



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Commissioner Releases New Agency Strategic Plan

Five-Year Plan Identifies Challenges and Goals for Agency

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today released the agency's new Strategic Plan. Using the motto, "Social Security Benefits America," the plan identifies the challenges the agency faces and the steps needed over the next five years to meet those challenges.

"The public expects us to get things done," Commissioner Astrue said. "This Strategic Plan charts the course that will enable us to maintain a strong level of performance on Social Security's core workloads and work toward long-term improvement of our service to the public."

Among the many challenges facing the agency are the unacceptable backlog of disability claims and the aging baby boomer population who will be filing retirement and disability claims at an ever-increasing rate. To address these and other challenges, the plan concentrates on four specific goals:

- ◆ Eliminate the hearings backlog and prevent its recurrence.
- ◆ Improve the speed and quality of the disability process.
- ◆ Improve retiree and other core services.
- ◆ Preserve the public's trust in Social Security's programs.

Underlying each of these goals is a series of specific objectives and long-term outcomes the agency plans to achieve. The plan also notes the key foundational elements for achieving success: Social Security's employees and information technology.

"Our workforce is one of our greatest strengths," Commissioner Astrue said. "The challenges we face have not shaken our resolve to provide the vital services on which the nation depends. We also need to rigorously explore and wisely employ new 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. A strong and modern infrastructure requires new investments in technology."

"Abraham Lincoln once said, 'The best way to predict your future is to create it,'" Commissioner Astrue said. "This Strategic Plan charts the course we will need to take over the next five years

to create our vision of the future. Working together with the President, Members of Congress and our stakeholders, we can provide world-class service for generations to come.”

To read the full text of Social Security’s Strategic Plan, go www.socialsecurity.gov/strategicplan.html.

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