



SOCIAL SECURITY
Office of the Inspector General

July 14, 2010

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

In an August 4, 2009 letter, you asked that we conduct a review regarding Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) hearing request dismissals to ensure that disabled individuals are afforded the rights and protections required by law and regulations. To address your request, we examined dismissal rates and determined whether ODAR followed applicable policies and procedures in dismissing hearing requests.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our insights on this important matter. As discussed in the enclosed report, we found improvements could be made for dismissing hearing requests. Our review also identified unsupported variances in dismissal rates among ODAR's regions, hearing offices, and administrative law judges. In a separate report, we plan to make recommendations to the Social Security Administration that will address the issues identified in this review.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please call me or have your staff contact Misha Kelly, Congressional and Intra-governmental Liaison at (202) 358-6319.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr.
Inspector General

Enclosure

cc:
Michael J. Astrue

CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSE REPORT

Office of Disability Adjudication and Review Hearing Request Dismissals

A-07-10-21049



July 2010

Mission

By conducting independent and objective audits, evaluations and investigations, we inspire public confidence in the integrity and security of SSA's programs and operations and protect them against fraud, waste and abuse. We provide timely, useful and reliable information and advice to Administration officials, Congress and the public.

Authority

The Inspector General Act created independent audit and investigative units, called the Office of Inspector General (OIG). The mission of the OIG, as spelled out in the Act, is to:

- Conduct and supervise independent and objective audits and investigations relating to agency programs and operations.**
- Promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency within the agency.**
- Prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in agency programs and operations.**
- Review and make recommendations regarding existing and proposed legislation and regulations relating to agency programs and operations.**
- Keep the agency head and the Congress fully and currently informed of problems in agency programs and operations.**

To ensure objectivity, the IG Act empowers the IG with:

- Independence to determine what reviews to perform.**
- Access to all information necessary for the reviews.**
- Authority to publish findings and recommendations based on the reviews.**

Vision

We strive for continual improvement in SSA's programs, operations and management by proactively seeking new ways to prevent and deter fraud, waste and abuse. We commit to integrity and excellence by supporting an environment that provides a valuable public service while encouraging employee development and retention and fostering diversity and innovation.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective was to address the request of Senator Claire McCaskill regarding Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) hearing request dismissals. Specifically, we examined dismissal rates and determined whether ODAR followed applicable policies and procedures in dismissing hearing requests.

BACKGROUND

ODAR is responsible for holding hearings and issuing decisions as part of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) process for determining whether a person may receive benefits. ODAR directs a nation-wide field organization staffed with administrative law judges (ALJ) who are tasked with conducting impartial hearings and making decisions on appealed determinations involving Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance benefits (Title II) and Supplemental Security Income payments (Title XVI).

Regulations specify conditions under which an ALJ may dismiss a claimant's request for hearing (see Appendix C).¹ In Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, ODAR issued dispositions on 660,842 hearing requests, of which 103,071 (16 percent) were dismissals.

In an August 4, 2009 letter, Senator McCaskill requested that we review dismissals of hearing requests to ensure disabled individuals are afforded the rights and protections required by law and regulations. The Senator also requested we determine whether there are any unusual dismissal trends by individual ALJs or by regions.

To address Senator McCaskill's request, we performed case review analysis on selected hearing request dismissals to determine whether there was documentation to support the dismissal. In addition, we examined dismissal rates by region, hearing office, and ALJ.

¹ 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.957 and 416.1457.

Results of Review

We reviewed three dismissal types to determine whether ODAR followed applicable policies and procedures in dismissing hearing requests. First, we analyzed ALJ dismissals for untimely hearing requests, as requested by Senator McCaskill. In addition, we reviewed the two most prevalent dismissal types: abandonment and withdrawal.²

We found that there were areas where improvements could be made for dismissing hearing requests.³ Improvements were needed most in the area of untimely hearing request dismissals.

- For untimely hearing requests, our review disclosed cases where dismissals were not (1) appropriate, (2) supported by ODAR requests for claimants' explanations for untimely filing, (3) supported by an ALJ rationale, or (4) processed timely.
- For abandonment dismissals, we found cases where the dismissals were issued without the necessary attempts to contact claimants documented in the case folders.
- For withdrawal dismissals, we found one case where the claimant's case folder did not contain evidence the claimant or the claimant's representative requested the hearing request be withdrawn.

