

Summary of Accuracy of the Social Security Administration's Numident

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Objective

To assess the accuracy of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Numident fields that are relied on by E-Verify.

Background

It is essential that the Numident be as accurate and complete as possible because SSA provides a number of verification services that allow names and Social Security numbers (SSN) to be matched with SSA's records. E-Verify (formerly Basic Pilot) is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) employment eligibility program supported by SSA. The purpose of E-Verify is to assist employers in verifying the employment eligibility of newly hired employees. In 2006, we reviewed SSA's Numident and determined that the information it contained was generally accurate. However, we estimated that discrepancies in approximately 4.1 percent of the Numident records could have resulted in incorrect feedback when submitted through E-Verify.

Our Findings

We determined that data fields E-Verify relied on were generally accurate for Numidents SSA established in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011. While we identified a few discrepancies in numberholders' names, there were fewer than we identified in our previous review. In addition, these discrepancies did not result in incorrect feedback when submitted through E-Verify.

We commend the Agency on the accuracy of its FY 2011 Numident data because quality in the enumeration process enhances the integrity of SSA's SSN and name verifications. Although administration of E-Verify is DHS' responsibility, we believe it is important to restate an E-Verify limitation we identified in our 2006 report, *Congressional Response Report: Accuracy of the Social Security Administration's Numident File* (A-08-06-26100). We determined that E-Verify will confirm employment eligibility, without some additional notification to, and attestation from, the employer for numberholders who are young children or aged. That is, unless the Numident contains a death indicator, E-Verify will confirm these numberholders' employment eligibility as long as their SSN, name, date of birth, and citizenship/alien status agree.

Our Recommendations

We recommended that SSA encourage DHS, or assist DHS if appropriate, to enhance E-Verify through implementation of a front-end system alert that is sent to employers who must attest to the accuracy/truthfulness of information they submit for employees under or over a predetermined age before E-Verify confirms these employees' work eligibility.

SSA agreed with our recommendation.