Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

October 2011

Objective

To (1) determine what Social Security Administration's (SSA) electronic services were available to the public; (2) determine how the Agency planned to expand these services in the future; and (3) assess SSA's marketing of its electronic services through the use of social media.

Background

This report discusses SSA's electronic services, specifically: the current electronic services available to the public, the Agency's plans for future electronic services, the Agency's use of social media to market its electronic services, and how other Federal agencies are using social media.

To view the full report, visit http://oig.ssa.gov/audits-and-investigations/audit-reports/A-14-11-11112

The Social Security Administration's Electronic Services
(A-14-11-11112)

Our Findings

As of January 2011, SSA had 22 Internet-based electronic services available to the public. The Agency plans to improve its authentication process and release several other services. The Agency has a tactical plan to develop and implement electronic services in Fiscal Year 2011 but no documented electronic services strategic plan beyond 2011.

To date, the marketing efforts for SSA's electronic services have primarily been through television and radio public service announcements, public affairs specialists, and print ads amongst others. SSA began using social media in 2007and expanded its efforts in March 2010. The Agency can draw a cause and effect relationship between its electronic services marketing efforts and its online service use. However, SSA cannot demonstrate a cause and effect relationship between visitation to its social media sites and the number of online applications it receives.

Our Recommendations

1. Develop a strategic plan for its electronic services that will contribute to SSA's technology vision and customer service delivery goals.
2. Develop a performance metric to measure customer satisfaction for key electronic service applications.
3. Continue to evaluate its composition of customer satisfaction ratings included in its Overall Average Customer Satisfaction goal and include all electronic services, if applicable, in the measurement.
4. Continue to review customer service feedback to determine the necessary service improvements and implement appropriate solutions.
5. Continue expanding its portfolio of electronic services to provide additional ways for the public to do business with the Agency.
6. Revise a question on its Office of Quality Performance survey and add a question in the American Customer Satisfaction Index that asks customers to identify how they learned about the Agency's electronic services and include social media as one of the options.
7. Continue to explore, develop, and implement more innovative ways to interact and communicate with its customers.

SSA agreed with Recommendations 3 through 7. SSA disagreed with Recommendations 1 and 2.