



**Major Strategic
Accomplishments
Fiscal Year 2008**

*Social Security
Benefits America*



Social Security Administration

Eliminate Our Hearings Backlog and Prevent Its Recurrence

Eliminating the hearings backlog is a moral imperative for the agency. We have moved quickly to utilize new technologies, improve our business processes and add new staff. Combined with the hard work of our employees and the support of Congress, we are clearly on the right track to providing Americans with disabilities the prompt service they deserve.

- Processed approximately 575,000 hearing requests in fiscal year (FY) 08
- Processed approximately 83,400 Appeals Council Reviews
- Reduced the number of aged hearing cases (over 900 days old) from 135,160 at the beginning of FY 08 to 281
- Hired and trained 190 Administrative Law Judges
- Opened the National Hearing Center in 10/07 to increase adjudicatory capacity and efficiency—we processed 2,151 cases at the Center in FY 08
- Implemented procedures in 11/07 to allow attorney adjudicators to issue fully-favorable decisions—over 24,000 decisions issued in FY 08
- Implemented a process in 06/07 in which the hearing office returns specific cases to the Disability Determination Services (DDS) for review for potential allowance—through FY 08, the DDSs allowed approximately 24,000 returned cases
- Implemented the Electronic Certified Administrative Record which allows us to use a compact disc for court cases rather than converting the electronic file to a paper file
- Implemented the Appeals Review Processing System which provides more efficient case management for hearings offices and the Appeals Council

Improve the Speed and Quality of Our Disability Process

The length of time many people wait for a disability decision is unacceptable. I am committed to a process that is as fair and speedy as possible.

- Processed approximately 2.6 million initial disability claims in FY 08
- Processed approximately 560,000 reconsideration cases in FY 08

- Implemented two processes—Quick Disability Determinations and Compassionate Allowances—to fast-track disability cases that have a high probability of allowance
- Updated the Medical Listings for Visual Disorders, Digestive Disorders, and Immune System Disorders to reflect advances in medicine and to improve the accuracy and consistency of disability determinations
- Established an automated process to identify and expedite military casualty claims
- Implemented the Request for Program Consultation process nationally to improve accuracy and consistency in the disability decision-making process
- Implemented a process that allows the public and third parties to file disability reconsideration and hearing requests via the Internet
- Published new rules for the Ticket to Work Program to improve our ability to help beneficiaries with disabilities return to work

Improve Our Retiree and Other Core Services

The public expects and increasingly demands the convenience of online services. With millions of baby boomers becoming eligible for Social Security benefits, we must transform the way we deliver services by developing a wide-range of online and automated services.

- Processed approximately 4.24 million Retirement and Survivors Insurance claims in FY 08
- Processed approximately 18.1 million Social Security number (SSN) requests in FY 08
- Paid approximately \$1.8 billion in benefits each day to 60 million beneficiaries
- Simplified the retirement application to improve customer service
- Implemented the online Retirement Estimator to enable the public to get immediate and personalized benefit estimates
- Improved Social Security Number verification procedures to help businesses verify a person's eligibility to work
- Published final rules for Parent-to-Child Deeming in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program to clarify how we compute SSI payment amounts for children
- Implemented the *Internet Representative Payee Accounting Report* to facilitate the filing of accounting forms
- Redesigned the Social Security Internet home page to improve usability for the public

- Conducted an outreach campaign for individuals eligible for extra help with Medicare prescription drug plans
- Implemented Direct Express Debit Card for people without bank accounts
- Implemented Scheduled Voice Callback to improve 800 number service
- Improved the check-in process for individuals visiting Field Offices (FOs) through the use of touchscreen monitors

Preserve the Public's Trust in Our Programs

To preserve the public's trust and confidence in our programs, we must move forward aggressively with process, policy, systems, regulatory, and legislative improvements.

- Processed 1.2 million SSI non-disability redeterminations
- Processed approximately 1.1 million periodic continuing disability reviews
- Processed 1 billion Social Security Number verifications
- Issued the *Agency Strategic Plan* to lay out the vision for the future
- Received the Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting for our *2007 Performance and Accountability Report* which uses performance and financial data to demonstrate our stewardship efforts to the public and Congress

Encourage Savings

Saving and investing wisely are important not only for individuals and their families, but also for the country. We believe the agency has a responsibility to help individuals understand the role of Social Security benefits and the need for them to save as they plan for their future.