Our analysis of dismissal rates identified wide variances among ODAR regions, hearing offices, and ALJs. ODAR stated that scientific or statistical data do not exist to support an explanation of dismissal rate variances. Although ODAR stated economic and demographic factors might explain the variances, it did not expand on those factors or how they impact variances in dismissal rates.

We will issue a separate report to the Commissioner of SSA with recommendations to correct the problems with hearing request dismissals found during this review.

² See Appendix C.

³ We shared the results of our review with ODAR officials whose comments were incorporated in the report, where appropriate.

UNTIMELY HEARING REQUEST DISMISSALS

We reviewed 50 cases dismissed in FY 2009 where ODAR determined the claimant filed the hearing request untimely, that is, not within the prescribed number of days after the prior determination or decision.^{4,5} Our review disclosed cases where dismissals were not

- appropriate,
- supported by ODAR requests for claimants' explanations for untimely filing,
- supported by an ALJ rationale, or
- processed timely.

Dismissals Were Not Appropriate

In 2 of the 50 untimely hearing request dismissals we reviewed, it appeared the ALJ should not have issued an untimely hearing request dismissal.

- One claimant filed the hearing request timely (18 days after the denial determination) yet the ALJ issued an untimely hearing request dismissal.⁶ The claimant appealed the dismissal to the Appeals Council, which remanded the decision back to the ALJ. The ALJ subsequently issued a fully favorable decision. Because the ALJ initially issued a dismissal, the claimant waited an additional 393 days to receive an allowance decision.

⁴ HALLEX I-2-0-50.C. ODAR generally considers a hearing request timely filed if it is received within 65 days of the prior determination. However, if a request is not received within the 65-day period, but the U.S. Postal Service stamp cancellation or postmark shows that it was mailed within that period, the postmark is used and the request is considered filed in a timely manner. If a request is received by mail within 70 days of the date of the determination or decision, and the postmark is unreadable or there is no postmark, the request is considered timely filed.

⁵ Of the 50 untimely hearing request dismissals we reviewed, 30 claimants filed new applications for benefits. Of the 30 claimants, 7 were allowed benefits, 6 were denied, and 17 had decisions pending at the time of our review. In addition, four claimants appealed the dismissal to the Appeals Council. One claimant's case was remanded back to the ALJ who allowed benefits (this case is discussed later in this report as an inappropriate dismissal). Two claimants' decisions were denied by the Appeals Council, and one claimant had a decision pending at the time of our review.

⁶ During our review, we found the hearing request forms did not consistently include the date the claimant signed the form or the date the hearing office received the form. In addition, when present, the dates on the hearing request forms did not always correspond with the hearing request dates recorded in ODAR's Case Processing and Management System (CPMS). Therefore, any analysis of a hearing request date is based on the date referenced in the *Order of Dismissal* signed by the ALJ and issued to the claimant. Every *Order of Dismissal* we reviewed included a hearing request date, and that date appeared to be accurate when compared to the hearing request form or the CPMS data if the hearing request form was not dated.

- Another claimant filed the hearing request untimely (112 days after the denial determination). However, on the hearing request, the claimant alleged she was not notified of her denial within the 65-day timeframe to file an appeal. After the dismissal was issued, the claimant provided additional evidence to the ALJ that the disability determination services (DDS) did not inform her of her denial until 112 days after the denial determination.⁷ Given the new evidence, the ALJ conducted a hearing and issued a fully favorable decision. We could not determine whether the ALJ knew, or should have known, of the claimant's situation before issuing the dismissal. However, the circumstances surrounding the dismissal caused the claimant to wait an additional 145 days to receive an allowance decision.

Dismissals Were Not Supported by ODAR Requests for Claimants' Explanations for Untimely Filing

For 7 of the 50 untimely hearing request dismissals we reviewed, there was no evidence in the claimants' case folders that ODAR requested an explanation for late filing from the claimant (good cause).⁸ Therefore, we could not determine whether these claimants were afforded the rights granted to them by ODAR's policy. According to ODAR, when the field office receives an untimely filed hearing request, the field office is instructed to obtain a written statement from the claimant explaining why they filed late.⁹ This statement is forwarded to the hearing office for evaluation by an ALJ as to whether good cause for missing the deadline is established. If the field office does not obtain the written statement, the hearing office is required to send the claimant a letter requesting an explanation for late filing.¹⁰

⁷ The DDS considered the claimant a suicide risk. Therefore, the DDS planned to inform the claimant in person that her claim was denied. However, according to the DDS, the claimant was not notified of her denial timely because of the DDS' workload.

