

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

August 2011



Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) had appropriate oversight and monitoring controls for the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Project. In addition, we determined whether (1) expenditures for WIPA were allowable, supported, and in accordance with the grant's terms and (2) grantees accomplished the grant objectives.

Background

The *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999* required SSA to award cooperative agreements (grants) with community organizations called WIPA's to disseminate accurate information to disabled beneficiaries about work incentives programs. From 2006 through 2010, SSA awarded about \$93 million in grant funds to 103 WIPA grantees.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-03-10-11054.pdf>

Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Project (A-03-10-11054)

Our Findings

Based on our review, the Agency was unable to show how many beneficiaries actually received WIPA services since its inception. Beneficiary data collected and reported by the grantees was inconsistent and unreliable from October 2006 through September 2008. SSA recognized the problem and implemented the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) system. The ETO system showed 12,574 beneficiaries were enrolled in WIPA services from October 2009 through March 2010, however, we verified that 11,890 (95 percent) were eligible to receive WIPA services. We found the remaining 684 (5 percent) individuals were either missing or had invalid Social Security numbers, were not receiving benefits, or died before the WIPA enrollment date. We also found that SSA had not established performance goals or specific targets to define the level of performance by the WIPA grantees. The lack of clearly defined performance goals contributed to a significant variation in the cost to enroll beneficiaries in WIPA, ranging from \$138 to \$5,230 among the 103 grantees. Additionally, SSA did not conduct suitability determinations for 56 grant employees as required by the grant award. Finally, two grantees could not demonstrate they had provided \$40,985 in matching funds, and three grantees failed to submit revised budget requests after exceeding their Federal share portion threshold by \$112,029.

Our Recommendations

We made five recommendations to the Agency including: (1) Conduct periodic validity and integrity checks on the ETO data to ensure the data are reliable by verifying beneficiary names, Social Security numbers, and benefit status. Based on the results of the validity and integrity checks, follow up with grantees who continue to enter inaccurate and incomplete information into the ETO system; (2) Establish performance goals for WIPA that define the level of performance WIPA grantees are to achieve, ensuring the performance goals are quantifiable and measurable; and (3) Establish procedures to ensure all grantee employees receive a suitability determination before working on the WIPA grant

SSA agreed with our recommendations.