

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

January 2012



Objective

To assess the Social Security Administration's (SSA) implementation of the Open Government Directive.

Background

On January 21, 2009, the President issued a *Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government* that called for a Government that was transparent, participatory, and collaborative. To help meet these objectives, executive departments and agencies are required, in part, to create an Open Government Webpage and Open Government Plan (OGP) that describes how they will improve transparency and integrate public participation and collaboration into their activities. They are also required to release previously unavailable high-value electronic data sets on Data.gov.

To view the full report, visit <http://oig.ssa.gov/audits-and-investigations/audit-reports/A-02-10-20102>.

The Social Security Administration's Implementation of the Open Government Directive (A-02-10-20102)

Our Findings

SSA implemented the initial requirements of the Open Government Directive. It released an Open Government Website and OGP that describe its plans to increase transparency, participation, and collaboration in its operations. It also released multiple electronic data sets on Data.gov and provided a list of data sets it planned to release.

While the Agency met the initial requirements of the Open Government Directive, future OGPs would be more useful if they provided a clearer description of how SSA planned to use the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration to help it meet its core mission and strategic goals. Additionally, SSA has the opportunity to increase its transparency by releasing multiple years of data on Data.gov for those data sets that SSA can release more than 1 year's worth of data but currently does not. This would allow the public to track performance over time.

Our Recommendations

We recommend that SSA:

1. More clearly describe in future OGPs how the Agency will use the Open Government principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration to meet its core mission and strategic and annual goals.
2. Ensure SSA's data on Data.gov allow for multiple year analyses of SSA's performance, whenever doing so would not be cost-prohibitive or create a privacy risk.

SSA agreed with the recommendations.