

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

PART ASSESSMENTS¹

¹ For each program that has been assessed using the PART, this document contains details of the most recent assessment. These details are presented in their original form; some programs have revised performance targets and developed or replaced performance measures since the original assessment. The PART summaries published with the 2006 Budget (in February 2005) provide current information on follow-up to recommendations and other updates.

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PART Performance Measurements

Program: Disability Insurance
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	88%	100%	58%	Effective

1.1 Is the program purpose clear?

Answer: YES

Question Weight 20%

Explanation: The Disability Insurance (DI) program purpose is clear: to provide benefits for eligible workers who have qualifying disabilities and for eligible members of their families.

Evidence: Social Security Amendments, effective 1956.

1.2 Does the program address a specific and existing problem, interest or need?

Answer: YES

Question Weight 20%

Explanation: The DI program currently provides for a specific problem/need: to replace a portion of lost income for covered workers who are considered disabled, if they have a qualifying disability, as defined under the Social Security Act.

Evidence: As of December 2002, the DI program provided benefits to 5.5 million disabled worker beneficiaries and 1.7 million dependents. (Office of the Actuary Fact Sheet on OASDI, December 31, 2002.)

1.3 Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local or private effort?

Answer: YES

Question Weight 20%

Explanation: While there are other private or governmental programs that may provide some disability benefits (e.g., workers' compensation, long term disability), the DI program is a universal program that provides a safety net for covered workers who have qualifying disabilities.

Evidence: Section 223 of the Social Security Act. Code of Federal Regulations 404.130.

1.4 Is the program design free of major flaws that would limit the program's effectiveness or efficiency?

Answer: NO

Question Weight 20%

Explanation: When it was first created, the DI program was probably effective in its legislative objective to replace a portion of income lost due to a qualifying disability. However, because of the many changes that have occurred since 1956, the program design does not optimally meet the needs of people with disabilities. For example, advances in technology and legislation like the Americans With Disabilities Act have opened the workplace and made it more accessible to all people. The President's New Freedom Initiative is actively working to expand employment opportunities for Americans with disabilities. In addition, many impairments that in the past may have been permanent and/or completely disabling, may now be treatable because of advances in medicine. These changes have made some aspects of the current disability program outdated. GAO expressed a similar conclusion when they recently placed all Federal disability programs on their high-risk list. SSA is exploring how to reshape the DI program in the future to reflect these changes and ways to improve the processing of disability claims, which can be lengthy.

Evidence: Social Security Amendments, effective 1956; GAO's Informational Final Report (GAO-03-119), "2003 High Risk Series - An Update, Audit # 12003009."

PART Performance Measurements

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1.5 Is the program effectively targeted, so that resources will reach intended beneficiaries and/or otherwise address the program's purpose directly? Answer: NO Question Weight: 20%

Explanation: The low hearings accuracy rate of 88% and inconsistency in initial and hearings decisions across states suggest that the DI program is not designed to have the smallest practicable share of funds going to unintended beneficiaries. This inconsistency partially reflects the differences between the Disability Determination Services (DDSs) and the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) determination processes. GAO, Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB), and a private consulting firm recommend that SSA overhaul its current Quality Assurance process to help address these issues. As first steps, SSA has created an internal team to look at these recommendations and established a revised definition of quality.

Evidence: FY 2004 APP, pg. 20. GAO, "Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: SSA," January 2003. The Lewin Group, "Evaluation of SSA's Disability Quality Assurance processes and Development of QA Options That Will Support the Long-Term Management of the Disability Program," March 2001. SSAB, "Charting the Future of Social Security's Disability Programs: The Need for Fundamental Change," January 2001.

2.1 Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program? Answer: YES Question Weight: 12%

Explanation: SSA has a limited number of long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program and address the management of the program. These include processing time, productivity, accuracy, and other measures. (The performance goals encompass a broader scope than just the DI program.)

Evidence: SSA's Strategic Plan 2003 - 2008; Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003, pgs. 59-61.

2.2 Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures? Answer: YES Question Weight: 12%

Explanation: SSA has set realistic and challenging targets for initial claims processing time, hearings processing time, and hearings productivity. However, targets for DDS productivity are not ambitious given SSA's commitment to annual productivity increases of 2% in FY 2004-2008. Also, SSA's DDS net accuracy target, held constant at the FY2004 level, does not promote continued improvement.

Evidence: SSA's Strategic Plan 2003 - 2008; FY 2005 Budget Submission.

2.3 Does the program have a limited number of specific annual performance measures that can demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's long-term goals? Answer: YES Question Weight: 12%

Explanation: SSA has a limited number of annual measures that address the management of the program. These include processing time, productivity, decisional accuracy, and other measures. (The performance goals encompass a broader scope than just the DI program.)

Evidence: Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003, pages 18 - 20. Performance and Accountability Report FY 2002 pages 32-33, 113-114, 118.

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-
- 2.4 Does the program have baselines and ambitious targets for its annual measures?** Answer: YES Question Weight:12%
- Explanation: SSA has baselines and ambitious annual targets that address the management of the program. These include processing time, productivity, decisional accuracy, and other targets. (The performance goals encompass a broader scope than just the DI program.)
- Evidence: Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003, pages 18 - 20. Performance and Accountability Report FY 2002 pages 32-33, 113-114, 118.
- 2.5 Do all partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) commit to and work toward the annual and/or long-term goals of the program?** Answer: YES Question Weight:12%
- Explanation: Both long-term and annual performance goals are established for and committed to by SSA's partners (DDSs). DDS Administrators commit to specific performance goals.
- Evidence: SSA's Strategic Plan 2003 - 2008; Performance Plan for FY 2004; and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003.
- 2.6 Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?** Answer: YES Question Weight:12%
- Explanation: SSA measures decisional accuracy on an ongoing basis and payment accuracy each year. SSA also evaluates policies and processes on a continuing basis. GAO and OIG continually audit the program and make recommendations for change. These evaluations thoroughly assess a wide range of aspects of the DI program and are generally national in scope.
- Evidence: SSA measures adjudicative accuracy and payment accuracy of claims. Outside monitoring entities (GAO, OIG, private accounting firm, etc) regularly evaluate the program and make recommendations in such areas as processing of disability claims. Recent reports include: GAO, "Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: SSA," Jan. 2003. OIG, "Status of SSA's Disability Process Improvement Initiatives," June 2002.
- 2.7 Are Budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget?** Answer: NO Question Weight:12%
- Explanation: SSA's budget requests are not explicitly tied to annual and long-term outcome performance goals (i.e. processing times and payment accuracy), such that there is not a direct link between resource requests and these goals; however, SSA does go through an elaborate and extensive process to tie performance to budgeting. Goals are set based on available resources and the need to balance overall performance within those resource limits. SSA tracks the level of performance against the annual and long term targets on an ongoing basis and adjusts resource allocation and level of effort accordingly. SSA can demonstrate that its budget request ties to annual and long-term output goals and can directly link incremental changes in resources to workload performance outputs such as retirement or disability claims processed. In addition, SSA is making progress in relating resources to outcomes such as the relationship between pending workloads and processing time, and the dollars invested in continuing disability reviews and program dollars saved.
- Evidence: SSA FY 2005 Budget Submission

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2.8 Has the program taken meaningful steps to correct its strategic planning deficiencies? Answer: YES Question Weight:12%

Explanation: SSA constantly assesses, evaluates and improves strategic plans and performance measures. SSA has a limited number of long-term performance goals and a limited number of annual performance targets that help the agency progress toward achieving the long-term goals. As a part of the Annual Performance Plan (APP) preparation, SSA re-evaluates the effectiveness of the agency's long-term strategies and short-term (annual) targets/measures, and adjusts the long-term strategies and annual performance targets as appropriate.

