July 29, 2011

The Honorable Sam Johnson
Chairman, Subcommittee on
  Social Security
Committee on Ways and Means
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Johnson:

In an April 14, 2011 letter, you asked that we review the Social Security Administration's (SSA) long-term customer service delivery planning. Specifically, you requested we determine whether SSA had a long-term (10 years or longer) customer service delivery plan. If SSA had a plan, you asked us to evaluate the plan. If SSA did not have a plan, you asked that we determine what information should be included in a long-term customer service delivery plan.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our insights on this important matter. To ensure SSA is aware of the information provided to your office, we are forwarding a copy of this report to the Agency.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please call me or have your staff contact Misha Kelly, Congressional and Intra-Governmental Liaison, at (202) 358-6319.

Sincerely,

Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr.
Inspector General

Enclosure

cc:
Michael J. Astrue

CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSE REPORT

The Social Security Administration's Customer Service Delivery Plan

A-07-11-01125

July 2011

Mission

By conducting independent and objective audits, evaluations and investigations, we inspire public confidence in the integrity and security of SSA's programs and operations and protect them against fraud, waste and abuse. We provide timely, useful and reliable information and advice to Administration officials, Congress and the public.

Authority

The Inspector General Act created independent audit and investigative units, called the Office of Inspector General (OIG). The mission of the OIG, as spelled out in the Act, is to:

- ❍ Conduct and supervise independent and objective audits and investigations relating to agency programs and operations.
- ❍ Promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency within the agency.
- ❍ Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in agency programs and operations.
- ❍ Review and make recommendations regarding existing and proposed legislation and regulations relating to agency programs and operations.
- ❍ Keep the agency head and the Congress fully and currently informed of problems in agency programs and operations.

To ensure objectivity, the IG Act empowers the IG with:

- ❍ Independence to determine what reviews to perform.
- ❍ Access to all information necessary for the reviews.
- ❍ Authority to publish findings and recommendations based on the reviews.

Vision

We strive for continual improvement in SSA's programs, operations and management by proactively seeking new ways to prevent and deter fraud, waste and abuse. We commit to integrity and excellence by supporting an environment that provides a valuable public service while encouraging employee development and retention and fostering diversity and innovation.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of our review was to evaluate the Social Security Administration's (SSA) long-term customer service delivery planning.[1]

BACKGROUND

The Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs touch nearly all Americans at some point in their lives. Each year, millions of Americans apply for Social Security benefits, SSI payments, or a Social Security number card. In fact, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, SSA received approximately 3.1 million applications for Social Security retirement benefits.[2] According to SSA officials, this number will increase to more than 3.9 million in FY 2020. While SSA anticipates an increase in retirement claims, it expects the number of Social Security disability and SSI claims to decrease slightly by FY 2020.[3]

While the majority of customers currently conduct business with SSA through field office visits and telephone calls to SSA's national 800-number, SSA customers are increasing their use of SSA's Internet services. In fact, in FY 2010, customers filed 37 percent of retirement claims and 27 percent of disability claims on the Internet. SSA expects these percentages to increase as more of the 80 million Internet-proficient Baby Boomers file for SSA benefits.[4] In fact, a Pew Research Center study shows a significant increase in Internet usage in the past 10 years for the age group that will be applying for SSA benefits within the next 10 to 20 years (see Table 1).[5]

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[1] As defined in the request from Congressman Sam Johnson, long-term means a period of 10 years or longer.

[2] SSA, *Annual Statistical Supplement to the Social Security Bulletin, 2010*, February 2011, p. 2.73.

[3] According to the *Annual Statistical Supplement to the Social Security Bulletin,* in FY 2009, SSA received approximately 2.9 million applications for Social Security disability benefits. According to SSA officials, this number will be almost 2.8 million in FY 2020. According to the *Annual Statistical Supplement to the Social Security Bulletin*, in FY 2009, SSA received approximately 3.1 million applications for SSI. According to SSA officials, this number will be almost 2.9 million in FY 2020.

