

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

April 2011



Objective

To determine the effectiveness of the Social Security Number Application Process (SSNAP) in enhancing compliance with Social Security Administration (SSA) policies and procedures for assigning Social Security numbers (SSN).

Background

SSNAP is the Agency's Web-based Intranet application for taking original and replacement SSN card applications at field offices. SSA began phasing in SSNAP in August 2009, and fully implemented this process in February 2010. SSNAP combines the functionality of two prior systems: the SS-5 Assistant and the Modernized Enumeration System. SSA developed SSNAP to help reinforce Agency enumeration policies and standardize data collection.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-08-11-11121.pdf>

The Social Security Number Application Process (A-08-11-11121)

Our Findings

SSNAP was generally effective in enhancing field office compliance with policies and procedures for assigning original SSNs. Field office personnel with whom we spoke told us that SSNAP was user friendly and helped them obtain acceptable evidentiary documents when processing original SSN applications. However, we identified several areas where we believe SSA could further enhance SSNAP to improve the integrity of the SSN assignment process. We noted that SSNAP did not always ensure compliance with SSA enumeration policies and procedures. For example, in certain instances, we determined that SSNAP allowed field office personnel to process original SSN applications with conflicting documentation. Additionally, we determined that SSNAP allowed field office personnel to process original SSN applications without meeting all secondary identity evidence requirements. We also determined that field office personnel did not always document that no other evidence was available when processing original SSN applications for refugees with only an immigration document, as required by SSA policy.

Our Recommendations

1. Enhance SSNAP to identify instances in which field office personnel enter an applicant's age and/or identity information that conflicts with their immigration status.
2. Continue SSNAP enhancements that would help enforce secondary evidence of identity requirements.
3. Determine whether requiring annotation in SSNAP's "Remarks" field with "NO OTHER EVIDENCE AVAILABLE" when a refugee, parolee, or victim of a severe form of trafficking has only an immigration document as evidence of age, identity, and lawful noncitizen status is essential to the enumeration process. If so, SSA should establish a systems control to ensure compliance. If not, SSA should reassess its policy accordingly.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.