

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

January 2011



Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) (1) accurately certified Social Security beneficiaries entitled to receive catch-up economic recovery payments (ERP) under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA) and (2) had controls and procedures in place to prevent the issuance of duplicate ERPs to ineligible beneficiaries.

Background

ARRA provided for a one-time ERP of \$250 to adult Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries. In May 2009, about 52 million beneficiaries received their \$250 payments, totaling about \$13 billion. From June 2009 to December 2010, SSA performed periodic catch-up runs to identify and certify ERPs to newly eligible individuals.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-09-10-11099.pdf>

Economic Recovery Payments – Catch-Up Payments (A-09-10-11099)

Our Findings

SSA properly certified 99.8 percent of the catch-up ERPs to beneficiaries who were eligible to receive payment under ARRA. In addition, we did not identify any beneficiaries who were eligible for an ERP but were not certified to receive payment. However, we estimate that 989 beneficiaries received improper payments totaling \$247,250. Specifically, we estimate that:

- 449 beneficiaries received 2 ERPs because they did not have a Social Security number (SSN) or had 2 different SSNs, resulting in \$112,250 in improper payments.
- 468 beneficiaries filed for nonreceipt and subsequently negotiated both the original and replacement ERPs, resulting in \$117,000 in improper payments.
- 72 beneficiaries were concurrently entitled to Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits and received 2 ERPs, resulting in \$18,000 in improper payments.

This occurred, in part, because SSA's automated systems did not always identify whether ERPs had previously been issued to beneficiaries without an SSN or under another SSN or payment record.

Our Recommendations

Should another ERP be enacted into law, we recommend SSA establish additional controls to prevent or detect the issuance of duplicate ERPs to beneficiaries without SSNs.

In addition, we recommend SSA take appropriate action to recover the duplicate ERPs identified by our audit.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.