

# Fiscal Year 2017 Inspector General's Statement on the Social Security Administration's Major Management and Performance Challenges

## A-02-18-50298



November 2017

Office of Audit Report Summary

### Objective

To summarize and assess the most serious management and performance challenges facing the Social Security Administration (SSA).

### Background

The *Reports Consolidation Act of 2000* requires that Inspectors General summarize and assess the most serious management and performance challenges facing agencies and the agencies' progress in addressing those challenges.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, we focused on the following management and performance challenges: Improve Administration of the Disability Programs; Reduce Improper Payments and Increase Overpayment Recoveries; Improve Customer Service; Modernize Information Technology Infrastructure; Secure Information Systems and Protect Sensitive Data; Strengthen the Integrity and Protection of the Social Security Number (SSN); and Strengthen Planning, Transparency, and Accountability.

### Challenges

SSA faced the following challenges in FY 2017.

- While the number of pending initial disability claims has decreased, the Agency still faces challenges with pending hearings and appeals. Continued focus is necessary to simplify work incentive regulations and create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to work. [Read more](#).
- Given the large overall dollar amounts involved in SSA's payments, even the slightest error in the overall process can result in millions of dollars in over- or underpayments. [Read more](#).
- SSA faces challenges as it pursues its mission to deliver quality services to the American public, including an increase in workloads as experienced employees are expected to retire. [Read more](#).
- SSA must modernize its information technology infrastructure to accomplish its mission despite budget and resource constraints. [Read more](#).
- SSA must ensure its information systems are secure and sensitive data are protected. [Read more](#).
- Protecting the SSN and properly posting the wages reported under SSNs are critical to ensuring eligible individuals receive the full benefits they are due. [Read more](#).
- Failure to plan properly to meet its mission and challenges will lessen the Agency's ability to provide its services efficiently and effectively now and in the future. Similarly, mismanagement and waste, as well as a lack of transparency for citizens on Government operations, can erode trust in SSA's ability to tackle the challenges it faces. [Read more](#).