⁸ According to ODAR, all communication at the hearing level should be associated with a claimant's file. This includes notices sent to the claimant and documentation received by the hearing office. Other contact with the claimant, via telephone or from personal visit, which could have an impact on the case should be documented on a *Report of Contact* and placed in the file.

⁹ SSA, POMS GN 03101.020.A.1 and B.1, DI 12010.002, and SI 04030.020.A.1.c.

¹⁰ HALLEX I-2-0-60.C. The hearing office also sends a request for explanation for late filing if the hearing request is filed at the hearing office and does not include an explanation. However, according to ODAR, the majority of hearing requests are filed at a field office and not a hearing office.

Dismissals Were Not Supported by an ALJ Rationale

In 3 of the 50 untimely hearing request dismissals we reviewed, we could not determine whether the ALJ considered the claimant's good cause. Specifically, the ALJ did not state in the *Order of Dismissal* why the claimant did not establish good cause for missing the deadline to request a hearing. ODAR's policy requires that ALJs include a complete rationale in the *Order of Dismissal* explaining why the ALJ found that the claimant has not shown good cause for late filing.¹¹

For example, for these three untimely hearing request dismissals, we would have expected to see a rationale similar to one in another case we reviewed. In this case, the claimant filed his hearing request nearly 5 months late stating he had not read the denial notice carefully and thought he had 1 year to appeal. In the *Order of Dismissal*, the ALJ gave a rationale for issuing the dismissal, stating, "The fact that the claimant did not read his Notice of Disapproved Claim carefully does not constitute good cause for untimely filing. The claimant is well educated (3 years of college) and clearly had the ability to read the Notice and to follow the simple instructions provided in order to file an appeal in a timely manner."

Dismissals Were Not Processed Timely

For the 50 untimely hearing request dismissals we reviewed, ODAR took between 6 and 637 days to issue the dismissal to the claimant (see Table 1). In fact, more than half the dismissals took more than 60 days. To identify reasons for delays in processing untimely hearing request dismissals, we reviewed the 10 cases that took more than 120 days from the hearing request date to the dismissal date. We found the following.

Number of Days	Number of Cases
30 days or less	11
31-60	12
61-90	8
91-120	9
More than 120 days	10
Total	50

- Eight cases sat in the hearing office from 61 to 564 days before they were assigned to an ALJ for a dismissal decision. ODAR policy states cases that appear to meet the criteria for dismissal should be immediately assigned to an ALJ.¹² However, according to ODAR, cases may not be assigned to ALJs immediately because hearing office staff must first screen all cases to identify those that may meet the criteria for dismissal. Cases identified as possible dismissals may then need further development. For example, hearing office staff may need to request explanations from the claimants for filing the hearing requests untimely.

¹¹ HALLEX I-2-4-5.B. and I-2-4-15.B.3.b. According to ODAR, a complete rationale contains the reason why the case meets the criteria for dismissal. If the claimant files a request for Appeals Council review of the dismissal, a well articulated rationale will provide the Council with the ALJ's reasoning. It will be the basis on which to apply the review standards of substantial evidence and abuse of discretion.

¹² HALLEX I-2-1-55.D.8.

- One case was assigned to an ALJ within 28 days of receipt in the hearing office; however, the dismissal was not issued for an additional 126 days. According to ODAR, under ideal conditions, it should take approximately 1 week for the ALJ to determine whether to dismiss a case. However, ODAR stated there are many unusual cases, and ALJs may need more time to adequately address the unique factors of each one.
- One case was not recorded in ODAR's CPMS as received from the SSA field office until 92 days after the hearing request was signed by the claimant; however, upon receipt, ODAR processed the case in 47 days.

According to ODAR, a specific timeframe for processing untimely hearing request dismissals has not been established because each case has unique factors. In addition, ODAR stated that processing time can be affected by the administrative process as a whole, including the (1) circumstances of the hearing office, such as workload and staffing, and (2) facts of the specific case since some cases may be ready for immediate processing while others require additional development.

