

Supplemental Security Income Recipients Denied Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefits Based on Lack of Technical Evidence

A-05-18-50654



November 2020

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) stopped Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments when recipients did not provide required technical evidence for their Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) applications.

Background

An individual is not eligible for SSI if SSA advises him/her, on a written, dated notice, of potential eligibility for other benefits; and he/she does not take all appropriate steps to file for and, if eligible, obtain such payments within 30 days of receipt of such notice.

An SSI claims specialist should communicate with the OASDI claims specialist to confirm the recipient is cooperating in pursuit of the claim, including whether the recipient provides certain required technical evidence, such as proof of age, relationship, or divorce. If, after receiving proper notification, an SSI recipient does not cooperate in pursuit of the OASDI claim, the claims specialist should stop SSI payments.

We identified 2,856 individuals from 1 segment of SSA's Master Beneficiary Record who were receiving SSI payments in or before Calendar Year (CY) 2019 with an OASDI denial indicating lack of technical evidence for OASDI claims filed during CYs 2015 through 2018.

Findings

Of 100 sampled recipients, SSA did not issue the proper SSI notices and therefore could not stop payments to 13 who did not provide required evidence for their OASDI claims. As of December 2019, SSA had paid the 13 recipients \$250,842. We project SSA had paid approximately \$99 million to 6,860 recipients who had not received proper notices as of December 2019. SSA will pay 10 of the 13 recipients an additional \$63,642 in CY 2020. We estimate 5,720 recipients will receive approximately \$36 million in additional payments in CY 2020. SSA relies on internal communication between OASDI and SSI claims specialists in field offices to ensure payments stop when required, which is not a sufficient control.

Recommendations

We recommend that SSA:

1. Take appropriate corrective actions for the 10 SSI recipients we identified with ongoing payments who have potential eligibility for OASDI benefits.
2. Analyze a sample of the remaining SSI recipients in our population that may require corrective action and assess the feasibility of broadening the review.
3. Modify business procedures, using systems such as the Consolidated Claims Experience or other applications, to better inform claims specialists of necessary actions when SSI recipients do not provide required information and evidence for OASDI claims.
4. Remind OASDI and SSI claims specialists to communicate with each other to stop SSI payments according to policy when recipients do not provide required evidence.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.