

Performance Indicator Audit: Minimize Average Wait Time for Initial Disability Claims

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Office of Audit Report Summary

Objectives

To assess the Social Security Administration's (SSA) performance indicator (PI), *Minimize Average Wait Time for Initial Disability Claims*. Specifically, we (1) documented the sources of data that were collected to report on the specified PI; (2) identified and tested critical controls (both electronic data processing and manual) of systems from which the performance data were gathered; (3) tested the adequacy, accuracy, reasonableness, completeness, and consistency of the underlying data for the specified PI; and (4) recalculated the reported value for the PI to verify its accuracy.

Background

Federal agencies are required to establish PIs that assess the relevant outputs, service levels, and outcomes of each program activity. We reviewed the performance reporting in SSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 *Agency Financial Report (AFR)* for its PI, *Minimize Average Wait Time for Initial Disability Claims*. In FY 2013, the average wait time for initial disability claims was 107 days.

Findings

Underlying data used to report SSA's FY 2013 PI, *Minimize Average Wait Time for Initial Disability Claims*, were adequate, accurate, reasonable, complete, and consistent; and we were able to recalculate the performance reported for the PI using data provided by SSA. Our assessment of the PI did not identify any significant exceptions related to the accuracy of presentation or disclosure of the information related to the PI in SSA's AFR or to the PI's meaningfulness.

However, during our evaluation of the effectiveness of the control environment over the business process, we found claims representatives did not always ask the applicants all of the questions SSA policy requires to verify identity. By not asking all of the required identity questions, there is an increased risk of an individual using another person's identity to file a fraudulent claim to obtain benefits.

Recommendation

We recommend SSA remind field office employees to follow SSA's policy and procedures when verifying an applicant's identity.

SSA agreed with our recommendation.