[4] In FY 2012, SSA's goal is to have 50 percent of retirement claims and 38 percent of disability claims to be filed on the Internet. SSA, *Social Security Administration Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Overview*, February 2011, pgs. 14 and 17.

[5] Results from the Pew Research Center's *Pew Internet & American Life Project* can be found at http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data/Usage-Over-Time.aspx.

Table 1

Increase in Internet Usage Since 2000			
Age Group	March 2000	May 2010	Percentage Increase
Overall	46%	79%	72%
50-64	36%	78%	117%
65+	12%	42%	250%

In an April 14, 2011 letter, Congressman Sam Johnson asked that we review SSA's long-term customer service delivery planning. See Appendix B for a detailed discussion of the scope and methodology of our review.

SSA does not have a long-term (10 years or longer) customer service delivery plan. Instead, SSA uses its Agency Strategic Plan (ASP) to present the incremental steps it must take to reach a greater vision for the Agency. The ASP describes the goals and milestones of mostly short- and mid-range (3 to 5 years) initiatives, but does not prepare SSA for customer service demands in the long term.[6]

On April 27, 2011, the President issued Executive Order 13571 (*Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service*).[7] The Executive Order requires that Federal agencies, within 180 days of the Executive Order, develop ". . .a Customer Service Plan to address how the agency will provide services in a manner that seeks to streamline service delivery and improve the experience of its customers."[8] On June 13, 2011, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued guidance to Executive agencies on how to implement the Executive Order.[9] OMB's guidance does not specifically address whether the plan should have a short-term or long-term focus.

SSA must develop a long-term customer service delivery plan that prepares it for increased workloads and service delivery in an electronic environment. The plan must outline what the service delivery environment will be long-term, including what services customers will expect and how they will want services delivered. The plan must be a roadmap that ensures the Agency is technologically and structurally prepared with appropriate staff to operate its programs in the future. In addition, the plan must have timelines and performance metrics to ensure SSA achieves its goals.

We identified issues that SSA should address when developing a long-term customer service delivery plan. We also provided best practices from government and private industry that SSA should consider when developing a long-term plan.

SSA'S LONG-TERM CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

Since SSA does not have a long-term customer service delivery plan, we identified issues that SSA should address when it develops such a plan. Specifically, SSA should address the following issues:

- Electronic services
- Information technology (IT) environment

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[6] The most recent ASP covers FYs 2008 through 2013. SSA is developing an ASP through FY 2017.

[7] 76 FR 24339.

[8] *Id.* at section 2.

[9] OMB, Implementing Executive Order 13571 on Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service, M-11-24 (June 13, 2011).

- Staffing
- Physical infrastructure
- Performance metrics
- Potential challenges