Evidence: SSA's Strategic Plan 2003 - 2008; Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003. SSA has adopted a revised DDS performance measure, DDS net accuracy rate. From an external standpoint, this new measure more clearly and comprehensively shows whether DDSs are making the right disability determination. Formerly, SSA reported separate allowance and denial accuracy rates for DDSs. Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003, page 60.

3.1 Does the agency regularly collect timely and credible performance information, including information from key program partners, and use it to manage the program and improve performance? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: Timely and credible performance information is collected through systematic and consistent processes with periodic quality controls to confirm the validity of the data. For example, SSA reviews a sample of initial disability claims each quarter to determine their accuracy. Additional sampling and review is conducted if a specified level of accuracy is not reached.

Evidence: SSA regularly collects payment accuracy, adjudicative accuracy, workload data and myriad of management information from administrative records. (FY 2002 PAR pgs. 32-34, 112-120; Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003, pages 18-20.

3.2 Are Federal managers and program partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) held accountable for cost, schedule and performance results? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: SSA executives are held accountable for key performance measures. Monthly meetings are held and progress is tracked in the SSA Tracking Report on the Intranet. In FY 2003 SSA has implemented a revised SES Performance Appraisal Plan, which incorporates performance standards for managers, and will implement a revised plan for other employees in the future. In addition, the DDS administrators are held accountable for their performance. When the DDS's accuracy falls below the required range for two consecutive calendar quarters, appropriate performance support is provided.

Evidence: SES Performance Appraisal System Plan. Section 411.250 of the "Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program" Final Rule. The Code of Federal Regulations for Social Security, sections 404.1645-404.1662.

3.3 Are funds (Federal and partners') obligated in a timely manner and spent for the intended purpose? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: Program funds are obligated consistent with the rules of the program. Procedures exist for reporting actual expenditures.

Evidence: SF-133; FY02 PAR, pages. 50 ff.

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3.4 Does the program have procedures (e.g. competitive sourcing/cost comparisons, IT improvements, appropriate incentives) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: SSA continually looks for means to achieve cost efficiencies in managing the DI program. The budget process in general looks to identifying improvements in the processing of disability claims. As an example, SSA is implementing the first steps to improving the disability process and is assessing additional ways to improve it (Service Delivery Plan, APP). SSA's information technology (IT) capital planning process provides the operational IT plans required to provide the technology and other IT resources needed to achieve the agency's strategic goals and performance objectives. IT resources are used to invest in more efficient customer responsive processes. SSA's IT plan includes financial systems replacement (FACT and MCAS), Electronic Service Delivery and Accelerated Electronic Disability folder (Aedib).

Evidence: SSA's FY 03 Budget Submission pgs 11-15, 31-42; memorandum did 5/23/02 to OMB; FY 2001 PAR, page 66; Exhibit 300 - 016-00-01-02-01-2060-01; FY 2004 Budget Submission; FY 2002 PAR, page 52 .

3.5 Does the program collaborate and coordinate effectively with related programs? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: The DI program is effective in working with other related programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation facilities. The Ticket to Work provisions have led to coordination of employment initiatives with the Department of Labor (DOL) and private industry. SSA works with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide Medicare coverage for beneficiaries who return to work, and will be sharing data with CMS to identify continuing disability review (CDR) mailer candidates. SSA coordinates with State workers' compensation agencies and the DOL to ensure that beneficiaries are paid correctly. SSA works with the Veteran's Administration to secure medical evidence for veterans who have applied for disability benefits. In the near future, SSA will be working closely with other agencies to coordinate efforts related to the President's New Freedom Initiative.

Evidence: 1) Coordination with CMS: Interagency Agreement between SSA and CMS providing SSA with Medicare utilization data. 2) Coordination with the State's worker's Compensation (WC) agencies: SSA's Program Operation's Manual (Pomes) DI 52001.150 discusses WC verification; several references describing SSA's procedures in providing its data to States that offset the WC due to receipt of disability benefits including, Colorado (DI 52001.204), Florida (DI 52001.211), Massachusetts (DI 52001.905), Ohio (DI 52001.239), and Washington (DI 52001.253). 3) FY04 Budget Justification details forthcoming coordination efforts related to the New Freedom Initiative.

3.6 Does the program use strong financial management practices? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: SSA's financial statements received an unqualified audit opinion in FY 2002 for the ninth consecutive year. In the past SSA has conducted Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) based on a special funding mechanism and has proposed earmarking funding for CDRs and data matches (WC cleanup, Office of Child Support Enforcement match) to increase payment accuracy.

Evidence: FY 2002 PAR pgs 42-45; pages 175-182.

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3.7 Has the program taken meaningful steps to address its management deficiencies?

Answer: YES

Question Weight: 14%

Explanation: SSA integrates management controls into process and financial management systems at all levels to identify control weaknesses. Once identified, SSA develops corrective action plans, implements them, and reviews the controls of the new or changed processes to ensure they remain effective. Reviews encompass processes such as earnings, claims and postentitlement events, and debt management. Through its service delivery assessment of the disability program, SSA has identified problems with the disability claims process and is taking steps to address them. These steps include: eliminating backlogs as a prerequisite to reducing processing time; accelerating the development of a paperless disability process that includes sharing of information through an electronic folder; updating medical listings to reflect advances in medical knowledge, diagnosis, and treatment. SSA is also taking steps to improve the appeals process, including: improving all facets of training for disability adjudicators; developing a case management processing system; issuing bench decisions, expanding the use of technology; and contracting out file assembly.

Evidence: SSA's Strategic Plan 2003 - 2008; Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003 pages 18-20.

4.1 Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term performance goals?

Answer: SMALL
EXTENT

Question Weight: 25%

Explanation: SSA has made adequate progress in improving DDS processing time and hearings processed per workyear (PPWY) over the prior year. However, the agency has not yet made sufficient progress in achieving goals with respect to hearings processing time and long-term decisional accuracy. As stated in Question 2.2, the long-term DDS PPWY goal is not ambitious.

Evidence: Performance Plan for FY 2004 and Revised Final Performance Plan for FY 2003 pages 59-61 for target goals. The Performance and Accountability Report for FY 2002, pages 32, 33, 112, & 118 for actual results.