ABANDONMENT DISMISSALS

We reviewed 50 cases dismissed in FY 2009 because the claimant abandoned the hearing, that is, the claimant did not appear at the scheduled hearing.^{13,14} For seven cases, the claimants' case folders did not contain evidence that ODAR attempted to contact the claimants, as required. These seven claimants did not return the form acknowledging receipt of the hearing notice.¹⁵ This form requests that claimants provide their intentions for attending the hearing.¹⁶ The ALJ may dismiss the hearing request if the claimant has not returned the acknowledgment notice. However, before issuing a dismissal for this reason, the ALJ should ensure all attempts to contact the claimant are clearly documented.¹⁷ Our review of the claimants' case folders did not identify evidence of ODAR's attempts to contact these seven claimants.¹⁸

¹³ HALLEX I-2-4-25.A. An ALJ may dismiss a hearing request when neither the claimant who requested the hearing nor the claimant's representative appears at a scheduled hearing and neither shows good cause for the absence.

¹⁴ Of the 50 abandonment dismissals we reviewed, 8 claimants filed a new application for benefits. Four claimants were denied benefits and four claimants had decisions pending at the time of our review. In addition, two claimants appealed the dismissal to the Appeals Council. Both of these claimants' cases were remanded back to the ALJ and had decisions pending at the time of our review.

¹⁵ *Form HA-504 Acknowledgement of Notice of Hearing.*

¹⁶ HALLEX I-2-3-20.C.

¹⁷ HALLEX I-2-4-25.C.2.b.

¹⁸ In six of the seven cases, the *Order of Dismissal* alleged contact attempts, but there was no evidence of these attempts in the claimants' case folders. Therefore, we cannot determine whether these contact attempts were actually made.

WITHDRAWAL DISMISSALS

We reviewed 50 cases dismissed in FY 2009 because the claimant withdrew the hearing request.¹⁹ However, one claimant's case file did not contain evidence the claimant wanted to withdraw the hearing request.²⁰ ODAR policy indicates that an ALJ may dismiss a request for hearing, at the request of the claimant who filed the hearing request, any time before mailing notice of the decision if certain conditions are met. For example, the hearing request may be dismissed if the claimant or claimant's representative has submitted a signed request to withdraw the hearing request or made such a request for withdrawal orally on the record at the hearing.²¹

DISMISSAL RATES

We analyzed all dismissals issued in FY 2009 and found that dismissal rates varied among ODAR regions, hearing offices, and ALJs. ODAR stated that scientific or statistical data do not exist to support an explanation of dismissal rate variances. Although ODAR stated economic and demographic factors may explain the variances, it did not expand on those factors or how they impact variances in dismissal rates.

We found that dismissal rates varied among ODAR's 10 regions. Specifically, dismissal rates ranged from a low of 14 percent in the Dallas Region to a high of 23 percent in the Kansas City Region (see Table 2).

¹⁹ Of the 50 withdrawal dismissals we reviewed, 8 filed new applications for benefits. Two were allowed benefits, one was denied, and five had decisions pending at the time of our review. In addition, two claimants appealed to the Appeals Council where they had decisions pending at the time of our review.

²⁰ The *Order of Dismissal* alleged that the claimant's representative requested the case be dismissed, but there was no evidence of the request in the claimant's case folder. Therefore, we cannot determine whether this request was actually made.

²¹ 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.957 and 416.1457. HALLEX I-2-4-20.A.

Table 2			
Percent of Dismissals by Region²²			
Region	Number of Dispositions²³	Number of Dismissals²⁴	Dismissal Rate
Kansas City	31,463	7,216	23%
New York	63,444	13,442	21%
Chicago	94,614	16,493	17%
Philadelphia	74,289	12,149	16%
Boston	22,866	3,681	16%
San Francisco	65,476	10,461	16%
Atlanta	174,838	26,999	15%
Seattle	17,940	2,677	15%
Denver	17,675	2,673	15%
Dallas	89,058	12,528	14%

We also found wide variances in dismissal rates within regions (see Table 3). For example, one hearing office in the Kansas City Region had a dismissal rate of 15 percent while another hearing office in the region had a dismissal rate of 34 percent. In fact, the Kansas City, Missouri, Hearing Office had the highest dismissal rate in the Nation at 34 percent.²⁵

Table 3		
High and Low Dismissal Rates per Hearing Office by Region		
Region	Hearing Office Dismissal Rates	
	High	Low
Kansas City	34%	15%
New York	33%	5%
Philadelphia	26%	10%
Atlanta	26%	7%
Chicago	26%	10%
San Francisco	24%	11%
Boston	23%	14%
Dallas	21%	10%
Denver	19%	11%
Seattle	18%	10%

²² This table does not include 9,162 dispositions, including 1,236 dismissals, issued by National Hearing Centers or the National Screening Unit. These offices hold video hearings or issue on the record decisions to assist hearing offices across the country.

