

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

September 2010



Objective

The former Chairman of the Social Security Subcommittee and Representatives Johnson and Linder asked us to determine the portion of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 administrative expenses dedicated to training, as well as the role of off-site training conferences within these training funds, and define the Agency's decision-making process related to off-site training, including steps taken to ensure service delivery is not affected when employees are at these conferences.

Background

The Agency uses various financial systems to track the costs related to employee training. Some training costs are more easily attributed to individual components and the activities being measured, whereas other costs relate to activities that must first be measured so the costs can be properly allocated.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-05-10-10118.pdf>

Congressional Response Report: Training Expenditures at the Social Security Administration (A-05-10-10118)

Our Findings

Although SSA's cost systems were not set up to specifically track and accumulate training costs in one report or management information system, we reviewed the available financial data and estimated the Agency spent approximately \$409 million on training-related activities in FY 2009, representing about 3.8 percent of SSA's \$10.7 billion administrative budget. This amount does not include training costs incurred by the State Disability Determination Services, which we estimated could be another \$64 million. SSA incurred approximately \$9.7 million in off-site conference costs in FY 2009, or about 2.4 percent of the estimated \$409 million spent by the Agency on training in FY 2009 (and less than 0.1 percent of the Agency's administrative budget). Beginning in FY 2010, off-site conferences became subject to centralized oversight to ensure such training closely adhered to the Agency's training procurement policies.

We also found that SSA regional offices, which incurred the majority of the training expenses, had a degree of autonomy when planning for employee training needs, which may include off-site conferences. In addition, the regions and Agency lacked a comprehensive training database that could provide detailed training information for each regional employee, though the Agency is developing a new system that will provide this information upon implementation.

Finally, we found that in the absence of a formal or written policy, field office managers took a variety of steps to ensure service delivery was not affected when employees attended training, whether the training was provided internally or off-site.