

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

November 2011



Objective

To determine the status of corrective actions the Social Security Administration (SSA) had taken to address recommendations in our July 2006 report, *The Social Security Administration's Program for Issuing Replacement Social Security Cards to Prisoners* (A-08-06-16025) and assess the effectiveness of the Agency's controls for issuing replacement Social Security cards to prisoners under prison agreements.

Background

To assist prisons in obtaining replacement Social Security cards on behalf of inmates, SSA allows field offices to enter into written agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with prisons. Our July 2006 report identified vulnerabilities that may have allowed prisoners to improperly obtain replacement Social Security cards.

To view the full report, visit <http://oig.ssa.gov/audits-and-investigations/audit-reports/A-08-10-10141>

Follow-up: The Social Security Administration's Program for Issuing Replacement Social Security Cards to Prisoners (A-08-10-10141)

Our Findings

Although SSA had taken steps to enhance controls for issuing replacement Social Security cards to prisoners, we determined that vulnerabilities still existed, and the Agency needs to address those vulnerabilities to improve Social Security Number (SSN) integrity and security. For example, our review disclosed that some SSA field offices continued to process prisoner replacement card applications without required MoUs. We also determined that some field offices improperly accepted prisoner identification (ID) cards as evidence of identity. Further, we determined that prisons routinely submitted incorrect or incomplete replacement card applications to field offices. We believe SSA can enhance SSN integrity and security by working with prison personnel to ensure they fully understand the prisoner enumeration process, and by instructing field offices to review prisons when they do not comply with the terms of the MoU.

Our Recommendations

We recommend that SSA: (1) Ensure all field offices that process replacement Social Security card applications on behalf of correctional facilities/prisoners do so under an approved MoU; (2) Reemphasize to field office personnel that prisoner ID cards are not acceptable evidence of identity, and ensure they end this practice; (3) Consider deleting "Prisoner ID" (third-level identity evidence) in SSNAP and replacing it with less confusing language; (4) Work with prison personnel to ensure they fully understand the prisoner enumeration process; and (5) Instruct field offices to review correctional facilities when they do not comply with the terms of the MoU, in accordance with SSA policies and procedures.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.