

The Social Security Administration's Plan to Reduce Improper Payments Under Executive Order 13520, as Reported in March 2013

A-15-13-13105



September 2013

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objectives

To review the Social Security Administration (SSA) Accountable Official's Annual Report to the Office of the Inspector General, as required by Executive Order 13520, *Reducing Improper Payments*, and determine whether the (1) figures presented were accurate and (2) Agency complied with all requirements of the Executive Order.

Background

On November 20, 2009, the President signed Executive Order 13520. The Executive Order provides, in part, that, when the Federal Government makes payments to individuals and businesses, such as program beneficiaries, grantees, or contractors, or on behalf of program beneficiaries, it must make every effort to confirm the right recipient is receiving the right payment. The purpose of the Executive Order is to reduce improper payments by intensifying efforts to eliminate payment error, waste, fraud, and abuse in major Federal Government-administered programs, while continuing to ensure that Federal programs serve and provide access to their intended beneficiaries.

Our Findings

During our review, we noted the Agency generally presented all information required for Executive Order 13520 in its Annual Report.

However, the Agency did not report all required information describing corrective actions for the Title XVI Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program or explain the Title II Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and SSI programs' performance in meeting its reduction targets. We also noted two immaterial instances of figures that were inaccurate based on the supporting documentation.

The Agency has continued reporting the same corrective actions for SSI in the past three reporting cycles and has not reported any new initiatives that prevent and identify improper payments.

Our Recommendations

The Agency should continue to improve its quality review process to ensure it reports all information required by the Executive Order and properly states figures based on supporting documentation.

To ensure the prevention, collection, and detection of improper payments, SSA should continue efforts to address improper payments and evaluate the SSI and OASDI programs to identify additional improvements. Continuous efforts are needed to ensure improper payments are detected timely.