²³ The data file we received from ODAR's CPMS contained slightly fewer cases than ODAR identified in its workload reports for FY 2009. However, this difference is immaterial.

²⁴ The number of dismissals includes all cases with a dismissal. Therefore, if a concurrent Title II and XVI case had a favorable decision on one Title and a dismissal on the other Title; we counted the case as a dismissal. According to SSA, this could have had an impact on dismissal rates by region and hearing office since dismissals on concurrent cases are much more common than other dismissals. Specifically, any region or hearing office that processed more than the average number of dismissals on concurrent cases would most likely have a higher dismissal rate. However, we did not perform analysis to determine the impact dismissals on concurrent cases had on dismissal rates by region or hearing office.

²⁵ See Appendix D for dismissal rates for all hearing offices.

We also identified a wide variance in dismissal rates by ALJ. Although 90 percent of ALJs had dismissal rates of 25 percent or less, the dismissal rates by ALJ varied from 0 to 73 percent.

Of 1,176 ALJs in our review, 112 had dismissal rates between 26 and 73 percent.²⁶ However, 56 of the 112 ALJs were Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judges (HOCALJ). It is ODAR's procedure to assign HOCALJs cases that should receive a favorable dismissal.²⁷ This may have resulted in these 56 HOCALJs having higher dismissal rates than other ALJs. However, we are unaware of any reasons why the remaining 56 ALJs would have disproportionately high dismissal rates.

²⁶ ODAR reports 1,182 ALJs in FY 2009. However, we limited this analysis to ALJs that issued 100 or more dispositions in FY 2009 to ensure the ALJs processed a sufficient number for accurate analysis.

²⁷ Favorable dismissals are issued as a result of SSA's Informal Remand initiative. Under this initiative, cases are screened and remanded to DDS to determine whether an allowance can be issued without a hearing. If the DDS can issue an allowance, a dismissal is issued at the hearing level. According to SSA, the Informal Remand initiative could also impact region and hearing office dismissal rates. For example, if a particular state had a lower or higher number of allowances after informal remands, these numbers would have an impact on the dismissal rates for a particular region or hearing office. However, we did not perform analysis to determine the impact the Informal Remand initiative on dismissal rates by region or hearing office.

Conclusions

We found that there were areas where improvements could be made for dismissing hearing requests. For example, SSA needs to remind employees that the actions taken to support dismissals should be documented in the claimants' case folders. We also found wide variances in dismissal rates among ODAR's regions, hearing offices, and ALJs. While variations in dismissal rates do not necessarily indicate improper dismissals, SSA does not have scientific or statistical data that explains the dismissal rate variances. Therefore, SSA would need to conduct a review to capture such data.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – Acronyms

APPENDIX B – Scope and Methodology

APPENDIX C – Office of Disability Adjudication and Review Dismissal Types

APPENDIX D – Fiscal Year 2009 Dismissal Rates by Region and Hearing Office

Acronyms

ALJ	Administrative Law Judge
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
CPMS	Case Processing and Management System
DDS	Disability Determination Services
FY	Fiscal Year
HALLEX	Hearings, Appeals, and Litigation Law Manual
HOCALJ	Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge
ODAR	Office of Disability Adjudication and Review
POMS	Program Operations Manual System
SSA	Social Security Administration
U.S.C.	United States Code

Scope and Methodology

To address Senator McCaskill's request related to Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) hearing request dismissals, we:

- Reviewed applicable Federal laws and regulations and pertinent parts of the Hearings, Appeals, and Litigation Law Manual related to administrative law judge (ALJ) hearings.
- Reviewed prior Office of the Inspector General, Government Accountability Office, and Social Security Advisory Board reports related to the ALJ hearings process.
- Obtained all dispositions during Fiscal Year 2009 from ODAR's Case Processing and Management System (CPMS).
- Selected a sample of 50 cases each of untimely hearing request, abandonment, and withdrawal dismissals.¹ We reviewed documentation in the claimant's case folders to determine whether ODAR followed applicable policies and procedures in dismissing hearing requests.
- Analyzed dismissal rates by ODAR region, hearing office, and ALJ level.
- Obtained information from ODAR regarding policies and procedures for dismissing hearing requests.

