

Multiple Social Security Numbers Assigned to Non-citizens Using the Enumeration Beyond Entry Program

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Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration's (SSA) controls prevented the assignment of multiple Social Security numbers (SSN) to non-citizens who applied for SSNs through the Enumeration Beyond Entry (EBE) process.

Background

In October 2017, the EBE program was created through an agreement between SSA and "... the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to assist SSA in enumerating certain applicants who: live in the United States, apply for work authorization, and need to obtain a[n] SSN." When an applicant applies for an original or a replacement SSN card through EBE, DHS collects information during the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' application process, Form I-765 (*Application for Employment Authorization*) and electronically transmits certain data to SSA so an SSN can be assigned or a replacement card issued. Accordingly, applying for an SSN through EBE eliminates "... the need for non-immigrants to file an SS-5 (*Application for [a] Social Security Card*) application at an SSA field office."

From October 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018, SSA assigned 82,202 original SSNs through EBE and resolved 1,437 Enumeration Feedback Messages to alert employees an SSN may already exist.

Findings

We identified 138 non-citizens to whom SSA had issued multiple SSNs. These 138 individuals applied for SSNs via EBE and at an SSA field office.

SSA should not have processed the 138 non-citizens' second application because, in each case, the non-citizen's 2 SSN applications—1 submitted through EBE and 1 at a field office—had similar information. Of the 138 applications, 130 (94 percent) had enough identifying information that SSA employees should not have issued the second SSNs. The identifying information for the remaining eight applicants should have prompted SSA employees to contact the individuals to resolve the discrepant information.

Before our review, SSA had identified the improperly assigned SSNs for 44 of these 138 non-citizens and cross-referenced their SSNs in its records. We provided SSA the remaining 94 non-citizens whom SSA improperly assigned 2 SSNs.

Recommendations

We made three recommendations for SSA to take appropriate actions to improve its controls over SSN assignment through the EBE process. SSA agreed with our recommendations.