4.2 Does the program (including program partners) achieve its annual performance goals?

Answer: LARGE
EXTENT

Question Weight: 25%

Explanation: SSA has exceeded its targets for average initial processing time and hearing decisions issued per workyear; and improved in DDS PPWY over the prior year. In addition, the Agency almost met its annual goal for hearings processing time. However, the agency did not meet its annual goal for decisional accuracy for denials.

Evidence: The Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) for FY 2002, pages 32, 33, 112 & 118.

4.3 Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year?

Answer: YES

Question Weight: 25%

Explanation: SSA relies heavily on continuing disability reviews and data matches (Medicare Non-Utilization, WC match) to make the program as efficient and cost effective as possible. SSA is currently taking steps to improve the disability process. The Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and Hospital Insurance/Supplemental Medical Insurance program benefits from doing Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) decreased slightly from \$2.4 billion in FY 2000 to \$2.3 billion in FY 2001. DI actual overpayment collections for FY 2002 are expected to exceed both the FY 2002 estimate and the actual for FY 2001.

Evidence: FY 2001 PAR pg 66; memorandum dated 5/23/02 to OMB; SSA FY 1999 and FYs 2000 and 2001. Reports to Congress on the processing of CDRs; FY 2004 OMB Submission pg 95. FY 2002 PAR, page 52.

PART Performance Measurements

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4.4 Does the performance of this program compare favorably to other programs, including government, private, etc., with similar purpose and goals? Answer: NA Question Weight: 0%

Explanation: While private and public disability programs can offer lessons on isolated process components, differences in the programs being compared limit the relevance of direct comparisons. Private disability insurers generally assess only whether a claimant can no longer do the same job. They rely heavily on SSA's determinations to decide the more difficult question of whether a claimant is unable to work at all. Among public programs, variations in program requirements limit the usefulness of direct performance comparisons of aggregate measures such as total processing times. Payments from these other programs may be offset by any Social Security benefits.

Evidence: Testimony by UnumProvident to the U.S. House Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee, July 2002. UnumProvident is the largest private disability insurer in the U.S. and provides specialized return-to-work services early in the disability claims process. GAO Testimony to the U.S. House Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee of Ways and Means, July 2000. GAO's assessment found that private disability insurers incorporate return-to-work efforts from the beginning of the assessment process.

4.5 Do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results? Answer: SMALL EXTENT Question Weight: 25%

Explanation: While the program does achieve the objective of providing income support to disabled individuals, problems in the program design limit its effectiveness in other ways. Reports from the GAO, Social Security Advisory Board and others have repeatedly noted that significant program improvements are necessary if SSA is to improve its productivity and processing times. The problems that SSA, GAO, and others have identified include: inconsistency in claims decisions made by state Disability Determination Services and Office of Hearings and Appeals across States; long delays in processing claims; and the failure to adapt the disability definition to changing medical technology, vocational options, and social attitudes toward disability. Court decisions have also increased the difficulty of deciding disability claims.

Evidence: SSAB, "How SSA's Disability Programs Can Be Improved," August 1998. SSAB, "Charting the Future of Social Security's Disability Programs: The Need for Fundamental Change," January 2001. GAO, "SSA Has Had Mixed Success in Efforts to Improve Caseload Management," Oct. 1999. GAO, "Disappointing Results From SSA's Efforts to Improve the Disability Claims Process Warrant Immediate Attention," Feb. 2002. GAO, "Efforts to Improve Claims Process Have Fallen Short and Further Action Is Needed," June 2002. GAO, "High Risk Series, An Update," January 2003.

PART Performance Measurements

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Section Scores				Rating
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Measure: Initial disability claims average processing times (days). This is the number of days from the filing of an applicaiton to the date processing is complete.
Additional Information: Processing time is measured from the application date (or protective filing date) to either the date of the denial notice or the date the system completes processing of an award.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2002	120	106	
2003	115	104	
2004	104	97	
2008	93		

Measure: Percent of initial disability denials correctly processed.
Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual (Efficiency Measure)
2000		97.0%	
2001	96.5%	96.8%	
2002	96.5%	97.1%	
2003			

Measure: Percent of initial disability (allowances and denials) correctly processed.
Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2003	97%	96%	
2004	97%		

PART Performance Measurements

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Section Scores				Rating
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2005 97%

2006 97%

Measure: Disability Determination Service (DDS) Net Accuracy Rate (Allowances and Denials combined)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual	(Efficiency Measure)
2003	97%			
2004	97%			

Measure: Average processing time for hearings (in days)

Additional Information: Represents the elapsed time from the hearing requested date until the date of the notice of decision.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2008	243		

Measure: Disability Determination Service (DDS) cases processed per workyear (PPWY)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term	(Efficiency Measure)
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Measure: Number of hearings cases processed per workyear (includes all hearings, not just initial disability).

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term	(Efficiency Measure)
2003	103	101		
2004	100	105		

PART Performance Measurements

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2005

2006

Measure: Average processing time (in days) for initial disability claims (DI & SSI Blind and Disabled)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2008	97%		

Measure: Average processing time (in days) for initial disability claims (DI & SSI Blind and Disabled)

Additional Information: Processing time is measured from the application date (or protective filing date) to either the date of the denial notice or the date the system completes processing of an award.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2001	120	106	
2002	115	104	
2003	104	97	
2004	97		

Measure: Average processing time for hearings (in days)

Additional Information: Represents the elapsed time from the hearing requested date until the date of the notice of decision.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2001	271	308	
2002	330	336	
2003	352	344	

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2004 377

Measure: Disability Determination Service (DDS) cases processed per workyear (PPWY)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual	(Efficiency Measure)
2001		262		
2002		265		
2003	264	270.4		
2004	272			

Measure: Number of hearings cases processed per workyear (PPWY)

Additional Information: Note: FYs 2003-2004 targets include only SSA hearings (i.e. exclude Medicare Hearings)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual	(Efficiency Measure)
2001	103	87		
2002	91	97		
2003	101	103		
2008	112			

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
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1.1 Is the program purpose clear?

Answer: YES

Question Weight 20%

Explanation: The program purpose is to provide basic support to the needy aged (65 or older), blind and disabled based on nationally uniform eligibility standards and payment levels.

Evidence: The SSI program is a nationwide Federal assistance program administered by SSA that guarantees a minimum level of income for individuals who have little or no Social Security or other income and limited resources. The program purpose is clearly defined in the following references: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Ways and Means, Social Security Amendments of 1971: Report to Accompany H.R. 1, 92nd Congress, House Report, 92-231, pp 149-150. 2003 SSI Annual Report.

1.2 Does the program address a specific and existing problem, interest or need?

Answer: YES

Question Weight 20%

Explanation: Sections 1601 and 1602 of the Social Security Act set forth the purpose of the SSI program: to establish a national program to provide supplemental security income to individuals who have attained age 65 or are blind or disabled, who are determined to be eligible on the basis of their income and resources. The program was designed to provide opportunities for work and rehabilitation to enable individuals to escape from their dependent situations. It was designed to provide such assistance in an efficient and economical manner.