Electronic Services

SSA's long-term customer service delivery plan must recognize that a majority of the customers it will serve in 10 years will expect to conduct business electronically, conveniently, and without the intervention of an Agency employee. In fact, the Future Systems Technology Advisory Panel (FSTAP) recommended that SSA prepare to move to an electronic self-service model where 90 percent of its business is online.[10]
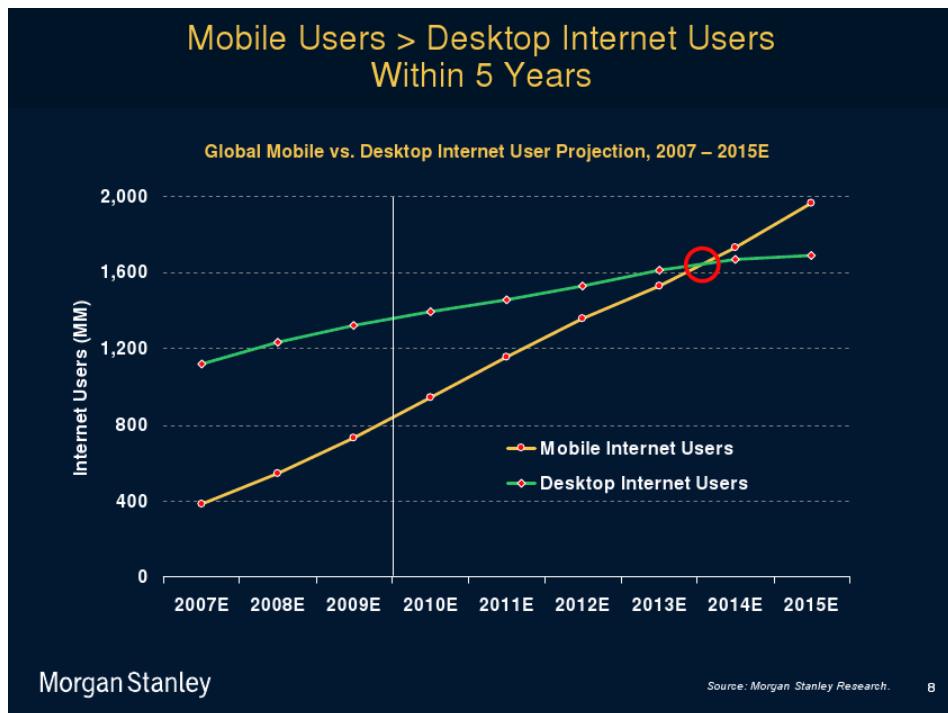
To ensure SSA's long-term customer service delivery plan addresses the electronic service expectations of its customers, SSA needs to identify what services customers will expect in the future and how customers will want services delivered. To identify this information, SSA must continually obtain input from its customers—through surveys, in-person meetings, and focus groups—on their expectations for electronic service delivery options.

The long-term customer service delivery plan must include how SSA will provide customers with service via advanced and ever-changing electronic technology. Already, the public is using mobile devices, such as smart phones and tablet computers, to conduct business, and these devices are replacing desktop computers because of their mobility. In fact, analysts expect people will access the Internet more frequently via mobile devices than via desktop computers beginning in 2013 (see Figure 1).[11] As such, SSA must have applications that support today's latest electronic devices and the devices that come along with tomorrow's technology.

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[10] FSTAP, *Re-imagining Social Security*, June 2010, p. 2. The Commissioner of Social Security established FSTAP in February 2008 to provide independent advice and recommendations on the future of systems technology and electronic services at SSA 5 to 10 years into the future.

[11] Matthew Ingram, *Mary Meeker: Mobile Internet Will Soon Overtake Fixed Internet*, Tech News and Analysis (April 12, 2010, 2:27 PM PT), http://gigaom.com/2010/04/12/mary-meeker-mobile-internet-will-soon-overtake-fixed-internet/.

Figure 1

Although SSA does not have a plan outlining its long-term electronic services initiatives, SSA offers a variety of electronic services via the Internet. Those Internet services are accessible from both personal computers and mobile devices. As of June 2011, SSA offered 21 citizen-to-government electronic services via the Internet.[12]

SSA is also continually expanding its electronic services. For example, SSA is developing a personal account portal, known as MySSA, and expects to implement the portal in FY 2012. After a customer signs into the portal, SSA anticipates the customer will initially be able to access his or her Social Security statement, verify benefits, change an address, and access direct deposit services. SSA expects customers will eventually have access to all its online services through MySSA.

As a further expansion of electronic services, SSA is developing a Spanish Internet claim application. This will allow Spanish-speaking customers to complete an online application for retirement, disability, or Medicare benefits. In addition, SSA will soon release its Nonresident Alien Tax Screening Tool, which will allow customers who reside outside the United States to determine whether SSA should withhold taxes from their benefits. SSA is also developing an interactive screening tool for customers with pensions from employment not covered by Social Security. This tool, set to be released in FY 2012, will provide information on how the pensions will affect customers' Social Security benefits.

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[12] See Appendix C for the name, a brief description, and the implementation date for each citizen-to-government electronic service.

