

# Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

September 2009



## Objective

Our objective was to determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) had taken appropriate actions to resolve delayed auxiliary or survivor claimants and pay underpayments to all affected beneficiaries.

## Background

SSA requires that auxiliary and survivor claimants submit evidence to establish their entitlement to benefits. Individuals who have filed a claim, but who have not provided all the required evidence of eligibility and whose entitlement would affect other beneficiaries who are receiving benefits are placed in a delayed payment status. When a claimant is placed in delayed status, SSA must control the claim to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to properly pay all affected beneficiaries.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-09-08-18006.pdf>

## **Improper Payments Resulting from Unresolved Delayed Claimants (A-09-08-18006)**

### Our Findings

We found that SSA needs to improve its controls and procedures to ensure appropriate actions are taken to resolve delayed auxiliary or survivor claimants and properly pay all affected beneficiaries. Based on our sample results, we estimate that

- if the delayed claimants were approved, these auxiliary or survivor claimants were due about \$29.6 million because SSA had not resolved the delayed claimants timely or
- if the delayed claimants were not approved, currently entitled beneficiaries on the same records were improperly paid about \$22 million because SSA had not resolved the delayed claimants timely.

Finally, we estimate that the currently entitled auxiliaries or survivors may not be properly paid \$67.6 million unless SSA takes action to resolve their delayed claimants.

### Our Recommendations

We recommend that SSA:

1. Take corrective action to properly resolve the 28 records with delayed claimants identified by our audit.
2. Identify and take corrective action on the population of delayed claimants that have been pending more than 90 days.
3. Improve controls to ensure that delayed claimants are resolved within appropriate time frames.
4. Remind employees to diary, follow up on, and timely resolve delayed claimants.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.