

The Social Security Administration's Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2020 A-15-19-50843



November 2020

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To fulfill our responsibilities under the *Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990* (CFO Act) (Pub. L. No. 101-576) and related legislation, we monitored Grant Thornton LLP's audit of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 financial statements to ensure the quality of the audit work performed was adequate.

Background

The CFO Act, as amended, requires that SSA's Inspector General or an independent external auditor, as determined by the Inspector General, audit SSA's financial statements in accordance with applicable standards. Under a contract monitored by the Office of the Inspector General, Grant Thornton, an independent certified public accounting firm, audited SSA's FY 2020 financial statements.

Grant Thornton's Report of Independent Certified Public Accountants for the audit of SSA's FY 2020 financial statements includes (1) opinions on the consolidated and sustainability financial statements; (2) an opinion on SSA's internal control over financial reporting; and (3) a report on compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, grants agreements, and other matters as required by *Government Auditing Standards*.

Findings

Grant Thornton found the following.

- The consolidated and sustainability financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States.
- SSA management maintained, in all material respects, effective internal control over financial reporting as of September 30, 2020. However, Grant Thornton identified four significant deficiencies in internal control.
 1. Certain Financial Information Systems Controls
 2. Information Systems Risk Management
 3. Accounts Receivable with the Public (Benefit Overpayments)
 4. Disability Program Monitoring.
- There were no reportable instances of noncompliance with laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other matters.

Recommendations

The Agency agreed with the first three significant deficiencies. The Agency commented on the fourth significant deficiency, Disability Program Monitoring. Specifically, the Agency stated, "We believe the pandemic-related effects to our internal controls were minimal and immaterial to our financial statements." In response to the Agency's comment, Grant Thornton stated, ". . . while it was necessary to adjust the Agency's operations due to the pandemic, there was not sufficient consideration given to the overall impact to its internal control environment and the accuracy of its financial reporting."