In anticipation of an increased need to provide services via mobile devices, SSA is experimenting with electronic services for mobile devices. For example, SSA recently released the Baby Name Playroom application for the iPhone. This application allows users to search the most popular baby names of the past 130 years based on Social Security data.

Information Technology Environment

SSA's long-term customer service delivery plan must address the information technology investments SSA will need to support the expansion of electronic services in the future.[13] The long-term planning should include an overall assessment of its current and future IT environment including hardware, software, and data center needs.[14]

Hardware and Software

SSA's long-term customer service delivery plan should identify the hardware and software investments needed to support the future electronic service delivery environment. For example, the long-term plan must provide for customer-friendly services using Web-based technology.

In addition, SSA must assess the viability of its current hardware and software in the future. For example, SSA has used the software programming language Common Business Oriented Language (COBOL) to support SSA applications for the last 30 years. SSA's long-term customer service delivery plan should include any proposals to transition from COBOL to other programming languages.

Although SSA does not have a customer service delivery plan outlining its long-term hardware and software needs, SSA has identified changes to hardware and software that will improve customer service. For example, in August 2008, SSA began receiving medical records electronically using health IT (HIT). SSA currently receives medical records through HIT from two medical provider organizations—one in Massachusetts and one in Virginia. According to SSA officials, receiving medical records through HIT has resulted in an 18-percent reduction in the time it takes to process initial claims in the two States using HIT. SSA is expanding HIT to 10 more States.

Further, SSA will implement new software to verify customers' identities to support the personal account portal, MySSA. According to SSA officials, the new software will provide adequate security to customers and ensure a user-friendly, secure way of conducting extended business with SSA. Customers will maintain one username and password to access multiple electronic services from the Agency.

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[13] SSA has recognized the need for IT planning, and in February 2009, developed an IT vision to address its short- and mid-range IT needs. SSA, *Information Technology Vision: 2009 - 2014,* February 2009. In addition, SSA's Office of the CIO monitors trends in IT to ensure SSA takes advantage of new and evolving trends.

[14] Hardware is a physical device, such as a computer or a smart phone, which runs programs, known as software, to perform a task.

SSA is also examining new computing models, such as cloud computing, that would enable computer resources, such as hardware, to be shared. According to the U.S. Chief Information Officer (CIO), cloud computing ". . .allows users to control the computing services they access, while sharing the investment in the underlying IT resources. . .With a cloud computing approach, [users] can spend less time managing complex IT resources and more time investing in core mission work."[15] SSA moved its telephone system to a cloud-based system to manage the call volume to the national 800-number and is researching movement of its email system.

Data Centers

SSA's long-term customer service delivery plan must address how the Agency's data center needs in 10 years will differ from those of today. SSA needs to identify the data center capacity required to support future electronic services, the capacity costs, and innovative methods for achieving necessary capacity while minimizing costs. SSA's long-term customer service delivery plan should also include ongoing processes to assess the usefulness and structural integrity of its data centers to avoid any potential lapse in service.

Long-term data planning is critical to ensure uninterrupted operability of its data centers, which is a current concern with the Agency's National Computer Center (NCC). At over 30 years old, the NCC has exhausted its useful life due to inadequate electricity, wiring, and emergency power supplies. While SSA is building a new data center, the National Support Center, its electronic communications remain at risk since the new data center will not be complete until January 2015. Adequate long-term planning on SSA's part would have resulted in replacement of the NCC before placing the Agency's electronic communications at risk.

Staffing

SSA's staff is an integral part of its service delivery—interacting with the public every day and authorizing more than $700 billion in benefits annually. Presently, most of SSA's service is face-to-face or via telephone. However, many of the customers SSA will serve in the next 10 years may expect self-service electronic business without the intervention of an Agency employee. Therefore, in a long-term customer service delivery plan, SSA should determine how it will recruit, develop, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet customers' electronic service demands of the future.