Evidence: The program provides benefits for 6.96 million individuals (monthly update, March 2004, Office of Research, Evaluation and Statistics) who are unable to meet their basic needs. The benefits are designed to improve their economic security. 2003 SSI Annual Report.

1.3 Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local or private effort?

Answer: YES

Question Weight 20%

Explanation: SSI does not duplicate benefits from other programs. SSI is the only Federal program that provides cash assistance for basic needs (food, clothing and shelter) to aged, blind and disabled individuals who have limited income and resources. SSI takes into account income from other sources and does not duplicate other programs but rather fills a gap between other income sources (including Federal, State or local programs and private efforts) up to a minimum level. Safeguards have been put in place to ensure that duplicate payments are not issued. Computer matching agreements with various agencies (i.e., Veterans Administration (VA), Railroad Board, and Office of Personnel Management) are examples of these safeguards. As a needs-based program it is mandatory that individuals explore entitlements to other benefits.

Evidence: Section 1611 (e)1(G) of the Social Security Act requires applicants to file for other benefits to which they may be entitled as a condition of eligibility for SSI.

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

1.4 Is the program design free of major flaws that would limit the program's effectiveness or efficiency? Answer: NO Question Weight 20%

Explanation: The SSI program is not free of major design flaws: (1) The disability determination process does not ensure that the right people get benefits on a timely basis, (2) The complex rules related to income and assets makes it difficult to pay people the correct amount, (3) Many of the medical listings that are used as part of the disability determination process do not recognize advances in medicine than would enable individuals to work, and (4) The vocational information used as part of the disability determination process is out-of-date. GAO expressed a similar conclusion when it recently placed all Federal disability programs on their high-risk list. The Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB) also raised the question of whether SSA's definition of disability is aligned with national disability policy as reflected, for example, in the Americans with Disability Act. SSA is working to improve the disability determination process and is currently vetting a carefully developed reform proposal. In developing this proposal, SSA has sought feedback from relevant stakeholders and is using this input to further refine the proposal. The new process should address many of the the issues in the GAO "high risk" Disability List. Further, as part of the SSI Corrective Action Plan, SSA has been exploring ways to simplify policy related to in-kind support and maintenance, the most complicated of SSI policies. Despite the drawbacks in program design enumerated above, however, it should be noted that with its nationally uniform standards and payment levels, the SSI program is a considerable improvement over its predecessor State programs.

Evidence: GAO "2003 High Risk Series" published February 2003. "A New Approach to Disability Determination" (Internet). "The Social Security Definition of Disability" - Social Security Advisory Board (Internet). P. L. 108-203 (H.R. 743) Social Security Protection Act of 2004. H.R. 4 "Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act of 2003". FY 2005 President's budget. 2003 SSI Annual Report.

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Program: Supplemental Security Income
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1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

1.5 **Is the program effectively targeted, so that resources will reach intended beneficiaries and/or otherwise address the program's purpose directly?** Answer: NO Question Weight 20%

Explanation: The program does not always effectively reaches its intended beneficiaries. In 2002 \$2.7 billion, or 8% of all SSI payments, were improper. There are inconsistencies in decisions about whether someone is disabled across states and between Disability Determination Services (DDS) and Offices of Hearings and Appeals. The hearings decisional accuracy rate in 2003 was 90%. There is inconsistency in decisions within DDSs as well. A Lewin Group study has shown that within individual DDSs, examiners come to different decisions on the same types of cases. GAO has pointed out in a recent report that SSA has not done enough to understand the sources of inconsistency in the decision making process. Still, SSA is working to reduce inconsistency. SSA has developed both short-term and long-term strategies. The short-term strategy includes early screening of hearings for on-the-record decisions, using a short form for fully favorable decisions, and deploying speech recognition and video teleconferencing technology to hearing offices. For the long-term, the Commissioner has developed a new approach to disability determinations that focuses on making the right decision as early in the process as possible. This approach is predicated on the successful implementation of SSA's new electronic disability system. In addition, SSA wants to extend pre-effectuation review provisions, already in place for Social Security disability claims, to SSI adult disability and blindness cases. By providing a review of high-risk allowances, this provision, like its Title II counterpart, improves the accuracy of initial decisions. Periodic continuing disability reviews (CDR) also improve the integrity of the SSI program. SSA uses CDRs to determine whether beneficiaries continue to be entitled to benefits because of their medical conditions. CDRs are very cost-effective. SSA has generated government-wide savings of approximately \$10 for each \$1 spent on CDRs. SSA also conducts regular redeterminations of non-medical factors of eligibility. Redeterminations are the most powerful tool we have to improve payment accuracy (to determine that individuals are still eligible for and receiving the correct amount of SSI benefits). In FY 2003, the total overpayments collected and prevented from redeterminations and limited issue cases was almost \$2.7 billion, compared to \$2.3 billion in FY 2002. GAO removed SSI from its High Risk designation in January 2003 as a result of demonstrated actions in the Corrective Action Plan saying "SSA has made sufficient progress in improving SSI's financial integrity and management to warrant removing its high-risk designation."

Evidence: "More Effort Needed to Assess Consistency of Disability Decisions," GAO, July 2004. 2003 SSI Annual Report, Section II.C. FY 2005 APP, page 20. GAO, "Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: SSA". The Lewin Group, "Evaluation of SSA's Disability Quality Assurance Processes and Development of QA Options That Will Support the Long-Term Management of the Disability Program," March 2001. SSAB, "Charting the Future of Social Security's Disability Programs: The Need for Fundamental Change," January 2001. "A New Approach to Disability Determination" (Internet).

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

2.1 Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program? Answer: YES Question Weight: 13%

Explanation: The SSI program has a limited number of long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program and address the management of the program. Long-term outcome measures include percent of SSI beneficiaries below 70% of poverty and the importance of SSI as a source of income. Recent figures for these two measures makes it clear that this program provides assistance to people who would otherwise have very little income. In 2002, 16 percent of SSI recipients age 18 or older lived in families with income below 70 percent of the poverty level. In 2002, 47 percent of SSI recipients age 18 or older relied on SSI for 90 percent of their income. SSI also has several measures related to the management of the program, including processing time, productivity, and payment and decisional accuracy measures. These measures focus on improving economic security for the elderly and disabled. For example, reducing processing times helps people in need by providing them income support more quickly.

Evidence: Source for purpose of the program: Committee on Ways and Means report accompanying the original SSI legislation (H.R. 92-231). Source for payment accuracy: Agency Strategic Plan (ASP) for FYs 2003 - 2008 pp. 2 & 22. Source for other measures: FY 2005 Service Delivery Budget Plan. Social Security's Performance Plans, FY 2005 APP and Revised Final FY 2004 APP, p. 1. FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report pp. 29-56.

