

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

July 2010



Objective

To determine how the Social Security Administration (SSA) modified the disability programs in response to changes that had taken place in society since 1980.

Background

During a March 24, 2009 hearing on eliminating the Social Security disability backlog, Congress asked what SSA had done to streamline the disability claims process. Based on this inquiry, we initiated this review to highlight several initiatives the Agency implemented to address changes that had taken place in society since 1980.

To view the full report, visit
http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO_BEPDF/A-01-09-19028.pdf

Congressional Response Report: The Social Security Administration's Disability Programs and Changes in Society (A-01-09-19028)

Our Findings

SSA implemented several initiatives in response to changes that have taken place in society since 1980. For example, the Agency has updated its Listing of Impairments (Listings) to reflect changes in medicine and assistive technology and developed a new process to keep the Listings updated. The Agency has also begun developing a new Occupational Information System that, unlike the current system, will include up-to-date information on jobs that exist in the national economy. Additionally, SSA has been pursuing the use of technology in its disability claims process to address the increasing disability workloads.

Although the Agency implemented many initiatives in response to the changes that have taken place in our society since 1980, it did not always implement them quickly because of such factors as resource limitations and matters that needed to be resolved through new legislation or regulation. Furthermore, while some initiatives worked, others did not. As a result, SSA has not been able to keep pace with all changes in society.