While SSA anticipates approximately 36 percent of its staff will retire in the next 10 years, SSA has not projected the expected number of employees it will need to perform its mission in the long term or the types of positions it will need. SSA anticipates its future workforce will have and need a high aptitude to new technologies. As members of the Baby Boomer generation retire, SSA anticipates members of the computer-literate Generation Y (people born between 1980 and 2000) will become the largest percentage of the Agency's workforce.

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[15] Vivek Kundra, U.S. CIO, *Federal Cloud Computing Strategy*, February 8, 2011, p. 5.

Although SSA does not have a customer service delivery plan outlining its long-term staffing needs, SSA developed a human capital management program. According to SSA officials, this program includes strategies ". . .to attract, retain, develop, and reward a diverse workforce and foster a culture of continuous improvement." To accomplish the goals of SSA's human capital management program, SSA will:

- Capitalize on recruitment programs to attract a multigenerational, multicultural workforce with the necessary competencies.

- Develop leaders at all levels through comprehensive succession management, outstanding development programs, and an extensive array of learning opportunities.

- Improve employee performance by fostering better management-employee communication and rewarding excellence.

- Provide an environment and culture that fosters employee retention, promotes achievement in public service, and encourages the pursuit of personal excellence through continual learning.

Physical Infrastructure

Since 1948, SSA's organizational structure has consisted of its Baltimore, Maryland, headquarters and 10 regional offices. SSA provides face-to-face service with customers in approximately 1,300 field offices. SSA also operates 154 hearing offices where customers appeal benefit decisions; 37 teleservice centers that provide service to customers by telephone; and 6 program service centers where SSA employee duties include disability claims processing and review and benefit recomputations.

In developing a long-term customer service delivery plan, SSA will need to ensure the physical infrastructure it has had in place for numerous years still supports the service delivery needs of a changing population. SSA needs to determine whether it should streamline the physical locations where it provides services, and whether services should be provided in new locations. For example, the Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB) suggested SSA provide service via videoconferencing from an individual's home computer or at kiosks in various public locations.[16] Furthermore, many future customers will expect to use mobile devices to file benefit applications. Accordingly, SSA's long-term planning should assess whether the number, size, geographic coverage, and staffing of the Agency's existing headquarters, regional, and field offices are in line with future methods of providing customer service.

While SSA does not have a long-term plan that addresses physical infrastructure, SSA is exploring new ways of delivering service to its customers. For example, SSA implemented Video Service Delivery (VSD) in 253 field offices and 57 video partner sites to allow customers easier access to Social Security services. VSD, which uses

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[16] SSAB, *A Vision of the Future for the Social Security Administration*, March 2011, p. 6. SSAB is a seven-member bipartisan advisory board created in 1994 when SSA became an independent agency. It was created to advise the President, Congress, and the Commissioner of Social Security on Social Security and SSI policy.

videoconferencing technology, allows consumers to receive "on demand" government services. VSD can take place between an SSA office and either another SSA office or a community partner, such as a hospital or library. SSA plans to continue exploring ways to maximize use of VSD.

For best practices related to physical infrastructure assessment, SSA could look to the Department of Defense's (DoD) Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program. Periodically, Congress organizes a commission to perform a BRAC program that reorganizes the DoD's infrastructure to more efficiently and effectively support its forces, increase operational readiness, and facilitate new ways of doing business. Implementing a program similar to BRAC could help SSA ensure it uses its resources in the most effective and efficient manner possible to meet customers' expectations.

In addition, the Census Bureau has experience in physical infrastructure realignment. Specifically, the Census Bureau recently announced a plan to update the number, size, geographic coverage, and staffing of its regional offices. The Census Bureau's goal is to reduce costs and improve the quality of its annual surveys. As such, the Census Bureau is reforming its current structure of 12 regional offices, a structure in place since 1961, by taking advantage of technology to enhance performance and reduce costs. The result will be greatly increased efficiency and enhanced ability to continually provide high quality data, keeping pace with innovative changes in how surveys are conducted worldwide. The Census Bureau will eliminate layers of management, streamline business processes, and close 6 of 12 regional offices. The restructuring, to begin in FY 2014, is projected to result in $15 million to $18 million in annual savings to the Federal Government.