Our work was conducted at the Office of Audit in Kansas City, Missouri, from September 2009 through February 2010. The entity audited was ODAR. We determined that the data used in this report were sufficiently reliable given the review objective and their intended use. We conducted our review in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspections*.

¹ We had to replace 2 untimely hearing request dismissals and 1 abandonment dismissal in each sample of 50 dismissals. Though they were originally selected in our samples, they were replaced when we discovered they appeared to be miscoded in ODAR's CPMS. The untimely hearing request dismissals should have been coded as administrative dismissals while the abandonment dismissal should have been coded as an untimely hearing request dismissal.

Office of Disability Adjudication and Review Dismissal Types

Type of Dismissal	Dismissal Definition	Number of Dismissals FY 2009 ¹
Abandonment	The claimant did not appear for the hearing, and the administrative law judge (ALJ) did not find good cause for failure to appear.	46,675
Withdrawal	The claimant withdrew the hearing request.	29,587
Favorable	A lower level Social Security Administration (SSA) component issued a revised favorable decision, rendering the need for a hearing moot.	15,165
Untimely Hearing Request	The hearing request was untimely, and the ALJ did not find good cause for late filing.	6,155
Other	The Appeals Council remanded an earlier application for the same claim and time period.	3,328
Administrative	The claimant did not have a right to a hearing.	3,234
Death	The claimant died.	2,534
Special	Dismissal code used under management direction.	2,254
<i>Res Judicata</i>	SSA made a previous determination on the same facts and issues. The previous determination became final.	664
Abandonment Pre-hearing	The claimant did not appear for the pre-hearing conference.	54
Improper Party	An improper party filed the hearing request.	39
Total		109,689

¹ The Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) reported 103,071 dismissals in Fiscal Year 2009. We identified more than the ODAR reported number of dismissals for two reasons related to concurrent Title II and XVI cases. First, ODAR counts dispositions based on the Title XVI disposition. So, if the Title XVI decision in a concurrent case is favorable and the Title II disposition is a dismissal, ODAR includes the case in the count of favorable decisions. However, we included the case as a dismissal for our review. Second, concurrent cases can have different dismissal types for each title. For example, the Title II disposition could be a withdrawal dismissal and the Title XVI disposition could be a favorable dismissal. We counted each dismissal type for our analysis since each type has its own criteria.

Fiscal Year 2009 Dismissal Rates by Region and Hearing Office

Location	Number of Dispositions	Number of Dismissals ¹	Dismissal Rate
Boston Region	22,866	3,681	16%
Providence, RI	2,613	592	23%
Portland, ME	2,961	500	17%
Manchester, NH	2,499	401	16%
Boston, MA	6,375	978	15%
Springfield, MA	3,090	456	15%
Hartford, CT	2,946	430	15%
New Haven, CT	2,372	324	14%
Boston Regional Office Staff	10	0	0%
New York Region	63,444	13,442	21%
Jericho, NY	4,918	1,623	33%
Syracuse, NY	5,001	1,593	32%
Bronx, NY	4,622	1,406	30%
Buffalo, NY	6,540	1,760	27%
Albany, NY	4,932	1,104	22%
New York, NY	7,681	1,497	19%
White Plains, NY	2,516	489	19%
Voorhees, NJ	3,902	738	19%
Brooklyn, NY	7,266	1,327	18%
Queens, NY	3,118	508	16%
Newark, NJ	4,990	803	16%
Ponce, PR	1,260	182	14%
San Juan, PR	5,374	371	7%
Mayaguez, PR	904	41	5%
New York Screening Unit	420	0	0%
Philadelphia Region	74,289	12,149	16%
Philadelphia-E, PA	4,522	1,154	26%
Pittsburgh, PA	4,544	1,057	23%
Philadelphia, PA	4,844	1,031	21%
Elkins Park, PA	5,384	1,105	21%

¹ The number of dismissals includes all cases with a dismissal. Therefore, if a concurrent case had a favorable decision on one title and a dismissal on the other title, we counted the case as a dismissal.