2.2 Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures? Answer: YES Question Weight: 13%

Explanation: The SSI program has ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures. Its outcome measures reflect that SSI meets congressional intent to serve very low-income individuals by providing them monthly assistance. SSA hopes to increase work among recipients of SSI and thereby reduce reliance on SSI of its recipients. This is reflected in its ambitious targets for its long-term outcome measures. For its measures related to the management of the program, SSA has set realistic and challenging targets for initial claims and hearings processing times, as well as for hearings and DDS productivity. These measures are consistent with SSA's commitment to annual productivity increases of 2%. SSA expects AeDIB will reduce processing time significantly over the long term. SSA's DDS net accuracy target, held constant at the FY 2004 goal, is ambitious when combined with greater productivity. The long-term target set for overpayment accuracy is very ambitious given past experience and legislative requirements. Although SSA has not met the established goals pertaining to SSI overpayment and underpayment accuracy rates, the Agency continues to take action to improve its payment accuracy to reach future goals. For example, wages received by recipients and deems are a cause of overpayments in the SSI program. Collecting and compiling wage information and updating the SSI record is a labor intensive process that must be accomplished in a relatively short time period for the system to compute and pay the right amount. SSA is developing a wage verification program which will provide an automated tool for collecting earnings information.

Evidence: Source for payment accuracy: Agency Strategic Plan (ASP) for FYs 2003 - 2008 pp. 2 & 22. Source for other measures: FY 2005 Service Delivery Budget Plan. Social Security's Performance Plans, FY 2005 APP and Revised Final FY 2004 APP, page 1. FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report pp. 65-114.

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
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Bureau:
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Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

2.3 Does the program have a limited number of specific annual performance measures that can demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's long-term goals? Answer: YES Question Weight: 13%

Explanation: SSA has a limited number of annual measures that address the outcomes and management of the program. Its annual outcome measure relates to the number of SSI recipients who are working. Its management measures include processing time, productivity, decisional accuracy measures. SSA has two other measures that support its long-term goals: percent of outstanding SSI debt in a collection arrangement; percent of SSI payments free of preventable overpayments and underpayments. SSA's Tracking Report provides the status of all SSA Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals as well as other workload, budget and productivity measures. SSA executives meet monthly to discuss progress and necessary actions to meet performance goals. The Commissioner meets with the Deputy Commissioners on a regular basis to review actual progress towards meeting Agency performance commitments versus budget plans, making funding adjustments, when necessary, to maximize the Agency's ability to meet performance commitments. Also, the Deputy Commissioner holds monthly SSI improvement meetings with SSA executives to review and discuss the SSI Corrective Action Plan and SSI Performance Indicator Report.

Evidence: SSA Tracking Report. Social Security's Performance Plans, FY 2005 APP and Revised Final FY 2004 APP, page 8. FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report pp. 80 & 92.

2.4 Does the program have baselines and ambitious targets for its annual measures? Answer: YES Question Weight: 13%

Explanation: SSA has baselines and ambitious annual performance targets that focus on numbers of recipients working, improvements to processing time, productivity, decisional accuracy, and accuracy in providing payment. SSA's Tracking Report provides the status of all SSA Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals as well as other workload, budget and productivity measures. SSA executives meet monthly to discuss progress and necessary actions to meet performance goals. Also, the Commissioner meets with the Deputy Commissioners on a regular basis to review actual progress towards meeting Agency performance commitments versus budget plans, making funding adjustments, when necessary, to maximize the Agency's ability to meet performance commitments.

Evidence: Source: SSA Tracking Report. Social Security's Performance Plans, FY 2005 APP and Revised Final FY 2004 APP, page 8. FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report pp. 80 & 92.

2.5 Do all partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) commit to and work toward the annual and/or long-term goals of the program? Answer: YES Question Weight: 13%

Explanation: States support the program purpose by supplementing Federal benefits. State Disability Determination Services play a pivotal role in making disability determinations. DDS administrators commit to specific performance goals set by SSA. The Commissioner of SSA and other senior staff meet frequently with DDS representatives and the Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB). In addition, SSA has collaborated with the Department of Labor (DOL) in the establishment of a nationwide network of employment support staff in One-Stop Career Centers to serve Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities. SSA also supports DOL in the Employer Assistance Referral Network (EARN). EARN is a premier cost-free employment service designed to assist employers nationwide with recruitment resources that will guide and refer them to providers who have access to qualified job seekers with disabilities.

Evidence: SSA Annual Report on the SSI Income Program, May 2003, pp 109-20. SSA's Strategic Plan 2003-2008. Social Security's Performance Plans, FY 2005 APP and Revised Final FY 2004 APP.

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Program: Supplemental Security Income
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Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

2.6 Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need? Answer: YES Question Weight: 13%

Explanation: Quality independent evaluations are conducted on a regular basis and are used to support program improvements. The OIG and GAO continually audit the program and do so independently from SSA. Their audits are generally national in scope and use sound methodology, ensuring the quality of their findings. SSA executives meet regularly with the OIG to discuss issues that need to be addressed in the SSI program. SSA pays attention to the reports that are done by independent evaluators. For example, the GAO had included the SSI program on its High Risk List for several years. SSA responded to GAO's criticisms by adopting a Corrective Action Plan and by developing initiatives to address the program's deficiencies. For example, SSA sought and secured legislative authority for additional tools to verify an applicant's financial eligibility for benefits, and for expanding authority for cross-program recovery of overpayments, and several SSI simplification provisions. SSA's Service Delivery Assessment of the disability determination process demonstrated that we needed to accelerate the implementation of the electronic disability process (eDIB) and other improvements to address delay time in processing disability claims. Many of these are completed and others are in process. Our Service Delivery Budgets addressed queue times due to backlogs by outlining the resources required to reduce backlogs. SSA is also working to improve the disability determination process. Additionally, SSA conducts reviews which are independent of its operating and policy components. For example, since the inception of the SSI program, SSA has conducted a quality assurance review of the accuracy of payments issued to SSI recipients. Data from the reviews are used in corrective action planning and in monitoring performance as required by the GPRA of 1993. The Office of Policy uses the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) and Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) data to report on policy impact on poverty, e.g., the percent in poverty without SSI and the percent in poverty with SSI benefits. Using these data, SSA can demonstrate that the program serves as a program of last resort for people in need and reduces poverty. The Office of Quality Assurance within SSA audits and evaluates the SSI program and reports on payment accuracy. SSA reports the findings of this office and uses them to improve payment accuracy.

Evidence: GAO removed SSI from its High Risk list in January 2003. SSA revised its field office work credit and measurement system to better reward staff for time spent combating fraud. Outside monitoring entities (GAO and OIG) regularly evaluate the program and make recommendations, and Congress also exercises oversight. "Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: Social Security Administration" (GAO-03-117). P.L. 108-203 (HR 743) Social Security Protection Act of 2004. FY 2004 and FY 2005 Service Delivery Budget.

