

# Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

February 2011



## Objective

To assess the impact of the alien nonpayment provisions (ANP) on Social Security Administration (SSA) field offices along the Mexican border.

## Background

Under the *Social Security Act*, benefits are not payable to noncitizens when they reside outside the United States. This provision attempts to avoid paying benefits to ANP beneficiaries residing in another country who have little or no connection to the United States and were not dependent on the numberholder for their livelihoods while he or she was working. However, there are several exceptions to this rule, and, in practice, citizens of many countries are able to meet one or more of those exceptions.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-08-10-20140.pdf>

## **Impact of Alien Nonpayment Provisions on Field Offices Along the Mexican Border (A-08-10-20140)**

### Our Findings

While we recognize current law requires that ANP beneficiaries routinely visit the United States to maintain their benefits, we believe this practice has a significant impact on some field offices along the Mexican border. For example, we found that over 1,000 ANP beneficiaries visit some field offices monthly to establish presence in the United States. Providing services to such a large volume of beneficiaries increases workload; adds to wait times; and, during high traffic days, results in some office space issues. Furthermore, field office personnel at each office we visited told us the number of ANP beneficiaries is increasing. For these reasons, some field office personnel we interviewed questioned the need for ANP beneficiaries to routinely visit field offices.

### Our Recommendations

We recommended that SSA:

1. Continue to explore ways the Agency can use biometric technology to verify ANP beneficiaries' routine visits to the United States.
2. Continue to work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to verify the identities of ANP beneficiaries at the border. To ensure consistency, we believe SSA should consider developing model language for field offices to use when establishing agreements with DHS. Once implemented, field office personnel should monitor the identity verification process to ensure that DHS personnel are complying with SSA policies and procedures.
3. Consider placing field office personnel at the border to verify the identities of ANP beneficiaries if the Agency is unable to establish agreements with DHS.

SSA agreed with Recommendations 1 and 2. Although SSA disagreed with Recommendation 3, we believe the Agency considered our recommendation, but stated it did not want to place SSA employees in situations that could compromise their safety.