Location	Number of Dispositions	Number of Dismissals¹	Dismissal Rate
Washington, D.C.	2,476	471	19%
Baltimore, MD	4,732	812	17%
Morgantown, WV	3,463	558	16%
Harrisburg, PA	5,647	903	16%
Johnstown, PA	2,772	421	15%
Cranberry, PA	4,644	705	15%
Roanoke, VA	3,978	589	15%
Wilkes-Barre, PA	4,798	709	15%
Dover, DE	2,239	321	14%
Norfolk, VA	3,194	455	14%
Richmond, VA	3,514	460	13%
Charlottesville, VA	2,849	337	12%
Huntington, WV	5,112	510	10%
Charleston, WV	5,577	551	10%
Atlanta Region	174,838	26,999	15%
Miami, FL	3,279	838	26%
Greensboro, NC	5,894	1,434	24%
Atlanta-N, GA	5,597	1,205	22%
Florence, AL	3,657	784	21%
Montgomery, AL	6,026	1,265	21%
Jacksonville, FL	6,454	1,271	20%
Charlotte, NC	6,990	1,308	19%
Mobile, AL	6,953	1,277	18%
Charleston, SC	4,923	895	18%
Raleigh, NC	6,954	1,157	17%
Nashville, TN	4,845	802	17%
Orlando, FL	5,662	914	16%
Fort Lauderdale, FL	7,381	1,188	16%
Columbia, SC	5,156	817	16%
Memphis, TN	5,506	844	15%
Tampa, FL	7,884	1,201	15%
Savannah, GA	4,856	724	15%
Jackson, MS	4,731	703	15%
Greenville, SC	6,618	935	14%
Birmingham, AL	8,908	1,244	14%
Middlesboro, KY	1,730	240	14%
Knoxville, TN	6,054	776	13%
Chattanooga, TN	6,036	748	12%
Atlanta, GA	10,132	1,192	12%

Location	Number of Dispositions	Number of Dismissals ¹	Dismissal Rate
Paducah, KY	2,322	272	12%
Lexington, KY	5,606	652	12%
Louisville, KY	4,192	460	11%
Tupelo, MS	4,463	452	10%
Hattiesburg, MS	5,489	552	10%
Macon, GA	4,825	444	9%
Kingsport, TN	5,715	405	7%
Chicago Region	94,614	16,493	17%
Columbus, OH	4,569	1,166	26%
Grand Rapids, MI	4,705	1,110	24%
Dayton, OH	2,871	655	23%
Oak Park, MI	6,058	1,336	22%
Detroit, MI	5,515	1,189	22%
Oak Brook, IL	5,036	1,074	21%
Cleveland, OH	6,702	1,317	20%
Cincinnati, OH	4,756	907	19%
Milwaukee, WI	5,211	985	19%
Flint, MI	3,667	657	18%
Lansing, MI	3,719	644	17%
Minneapolis, MN	7,678	1,196	16%
Chicago Video Center	899	132	15%
Indianapolis, IN	5,665	827	15%
Peoria, IL	3,927	552	14%
Chicago, IL	4,994	687	14%
Evanston, IL	5,238	673	13%
Madison, WI (Satellite)	965	108	11%
Orland Park, IL	5,754	627	11%
Evansville, IN	3,082	319	10%
Fort Wayne, IN	3,232	332	10%
Chicago Regional Office Staff	2	0	0%
Chicago Screening Unit	369	0	0%
Dallas Region	89,058	12,528	14%
Metairie, LA	3,978	820	21%
New Orleans, LA	5,319	962	18%
Dallas-N, TX	7,199	1,162	16%
Little Rock, AR	7,649	1,205	16%
Dallas-DT, TX	6,960	1,026	15%
Houston, TX	5,473	796	15%
Houston-DT, TX	4,915	707	14%