Performance Metrics

To ensure SSA adequately progresses toward its goals, the Agency must install performance metrics in its long-term customer service delivery plan. These performance metrics will allow SSA to identify areas of success and areas that need improvement.

SSA should continue developing measurable and objective goals, such as those in its annual performance plans that are based on the broad objectives in its ASP. However, unlike the goals in SSA's annual performance plans, the performance metrics in a long-term customer service delivery plan should span several years, include interim goals to ensure success, and be based on specific outcomes.[17]

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[17] In April 2011, KPMG offered SSA 26 recommendations to assist in developing more outcome-based performance measurements. These performance measurements will help SSA identify key business plans to hold the Agency more accountable. SSA OIG, *Performance Indicator Audit: The Social Security Administration's Fiscal Year 2010 Performance Indicators* (A-02-10-11076), April 2011.

The strategic plans for the United Way[18] and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)[19] offer best practices in developing performance metrics. For example, the United Way identified general long-term goals, each of which had multiple target issues directed at achieving the goal. Each target had an intended result and indicator to measure whether the intended result was achieved. Likewise, the NNSA identified select initiatives related to its long-term goals. Each initiative had specific, intermediate goals to be achieved on various dates over the next 15 years.

Potential Challenges

In developing a long-term customer service delivery plan, SSA should identify the potential challenges that could prevent or delay the Agency from reaching its goals, and identify strategies to overcome those challenges. Events outside SSA's control can cause changes in the Agency's workloads and priorities. SSA specifically identified funding and resource limitations as the greatest potential challenge in meetings its goals. For example, SSA's FY 2011 appropriation was nearly $1 billion less than the President's budget request.

SSA could look to the strategic plan of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for best practices in identifying potential challenges and solutions to those challenges. NASA's strategic plan identified potential challenges and solutions to the potential challenges for each strategic goal.[20]

FEDERAL GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICES

In addition to the best practices identified above, SSA should also consider Federal guidance and additional best practices from other Government entities when developing its long-term customer service delivery plan. The following examples offer additional guidance and best practices for SSA to consider when developing its plan.

- The CIO of the United States recently offered guidance to Executive agencies regarding Federal IT management. Specifically, the CIO released reports discussing Federal IT management reform[21] and the Government's strategy on cloud computing.[22] SSA should ensure its long-term customer service delivery plan is consistent with the guidance provided by the CIO.

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[18] United Way, *Goals for the Common Good: The United Way Challenge to America*, 2008.

[19] NNSA, *Strategic Plan*, May 2011.

[20] NASA, *2011 NASA Strategic Plan*, February 14, 2011.

[21] Vivek Kundra, U.S. CIO, *25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management*, December 9, 2010.

[22] *Supra* note 15.

- The U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) Action Plan for the Future outlines (1) how the USPS got to its current condition, (2) how conditions at USPS will potentially worsen without fundamental change, and (3) the actions management and Congress can take to avoid or lighten the effect of worsening conditions.[23] By following the best practices of the USPS plan, SSA could ensure its long-term customer service delivery plan offers an understanding of SSA's current climate, how SSA plans to serve its customers in the future, and how SSA will transition into the future.

- The General Services Administration's Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies offers a 10-step plan to ". . .develop and implement an effective customer service strategy."[24] By following the 10-step plan, SSA should be able to develop effective strategies for its long-term customer service delivery plan. The 10 steps are as follows.

  1. Identify target customers
  2. Determine what customers want
  3. Create a culture of customer service
  4. Clearly communicate service standards and expectations
  5. Provide consistent service across channels
  6. Establish a vision for customer service excellence
  7. Implement an external strategy
  8. Focus on recruiting and retaining good employees
  9. Empower employees to resolve customer service problems
  10. Develop good communications and rewards systems.

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[23] USPS, *Ensuring a Viable Postal Service for America: An Action Plan for the Future*, 2010.

