

March 2016

Office of Audit Report Summary

### Objective

To answer questions from the Subcommittee on Social Security regarding the Social Security Administration's (SSA) *Vision 2025*.

### Background

We received the following questions from the Subcommittee on Social Security.

1. Does *Vision 2025* include specific, measurable goals?
2. Does *Vision 2025* clearly define the environment in which the SSA believes it will operate in 2025 and how it will affect the Agency's ability to provide services?
3. Does *Vision 2025* outline the strategy needed to implement the proposed vision?
4. The SSA contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to develop a vision for the future of the SSA. How does *Vision 2025* incorporate NAPA's work?
5. The SSA entered into a fixed-price contract with Deloitte Consulting for \$622,000. Did the SSA gain sufficient value from these services, and were they redundant from the services contracted through NAPA? What services has Deloitte delivered to date and what further services will they deliver under the contract?

### Findings

*Vision 2025* does not include specific, measurable goals or outline the strategy needed to implement SSA's proposed vision. It presents three priorities: superior customer experience, exceptional employees, and innovative organization. Per SSA, these priorities will guide the development of clear goals, detailed plans, and performance measures, which will be outlined in the Agency's strategic plans and annual performance reports. With this approach, SSA is using short-term strategic planning documents to support a broadly stated "aspirational vision." We believe SSA's long-term strategic vision should include specific, measurable goals that clearly outline the service delivery model SSA envisions in 2025 and beyond. This would allow SSA to use its shorter-term planning documents to outline the steps needed to achieve a larger and clearly defined objective.

Also, while *Vision 2025* describes its future environmental drivers, it does not explain how the environmental factors will affect its ability to provide services in the future. Additionally, *Vision 2025* addresses many of the issues outlined in NAPA's long-range strategic plan for SSA, but NAPA's plan is more specific than *Vision 2025*. Most importantly, NAPA concluded that SSA needs to develop a more cost-effective service delivery system that is primarily virtual. *Vision 2025* does not choose one service delivery method over another and promises a service delivery system that will meet each customer's desire.

Lastly, SSA has spent nearly \$1 million on a contract with Deloitte Consulting to assist the Agency in completing *Vision 2025* and developing a timeline for its implementation. The roadmap Deloitte Consulting developed includes a more specific description of a future SSA, but its reports do not adequately discuss how SSA's budget uncertainty and other environmental factors could affect the envisioned roadmap. The value of Deloitte's work will be measured by whether SSA uses its guidance as it makes the changes needed to meet its mission and successfully serve its customers in the future.