Location	Number of Dispositions	Number of Dismissals ¹	Dismissal Rate
Alexandria, LA	6,209	885	14%
Shreveport, LA	4,688	659	14%
Fort Smith, AR	3,054	410	13%
Tulsa, OK	5,628	752	13%
Fort Worth, TX	4,996	643	13%
McAlester, OK	1,305	151	12%
San Antonio, TX	9,120	1,050	12%
Oklahoma City, OK	6,648	720	11%
Albuquerque, NM	5,683	580	10%
Dallas Regional Office Staff	208	0	0%
Dallas Screening Unit	26	0	0%
Kansas City Region	31,463	7,216	23%
Kansas City, MO	5,275	1,780	34%
Omaha, NE	2,475	585	24%
Creve Coeur, MO	6,621	1,449	22%
Wichita, KS	4,732	1,033	22%
Springfield, MO	2,611	562	22%
St. Louis, MO	6,125	1,248	20%
West Des Moines, IA	3,624	559	15%
Denver Region	17,675	2,673	15%
Denver, CO	5,232	1,007	19%
Colorado Springs, CO	3,359	548	16%
Billings, MT	2,809	437	16%
Salt Lake City, UT	3,541	385	11%
Fargo, ND	2,734	296	11%
San Francisco Region	65,476	10,461	16%
Los Angeles-DT, CA	3,842	904	24%
Downey, CA	2,543	585	23%
Pasadena, CA	2,561	545	21%
Los Angeles-W, CA	3,845	803	21%
San Diego, CA	3,229	656	20%
Oakland, CA	3,289	564	17%
San Bernardino, CA	4,647	776	17%
Las Vegas, NV	1,588	250	16%
Orange, CA	3,895	596	15%
Long Beach, CA	4,022	592	15%
Phoenix, AZ	5,029	704	14%
San Jose, CA	2,763	376	14%
San Francisco, CA	3,777	508	13%

Location	Number of Dispositions	Number of Dismissals¹	Dismissal Rate
Stockton, CA	3,426	456	13%
Sacramento, CA	5,724	741	13%
Santa Barbara, CA	1,639	212	13%
Fresno, CA	3,695	473	13%
Tucson, AZ	2,976	370	12%
San Rafael, CA	2,282	270	12%
Honolulu, HI	701	80	11%
San Francisco Screening Unit	3	0	0%
Seattle Region	17,940	2,677	15%
Seattle, WA	7,990	1,402	18%
Eugene, OR	2,660	389	15%
Portland, OR	4,061	556	14%
Spokane, WA	3,229	330	10%

DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

Commissioner of Social Security

Office of Management and Budget, Income Maintenance Branch

Chairman and Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means

Chief of Staff, Committee on Ways and Means

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Social Security

Majority and Minority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Social Security

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

Chairman and Ranking Minority, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Finance

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Social Security Pensions and Family Policy

Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Senate Special Committee on Aging
Social Security Advisory Board

Overview of the Office of the Inspector General

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is comprised of an Office of Audit (OA), Office of Investigations (OI), Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General (OCIG), Office of External Relations (OER), and Office of Technology and Resource Management (OTRM). To ensure compliance with policies and procedures, internal controls, and professional standards, the OIG also has a comprehensive Professional Responsibility and Quality Assurance program.

Office of Audit

OA conducts financial and performance audits of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) programs and operations and makes recommendations to ensure program objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently. Financial audits assess whether SSA's financial statements fairly present SSA's financial position, results of operations, and cash flow. Performance audits review the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of SSA's programs and operations. OA also conducts short-term management reviews and program evaluations on issues of concern to SSA, Congress, and the general public.

Office of Investigations

OI conducts investigations related to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in SSA programs and operations. This includes wrongdoing by applicants, beneficiaries, contractors, third parties, or SSA employees performing their official duties. This office serves as liaison to the Department of Justice on all matters relating to the investigation of SSA programs and personnel. OI also conducts joint investigations with other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies.

Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General

OCIG provides independent legal advice and counsel to the IG on various matters, including statutes, regulations, legislation, and policy directives. OCIG also advises the IG on investigative procedures and techniques, as well as on legal implications and conclusions to be drawn from audit and investigative material. Also, OCIG administers the Civil Monetary Penalty program.

Office of External Relations

OER manages OIG's external and public affairs programs, and serves as the principal advisor on news releases and in providing information to the various news reporting services. OER develops OIG's media and public information policies, directs OIG's external and public affairs programs, and serves as the primary contact for those seeking information about OIG. OER prepares OIG publications, speeches, and presentations to internal and external organizations, and responds to Congressional correspondence.

Office of Technology and Resource Management

OTRM supports OIG by providing information management and systems security. OTRM also coordinates OIG's budget, procurement, telecommunications, facilities, and human resources. In addition, OTRM is the focal point for OIG's strategic planning function, and the development and monitoring of performance measures. In addition, OTRM receives and assigns for action allegations of criminal and administrative violations of Social Security laws, identifies fugitives receiving benefit payments from SSA, and provides technological assistance to investigations.