ePulling software, which in turn is increasing ePulling's case preparation times. In addition, ODAR needs to establish a sufficient assessment methodology for measuring ePulling's impact on the hearings process. This assessment methodology is critical to future decisions on expanding the use of ePulling to other hearing offices.

Our Recommendations

We recommend that SSA:

1. Perform a complete assessment of the ePulling pilot project results before expanding the use of ePulling to other hearing offices. The assessment should ensure that ePulling will not adversely affect file preparation time or any other aspect of the hearings process.
2. Consider if historical data can corroborate or improve upon the current 3-hour case preparation time estimate used to assess ePulling's impact on hearing office productivity.
3. Determine whether the ePulling pilot testing should also include cases with more than 300 pages.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.