2.7 Are Budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget? Answer: YES Question Weight: 13%

Explanation: In formulating its annual budget request, SSA assesses the impact of policy, procedural, legislative and automation changes on its workloads, which include assessing the impact on productivity, pending levels, etc. SSA's Service Delivery Budget Plan presents key performance goals through FY 2008 based in large part on changes in resource levels. During the budget cycle, SSA is able to assess workload effects of increases or decreases in funding. SSA has developed a macro model that allows it to reflect the full and marginal costs of achieving performance outcomes. Specifically, SSA is able to estimate the budgeted unit cost for key workloads and reflect the marginal costs of changes in productivity. SSA also has made solid progress in its attempt to document the relationship between resources and timeliness. Further, SSA is working to create a fully automated budget formulation system, enabling it to automatically estimate how changes at the SSA level will affect various components.

Evidence: SSA FY 2005 Budget Submission.

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

2.8 **Has the program taken meaningful steps to correct its strategic planning deficiencies?** Answer: YES Question Weight:13%

Explanation: SSA constantly assesses, evaluates and improves strategic plans and performance measures. SSA has a limited number of long-term performance goals and a limited number of annual performance targets that help the agency progress toward achieving the long-term goals. As a part of the Annual Performance Plan (APP) preparation, SSA re-evaluates the effectiveness of the agency's long-term strategies and short-term (annual) targets/measures, and adjusts the long-term strategies and annual performance targets as appropriate. The Agency developed an SSI Corrective Action Plan and a new Agency Strategic Plan for 2003-2008 which focus the Agency's efforts on correcting the deficiencies identified which include: 1) overpayment prevention through electronic access of financial institution records to determine if an applicant owns unreported assets; 2) increased emphasis on debt collection using a new debt collection measurement tool; and 3) better overpayment detection through online data access.

Evidence: SSI Corrective Action Plan, Agency Strategic Plan 2003-2008. PAR FY 2003, page 20. OGC data source: Restitution orders for FY 2004.

3.1 **Does the agency regularly collect timely and credible performance information, including information from key program partners, and use it to manage the program and improve performance?** Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: Timely and credible performance information is collected through systematic and consistent processes with periodic quality controls to confirm the validity of the data. SSA uses this information to manage the program and adjust program priorities. Computer matching agreements with external organizations are crucial in achieving SSA's payment accuracy performance measures. For example, SSA matches against Veterans Administration, Office of Personnel Management, Savings Bonds data, wage data maintained by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, nursing home admissions, prisoner matches, and fugitive felons information from law enforcement agencies. SSA reviews a sample of initial disability claims each quarter to determine their accuracy. SSA also has conducted a quality assurance review of payments issued to SSI recipients currently on the payment rolls in the fiscal year under review. SSA's Tracking Report provides the status of all SSA Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures including workload, budget and productivity measures. SSA executives meet monthly to discuss progress and necessary actions to meet performance goals. The Commissioner meets with Deputy Commissioners on a regular basis to review actual progress towards meeting Agency performance commitments versus budget plans, making funding adjustments, when necessary, to maximize the Agency's ability to meet performance commitments. Also, the Deputy Commissioner holds monthly SSI improvement meetings with SSA executives to review and discuss the SSI Corrective Action Plan and SSI Performance Indicator Report. In addition, the Commissioner of SSA and other Senior staff meet frequently with DDS representatives and the Social Security Advisory Board.

Evidence: SSA regularly collects payment accuracy, decisional accuracy, workload data and a myriad of management information from administrative records. The FY 2005 APP and Revised Final FY 2004 APP, page 5 and appendix vii. FY 2002 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) pp 11, 127. FY 2003 PAR pages 80 & 92. SSA Tracking Report. SSA conducts quality assurance (stewardship) reviews of the accuracy of payments issued to SSI recipients on the rolls which includes reviewing and redeveloping all non-medical factors of eligibility. Data are analyzed, published and used for corrective action planning and monitoring. SSA's Quality Assurance component is independent of SSA's operations and policy components

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1	2	3	4	Moderately
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3.2 Are Federal managers and program partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) held accountable for cost, schedule and performance results? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: SSA executives are held accountable for key performance measures. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner meet monthly with the accountable executives to review progress against an Agency-wide tracking report and take appropriate action when necessary. Also, the Deputy Commissioner holds monthly SSI improvement meetings with SSA executives to review and discuss the SSI Corrective Action Plan and SSI Performance Indicator Report. SSA has instituted a new performance appraisal system for its Senior Executives and GS-15 managers which ties to the Agency's mission, goal and outcomes. In addition, DDS administrators are held accountable for their performance. When the DDS accuracy falls below the required range for two consecutive calendar quarters, appropriate performance support is provided. In addition, Interagency Agreements are carefully monitored to ensure that the agencies are held accountable for performance results.

Evidence: SSA executives track progress monthly of goals using the SSA Tracking Report. SES and GS-15 Performance Plans. Monthly SSI Improvement Meetings. The Code of Federal Regulations for Social Security, sections 404.1645-404.1662.

3.3 Are funds (Federal and partners') obligated in a timely manner and spent for the intended purpose? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: Program funds are obligated consistent with the rules of the program. Procedures exist for reporting actual expenditures.

Evidence: SF-133s. FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report, page 119.

3.4 Does the program have procedures (e.g. competitive sourcing/cost comparisons, IT improvements, appropriate incentives) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution? Answer: YES Question Weight:14%

Explanation: SSA continually looks for means to achieve cost efficiencies both in program management and administration of the SSI program. The budget process builds these changes into the development of cost estimates as part of the Agency's analysis of productivity factors. An example of this is in the processing of SSI redeterminations. SSA first conducts redeterminations on individuals most likely to require an adjustment of award levels because of a change in resources and income. SSA reviews these recipients' income and resources to make sure they are still eligible for benefits and are getting paid the right amount. SSA also looks at methods to make the reviews more cost-efficient, such as by using mailers and electronic processing of redetermination forms. In addition, as described in question 1.5, SSA conducts continuing disability reviews (CDRs) to make sure that beneficiaries are still unable to work. Another example of an administrative cost efficiency is expansion of the Modernized Supplemental Security Income Claims System (MSSICS) which provides processing efficiencies in a variety of SSI workloads, including overpayments, change of address, status changes, redeterminations, and claims. These efficiencies have provided substantial workyear savings. In FY 2003 alone, we estimate that enhancements to MSSICS saved over \$25 million in workyear costs. An electronic disability processes is being implemented and will increase efficiency and provide important management information when completed.

Evidence: SSA's FY 2005 Budget Submission. FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report pp. 20, 32, 119. SSI Corrective Action Plan (May 2002). FY 2003 SSI Redetermination Change Rate Study.