[24] The 10-step plan can be accessed at http://www.howto.gov/customer-service/strategic-planning.

SSA must develop a long-term customer service delivery plan that serves as a roadmap for ensuring the Agency is technologically and structurally prepared with appropriate staff to address increased workloads and provide service delivery in an electronic environment. The plan must identify what the service delivery environment will be in the future, including what services customers will expect and how they will want to receive services. The plan must also include timelines and performance metrics to reach its long-term customer delivery goals. In addition, SSA must exert strong leadership to implement the long-term service delivery plan. In commenting on our draft report, the Agency agreed that a long-term customer service delivery plan is needed. The Agency further stated that it will develop a long-term plan.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – Acronyms

APPENDIX B – Scope and Methodology

APPENDIX C – Citizen-to-Government Electronic Services

Acronyms

ASP	Agency Strategic Plan
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CIO	Chief Information Officer
COBOL	Common Business Oriented Language
DoD	Department of Defense
EM	Emergency Messages
FR	Federal Register
FSTAP	Future Systems Technology Advisory Panel
FY	Fiscal Year
HIT	Health Information Technology
IT	Information Technology
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCC	National Computer Center
NNSA	National Nuclear Security Administration
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSAB	Social Security Advisory Board
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
USPS	U.S. Postal Service
VSD	Video Service Delivery

Scope and Methodology

To address Congressman Johnson's request related to the Social Security Administration's (SSA) long-term customer service delivery planning, we:

- Reviewed applicable Federal laws and guidance related to customer service delivery planning.

- Reviewed customer service delivery and strategic plans from other Federal agencies and private industry.

- Obtained information from SSA's Offices of Operations, Systems, Quality Performance, Communications, and Chief Information Officer (CIO), including:

    o Whether SSA had a long-term customer service delivery plan.
    o The number of transactions SSA anticipates processing in Fiscal Year 2020.
    o The citizen-to-government Internet applications currently implemented and planned for the future.
    o SSA's planned use of new and evolving technologies.
    o How SSA will transition its workforce to meet new customer service demands.
    o Potential challenges SSA anticipates in reaching its goals.

Our work was conducted at the Office of Audit in Kansas City, Missouri, from April through June 2011. The entities reviewed were the Offices of Operations, Systems, Quality Performance, Communications, and CIO. We conducted our review in accordance with the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*.

Citizen-to-Government Electronic Services

To address the needs of its customers, the Social Security Administration (SSA) offers 21 citizen-to-government electronic services via the Internet.[1]

Table C-1

	SSA Internet Application	Description	Implementation Date
1	Spanish Retirement Estimator	Internet users can enter retirement data to get benefit estimates in Spanish.	December 2010
2	iAppointment	Individuals can schedule an appointment with a servicing field office online.	June 2010
3	Medicare-Only Application	Allows Internet users who meet certain criteria to file for Medicare-Only benefits.	February 2010
4	Revised Adult Disability Report 3368	A citizen-to-government Web application that collects information (medical data and work history) on disability reports in conjunction with disability claims.	December 2009
5	Special Notice Option	SSA developed a special notice option to respond to a court order to collect responses from Social Security beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients, representative payees, and claimants who are blind or visually impaired. This process captures individuals' preferences for receiving notices and other communications from SSA.	November 2009
6	Application Status	This application gives claimants the ability to check the status of their claim online.	December 2008

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[1] Until March 2011, SSA offered 22 citizen-to-government electronic services. However, in March 2011, SSA disabled its online request for a Social Security Statement (*see* SSA, EM-11021). The online request for a Social Security Statement was implemented in March 1996.