- Issued a publication entitled “*When to Start Receiving Retirement Benefits*” to help the public effectively plan for retirement
- Prepared inserts for the *Social Security Statement* to help the public understand when and how to file for Social Security benefits

Our Employees

Our workforce is one of our greatest strengths. Social Security has a workforce of dedicated, talented, and well-trained employees. We need to continue to hire and retain the best and the brightest for the future.

- Developed and implemented a national Identity Protection Program to safeguard employees against the risk of injury or harm
- Conducted leadership training and administered leadership development programs to ensure the efficient operation of the agency
- Created a central intranet location for employees to view and order materials for marketing online services
- Converted volumes of legislative history to an electronic format which can be accessed through the SSA Digital Library

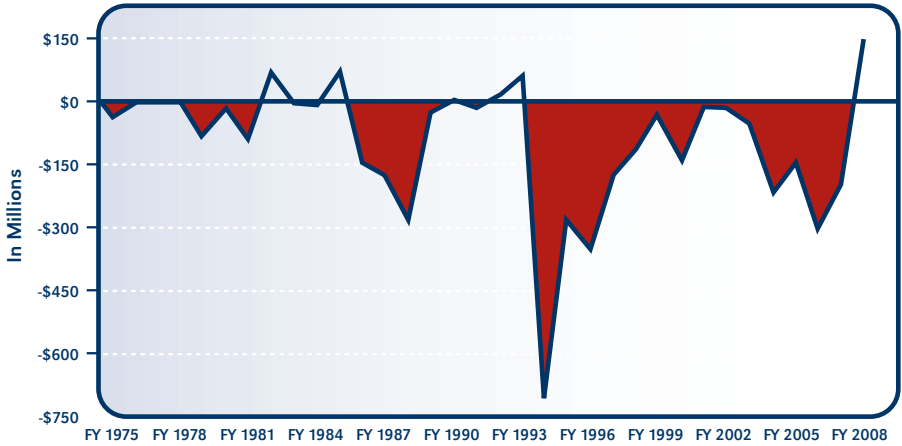
Information Technology

A strong and modern infrastructure requires new investments in technology. While we have effectively maintained and augmented our systems infrastructure, some of our key computer systems and our primary data center are more than 30 years old.

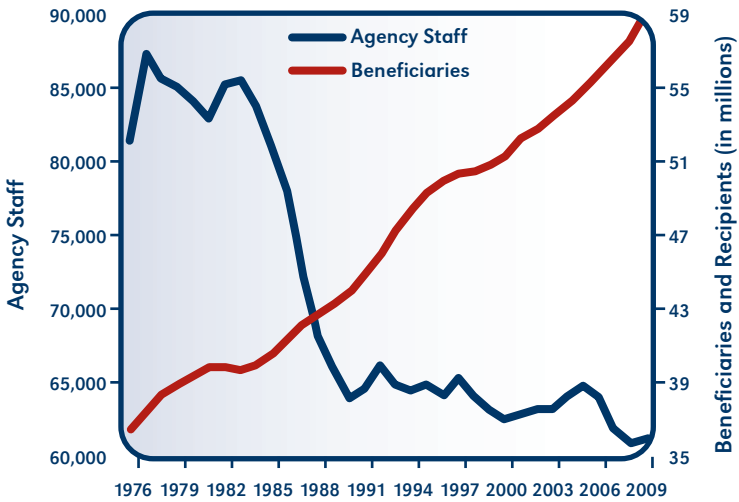
- Began upgrading the telephone systems in all FOs to provide better customer service
- Developed a strategy to move our major, master files into an industry standard, modern database that will enable us to more efficiently maintain these mission critical files
- Designed and oversaw construction of the Durham Support Center in support of the Information Technology Operations Assurance project which will allow us to provide most critical services in the event of an emergency affecting the National Computer Center
- Established the Future Systems Technology Advisory Panel to provide advice and recommendations to the Commissioner on IT systems and electronic services
-

SSA Is a Good Investment in America

Difference Between the President's Request (including supplementals) and Appropriation



Despite Increasing Beneficiary Population, SSA FTEs are at a Historic Low



*Productivity increases have allowed us to handle some of our increased workloads despite lower staffing levels.

FY 2007 IT Spending per Employee for Medium-Sized Agencies (15,000 – 79,999 Employees)