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Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

3.5 Does the program collaborate and coordinate effectively with related programs? Answer: YES Question Weight: 14%

Explanation: There are no other programs that provide comparable benefits to the same recipient population. However, most States provide a related SSI Supplementation payment. SSA administers payments for some States that choose it. For States that make payments directly to beneficiaries (as well as Federally Administered States), SSA monitors them to make sure they comply with "passalong" supplementation rules of the Act. SSA coordinates with certain States to make automatic Medicaid eligibility determinations, works with States to provide Medicare buy-in coverage for eligible individuals, and coordinates with USDA on food stamp applications. For example, how our program design goes beyond potential entitlement to explain eligibility for other benefits is highlighted under the terms of the Manchaca, et al. v. Chater court-approved settlement: Further, SSA personnel, under the terms of the Manchaca, et al. v. Chater court-approved settlement, who interview must ask a member of the household in which all members receive SSI payments the question, 'May I take your food stamp application today?' This question must be asked at all initial claims and all personal contact redeterminations. For disability beneficiaries, SSA works with other related programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation facilities and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and also uses their data in order to identify continuing disability review mailer candidates. When individuals file for SSI benefits, SSA automatically verifies if they are eligible for any Title II benefits (i.e., retirement, disability, survivor, etc.) and processes an application for those benefits. In addition, SSA coordinates with State workers' compensation agencies, the Railroad Retirement Board and DOL to ensure that beneficiaries are paid correctly. SSA works with the Veterans' Administration to secure medical evidence for veterans who have applied for disability benefits. SSA is a member of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. SSA also participates in the Department of Justice's Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative.

Evidence: For information on SSI State Supplementation, see SSA Program Operations Management System, SI 01415, SI 00830.235, DI 52001.150 and DI 52001.155. Coordination with CMS: Interagency Agreement between SSA and CMS provide SSA with Medicare utilization data. 2003 SSI Annual Report.

3.6 Does the program use strong financial management practices? Answer: YES Question Weight: 14%

Explanation: SSA received the highest rating possible, a green, for overall current status for the President's Management Agenda financial management initiative. SSA's financial statements received an unqualified audit opinion in FY 2003 for the tenth consecutive year. SSA conducts substantial numbers of periodic eligibility reviews and data matches to improve payment accuracy. The level of effort for these activities depends on funding; they are highly cost-effective.

Evidence: FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report, pp. 25, 116, 165-175. 2003 SSI Annual Report.

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Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

3.7 Has the program taken meaningful steps to address its management deficiencies? Answer: YES Question Weight: 14%

Explanation: OIG has reported that six significant management issues face SSA. OIG acknowledged that these issues are of a long-term nature and do not lend themselves to quick fixes. SSA tracks OIG and GAO reports to ensure recommendations are addressed. While the SSI program overall remains vulnerable to payment error, GAO removed the SSI program from its High Risk List based on SSA developing and implementing an SSI Corrective Action Plan. The Deputy Commissioner holds monthly SSI improvement meetings with SSA executives to review and discuss the SSI Corrective Action Plan and SSI Performance Indicator Report. Through its service delivery assessment of the disability program, SSA has identified problems with the disability claims process and has taken or is taking steps to address them. GAO expressed a similar conclusion when they recently placed all Federal disability programs on their "high-risk" list. SSA is working to improve the disability determination process. In September 2003, the Commissioner proposed a new approach for improving the disability determination process and making the right decision as early in the process as possible. The new process should address some of the issues in the GAO "High Risk" Disability List. The following enhancements to the Modernized Supplemental Security Income Claims System (MSSICS) also address deficiency concerns: Further automation of windfall offset; enhancements to the Office of Child Support Enforcement data in the MSSICS screen path; a data base to control SSI alerts; address integration between MSSICS and other SSA systems; and automation of remaining SSI actions not supported by MSSICS. SSA improved from a B- in 2002 to a B+ in 2003 in the Federal Computer Security Report Card prepared by the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census.

Evidence: OIG's November 2003 report: Major Management Challenges Fiscal Year 2003 describes the 6 challenges facing SSA. SSA continues to implement its SSI Corrective Action Plan as well as instituting systems changes and initiating new stewardship projects (e.g., developing a match with DHS to gain access to deportation information). In its January 2003 report, "Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: SSA (GAO-03-117), GAO notes its removal of SSI from its High Risk List. FY05 Service Delivery Budget Plan. GAO, Final Report, "High Risk Series," February 2003. FY 2003 Performance and Accountability Report, p 176. SSA has earned a B+ on security efforts. Source: Federal Computer Security Report Card 2003.

4.1 Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term performance goals? Answer: SMALL EXTENT Question Weight: 25%

Explanation: SSA has made progress in meeting several of its long-term goals. It has set an ambitious goal of processing 112 hearings per workyear in FY 2008. Actual performance on this hovered around 97 or 98 from 1999 to 2002 (with a drop in 2001). In 2003, however, SSA processed 103 hearings per work year. If this trend continues, SSA should meet its long-term goal for this measure. Further, SSA continues to make progress in improving initial disability claims processing times and initial disability claims and hearings production per workyear by exceeding its goals as well as prior year performance. SSA continuously looks for new ways to improve accuracy and improve management. However, SSA is not making progress on several important long-term goals. SSI overpayment accuracy remains a problem. SSI's overpayment accuracy goal (free of preventable errors) is 96% in FY 2008. Recent experience shows this figuring worsening from 94.9% in FY 1999 to 93.3% in FY 2001 and then slightly improving to 93.4% in FY 2002. The SSI program has adopted two new long-term outcome measures for the PART. It is too soon to determine whether the program is making progress in meeting targets for those measures.

Evidence: SSI Corrective Action Plan (May 2002). FY 03 APP, pp 73, 87. Performance Plan for FY 2005 and Revised Final FY 2004 APP, p. 5 and appendix vii. SSA's Workload Trend Report p. 13. FY 2003 PAR pages 80 & 92

PART Performance Measurements

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Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

4.2 Does the program (including program partners) achieve its annual performance goals? Answer: LARGE EXTENT Question Weight 25%

Explanation: SSA continues to make progress in improving initial disability claims processing times and initial disability claims production per workyear by exceeding goals and prior year performance. SSA also exceeded its hearings processing time and production per workyear goals by implementing changes to the hearings process. In FY 2003 the overall ALJ productivity rate continued to increase to record levels, which has further contributed to the number of dispositions processed. SSA continues to work on improving decisional and payment accuracy rates.

Evidence: FY 03 Performance and Accountability Report pp. 34, 80 & 92 page 34, 80 & 92. SSA's Workload Trend Report, p. 13.