Table C-1

	SSA Internet Application	Description	Implementation Date
	Current Citizen-to-Government Electronic Services		
7	Retirement Estimator	Internet users can enter retirement data to get benefit estimates online.	July 2008
8	i1020 (Applicant & 3rd Party)	Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Help allows Medicare beneficiaries, family members and caregivers, and other third parties to apply online for help with prescription drug costs.	June 2005
9	Change of Address (Knowledge-Base)	Ability to change an address or telephone number as early as 3 months before the effective date of change through the successful completion of a series of knowledge based questions.	February 2004
10	Appeal Disability Report 3441	Upon an unfavorable medical determination/decision notice, claimants can opt to complete an appeals package through the Internet.	February 2004
11	Child Disability Report 3820	Individuals can complete the *Disability Report-Child* (SSA-3820) online.	November 2003
12	Public Fraud Reporting Form	An online form to report allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse concerning SSA's programs and operations.	December 2002
13	Disability Application	Claimants can apply for disability benefits online.	January 2002
14	Direct Deposit (Password)	Using a personal identification number and password, beneficiaries can start or change direct deposit data for Social Security benefits over the Internet.	August 2001
15	Change of Address (Password)	Beneficiaries can update their Social Security benefits address through the Internet using a personal identification number and password.	April 2001
16	Spouse Application	Claimants can apply for spousal benefits online.	March 2001

Table C-1

	Current Citizen-to-Government Electronic Services		
	SSA Internet Application	**Description**	**Implementation Date**
17	Check Your Social Security Benefits	Beneficiaries can obtain information SSA has on record through the Internet using a personal identification number and password. Examples include direct deposit, Medicare, benefit payments, or overpayment information.	February 2001
18	Retirement Application	Claimants can apply for retirement benefits online.	November 2000
19	Medicare Replacement Card	Medicare beneficiaries can request a replacement Medicare card over the Internet.	July 2000
20	Replacement 1099	A beneficiary can request a replacement SSA-1099/1042S Social Security Benefit Statement over the Internet.	March 1999
21	Proof of Income Letter (Benefit Verification)	Beneficiaries can view, print, or request to be mailed a proof of income statement.	March 1999

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Social Security Advisory Board

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The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is comprised of an Office of Audit (OA), Office of Investigations (OI), Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General (OCIG), Office of External Relations (OER), and Office of Technology and Resource Management (OTRM). To ensure compliance with policies and procedures, internal controls, and professional standards, the OIG also has a comprehensive Professional Responsibility and Quality Assurance program.

Office of Audit

OA conducts financial and performance audits of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) programs and operations and makes recommendations to ensure program objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently. Financial audits assess whether SSA's financial statements fairly present SSA's financial position, results of operations, and cash flow. Performance audits review the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of SSA's programs and operations. OA also conducts short-term management reviews and program evaluations on issues of concern to SSA, Congress, and the general public.

Office of Investigations

OI conducts investigations related to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in SSA programs and operations. This includes wrongdoing by applicants, beneficiaries, contractors, third parties, or SSA employees performing their official duties. This office serves as liaison to the Department of Justice on all matters relating to the investigation of SSA programs and personnel. OI also conducts joint investigations with other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies.

Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General

OCIG provides independent legal advice and counsel to the IG on various matters, including statutes, regulations, legislation, and policy directives. OCIG also advises the IG on investigative procedures and techniques, as well as on legal implications and conclusions to be drawn from audit and investigative material. Also, OCIG administers the Civil Monetary Penalty program.

Office of External Relations

OER manages OIG's external and public affairs programs, and serves as the principal advisor on news releases and in providing information to the various news reporting services. OER develops OIG's media and public information policies, directs OIG's external and public affairs programs, and serves as the primary contact for those seeking information about OIG. OER prepares OIG publications, speeches, and presentations to internal and external organizations, and responds to Congressional correspondence.

Office of Technology and Resource Management

OTRM supports OIG by providing information management and systems security. OTRM also coordinates OIG's budget, procurement, telecommunications, facilities, and human resources. In addition, OTRM is the focal point for OIG's strategic planning function, and the development and monitoring of performance measures. In addition, OTRM receives and assigns for action allegations of criminal and administrative violations of Social Security laws, identifies fugitives receiving benefit payments from SSA, and provides technological assistance to investigations.