



Report Summary

Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General



The Social Security Administration's New Data Center Site Alternatives (Limited Distribution) (A-14-10-20184)

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* provided \$500 million to the Social Security Administration (SSA) to replace the National Computer Center (NCC). The Office of the Inspector General was tasked with providing oversight for the development and implementation of the NCC replacement. As part of our oversight function, we initiated this review to evaluate the appropriateness of the short list of potential sites selected by the General Services Administration (GSA)/SSA team for the new data center. We contracted with Strategic e-Business Solutions, Inc. (SeBS) and its subcontractor, Fortress International Group, to assist with this review.

SeBs found that in general, the SSA Site Selection Team had developed a highly sophisticated set of selection criteria to evaluate general geographic areas and prospective individual properties. The Agency's decision criterion seeks to avoid both natural and man-made risks that could be hazardous to the data center's operation. In addition, the decision factors define major site and data center construction criteria that would ultimately have a significant impact on the site property to be selected.

However, questions remain concerning the process that the SSA Site Selection Team employed in culling the site properties down to a short list. The three finalist sites have conflicts with one, two, and even three secondary criteria, while several unsolicited sites have only one documented secondary criteria conflict.

SeBs made several recommendations. SeBs recommended that SSA work with GSA to (1) ensure the final site selection report includes all information necessary so any reader, whether involved with the site selection process or a complete outsider, can understand the methods used without the need to make assumptions; (2) assess the impact of the Environmental Assessment on the schedule for site procurement; (3) get every aspect of the electrical utility infrastructure addressed and confirmed; (4) explain the rationale for why the team re-categorized mandatory requirements as secondary requirements; and (5) reassess its level of detail concerning the overall definition of the process that will be used to assess site criteria and compare site properties.

This report contains Federal procurement sensitive source selection information. The disclosure of such information is restricted by section 27 of the *Procurement Integrity Act*.