4.3 Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year? Answer: YES Question Weight 25%

Explanation: SSA generally continues to improve efficiencies in meeting program goals each year. SSI aged claims processed per workyear, for example, increased from 436 in 2001 to 556 in 2003. Disability Determination Service cases processed per workyear increased from 259 in 2002 to 270 in 2003. Hearings cases processed per workyear improved from 97 in 1999 to 103 in 2003. For the agency overall, productivity increased 2.1% in 2003 over the previous year. To further increase efficiency and improve productivity, SSA has developed an electronic disability process (eDib) which will eventually replace the current paper disability claims folder with an electronic folder. This will eliminate the need to create, mail and store paper disability files, and will allow staff to process claims by quickly accessing and retrieving information. In addition, SSA relies heavily on continuing disability reviews, redeterminations, and data matches to make the program as cost-effective as possible. SSA also strives to be cost-effective in the administrative use of program dollars and continues to improve productivity. For example, SSA has developed an electronic disability process (eDib) which will eventually replace the current paper disability claims folder with an electronic folder. This will eliminate the need to create, mail and store paper disability files, and will allow staff to process claims by quickly accessing and retrieving information. DDS production per workyear has improved from 259 cases per workyear in FY 1999 to over 270 cases per workyear in FY 2003. OHA production per workyear has improved from 97 cases per workyear in FY 1999 to nearly 103 cases per workyear.

Evidence: SSA's FY 05 Budget Submission. FY 2003 PAR, pp. 20, 32, 119. SSI Corrective Action Plan (May 2002). FY 2003 SSI Redetermination Change Rate Study.

4.4 Does the performance of this program compare favorably to other programs, including government, private, etc., with similar purpose and goals? Answer: NA Question Weight: 0%

Explanation: There are no other programs that provide comparable benefits to the same recipient population. While private and public disability programs can offer lessons on isolated process components, differences in the programs being compared limit the relevance of direct comparisons. Private disability insurers generally assess whether a claimant can no longer do the same job. They rely heavily on SSA's determinations to decide the more difficult question of whether a claimant is able to work at all. Among public programs, variations in program requirements limit the usefulness of direct performance comparisons of aggregate measures such as total processing times.

Evidence: Testimony by UnumProvident to the U.S. House Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee, July 2002. UnumProvident is the largest private disability insurer in the U.S. and provides specialized return-to-work services early in the disability claims process. GAO Testimony to the U.S. House Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee of Ways and Means, July 2000. GAO's assessment found that private disability insurers incorporate return-to-work efforts from the beginning of the assessment process.

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4.5 Do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?

Answer: SMALL
EXTENT

Question Weight 25%

Explanation: Problems identified by OIG and GAO include challenges in processing disability claims and beneficiaries' failure to timely and accurately report changes in income, living arrangements and resources. GAO recently had placed SSI on the "High-Risk List." It has since removed SSI from the High-Risk List, but it recently placed all federal disability programs on its "High-Risk List." While the program does achieve the objective of providing support to disabled and elderly individuals, program design limits its effectiveness in other ways. In addition to GAO, the Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB) and others also have repeatedly noted that significant improvements are necessary if SSA is to improve its productivity and processing times. The problems identified include: inconsistency in claims decisions made by State DDS and Office of Hearings and Appeals; long delays in processing claims; and the failure to adapt the disability definition to changing medical technology, vocational options, and social attitudes toward disability. Court decisions have also increased the difficulty of deciding disability claims. SSA is working to streamline the disability claims process in an effort to address these problems. Additionally, SSA conducts reviews which are independent of its operating and policy components. For example, since the inception of the SSI program, SSA has conducted a quality assurance review of the accuracy of payments issued to SSI recipients. Data from the reviews are used in corrective action planning and in monitoring performance as required by the GPRA of 1993. Private accounting firms have found SSA's overall financial management to be strong. Information offered by GAO suggests that SSA is making progress in identifying potential overpayments and improving management oversight of the program, which led GAO to remove the SSI program from its "High-Risk List."

Evidence: GAO and OIG audits in progress available at www.gao.gov. OIG annual audit reports are available in OIG's annual report of audit activity. PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Deloitte & Touche also provide audit evaluations, (Performance and Accountability Report for FY 2003, pp 116; 167-175). SSA has an active program evaluation function that uses process evaluations, outcome evaluations, impact evaluations and cost-benefit analysis. The GAO testimony, "SSI: Status of Efforts to Improve Overpayments Detection and Recovery," July 25, 2002, discusses SSA's progress related to reducing overpayments. OIG's draft report "SSI Overpayments" (OIG A-01-04-24022) recognized that "SSA has made significant efforts over the past several years to identify, prevent and recover SSI overpayments." SSAB, "How SSA's Disability Programs Can Be Improved," August 1998. SSAB, "Charting the Future of Social Security's Disability Programs: The Need for Fundamental Change," January 2001. GAO, "High Risk Series", February 2003.

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

Measure: Average processing time for initial disability claims (DI & SSI)

Additional Information: Processing time is measured from the application date (or protective filing date) to either the date of the denial notice or the date the system completes processing of an award.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2002	115	104	
2003	104	97	
2004	97	95	
2008	90		

Measure: Percent SSI payments free of preventable error underpayments (uP)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2003	98.8%	98.8%	
2004	98.8%		
2005	98.8%		
2006	98.8%		

Measure: Percent SSI payments free of preventable error overpayments (OP)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2008	96%		

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

Measure: Percent SSI payments free of preventable error underpayments (UP)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2008	98.8%		

Measure: Percent of SSI beneficiaries below 70% of poverty

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2002		16.4%	
2010	16%		

Measure: Percent of people dependent on SSI for more than 90% of their income

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2002		0.47	
2010	45%		

Measure: Number of DI and SSI beneficiaries with tickets assigned, who work

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2003		2726	
2004	3271		
2005	3816		

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

2006 4360

Measure: Number of hearings cases processed per work year (includes all hearings, not just initial disability)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2008	110		

Measure: DDS Net Accuracy Rate (Allowance and Denials Combined)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2008	97%		

Measure: Average processing time for initial disability claims (DI & SSI)

Additional Information: Processing time is measured from the application date (or protective filing date) to either the date of the denial notice or the date the system completes processing of an award.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2003	104	97	
2004	97	95	
2005	93		
2006	91		

Measure: Number of SSA hearings cases processed per work year (PPWY)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2003	101	103	

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

2004	105	100
2005	103	
2006	105	

Measure: Percent of SSI aged claims processed by the time the first payment is due or within 14 days of the effective filing date.

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Long-term
2008	80.0%		

Measure: Percent of SSI aged claims processed by the time the first payment is due or within 14 days of the effective filing date.

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2003	75%	83%	
2004	75%	84%	
2005	75%		
2006	75%		

Measure: DDS Net Accuracy Rate (Allowance and Denials Combined)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2000		96.4%	
2001		96.2%	

PART Performance Measurements

Program: Supplemental Security Income
Agency: Social Security Administration
Bureau:
Type(s): Direct Federal

Section Scores				Rating
1	2	3	4	Moderately
60%	100%	100%	58%	Effective

2002	96.4%
2003	96%
2004	97%
2005	97%
2006	97%

Measure: Percent SSI payments free of preventable error overpayments (OP)

Additional Information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	Measure Term: Annual
2003	95.4%	93.9%	
2004	94.4%		
2005	94.9%		
2006	95.4%		