

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

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Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs	JUDY L. CHESSE
Chief Financial Officer	JOHN R. DYER

[For the Social Security Administration statement of organization, see the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Title 20, Part 422]

The Social Security Administration administers the Federal retirement, survivors, disability, and health insurance programs for the aged, disadvantaged, and physically and mentally challenged. It is responsible for studying the problems of poverty, insecurity, and health care needs of those individuals and how they can be resolved through social insurance and related programs, and for making recommendations towards the most effective methods of improving social and economic security through social insurance.

The Administration also assigns Social Security numbers and birth registration documents to U.S. citizens and maintains a record, for tax purposes, of reported earnings for each individual assigned a social security number.

The Social Security Administration was established by Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1946 (5 U.S.C. app.), effective July 16, 1946. It was made an independent agency in the executive branch by the Social Security Independence and Program Improvement Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 901), effective March 31, 1995.

The Administration is headed by a Commissioner, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

In administering the programs necessary to carry out its regulatory responsibilities, the Commissioner is assisted by a Deputy Commissioner, who performs duties assigned or delegated by the Commissioner; a Chief Financial Officer; and an Inspector General.

To assist the Commission in exercising its responsibilities, there is a Social Security Advisory Board to advise the Commissioner on policies related to old-age, survivors, and disability insurance programs under title II of the Social Security Act and the supplemental security program under title XVI of that act. The Board is composed of seven members, one of whom is designated by the President as Chairman.

Activities

Medicare The Social Security Administration administers a national

program of contributory social insurance whereby employees, employers, and the self-employed pay contributions that are pooled in special trust funds. When earnings stop or are reduced because the worker retires, dies, or becomes disabled, monthly cash benefits are paid to partially replace part of the earnings the family has lost.

Part of the contributions go into a separate hospital insurance trust fund, so that when workers and their dependents become 65 years old they will have help with their hospital bills. They may also elect to receive help with doctor bills and other medical expenses by paying a percentage of supplementary medical insurance premiums, while the Federal Government pays the remainder. Together, these two programs are often referred to as "Medicare." Under certain conditions, Medicare protection also is provided to people who are receiving social security or railroad retirement monthly benefits based on a disability. The responsibility for the administration of the Medicare Program has been transferred to the Health Care Financing Administration. By agreement with the Department of Labor, the Administration is also involved in certain aspects of the administration of the black lung benefits provisions of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, as amended (30 U.S.C. 901).

Old-Age Survivors and Disability This insurance program provides monthly benefits to retired and disabled workers, their spouses and children, and to survivors of insured workers.

Supplemental Security Income The agency administers this program for the aged, blind, and disabled. This basic Federal payment program is financed out of general revenue, rather than a special trust fund. Some States, choosing to provide payments to supplement the benefits, have agreements with the Administration under which it administers the supplemental payments for the States.

Appellate Decisions The Social Security Administration also provides administrative direction to a national organization of administrative law judges, who conduct independent

hearings and decide appealed determinations involving the benefit provisions of Administration programs. The Administration, through its Appeals Council, reviews such appealed determinations and renders the Secretary's final decision.

Regional Offices

Social Security Administration operations are decentralized to provide appropriate services at the local level. The United States is divided into 10 regions, each headed by a Regional Commissioner. The Regional Commissioner is the principal agency representative at the regional level, responsible for effective Administration contact with HHS, other Federal agencies, State disability determination services, and State welfare agencies. Regional Commissioners implement national operational and management plans for providing services directly to the public and coordinate regional operations so that they are effective and consistent with national and regional requirements, as well as systems and policy directives.

Each region contains, under the overall direction of the Regional Commissioner, a network of district offices, branch offices, and teleservice centers, which serve as the contact between the Administration and the public. These installations have responsibility for:

- informing people of the purposes and provisions of programs and their rights and responsibilities thereunder;
- assisting with claims filed for retirement, survivors, health, or disability insurance benefits, black lung benefits, or supplemental security income;
- developing and adjudicating claims;
- assisting certain beneficiaries in claiming reimbursement for medical expenses;
- conducting development of cases involving earnings records, coverage, and fraud-related questions;
- making rehabilitation service referrals; and
- assisting claimants in filing appeals on Administration determinations of benefit entitlement or amount.

Sources of Information

Inquiries on the following subjects may be directed to the appropriate office, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

Contracts and Small Business Activities Contact the Office of Acquisitions and Grants. Phone, 410-965-9457.

Employment A variety of civil service registers and examinations are used in hiring new employees. Specific employment information may be obtained from the Office of Personnel. Phone, 410-965-4506.

Publications The Social Security Administration collects a substantial volume of economic, demographic, and other data in furtherance of its program mission. Basic data on employment and earnings, beneficiaries and benefit payments, utilization of health services, and other items of program interest are published regularly in the *Social Security Bulletin*, its *Annual Statistical Supplement*, and in special releases and reports that appear periodically on selected topics of interest to the general

public. Additional information may be obtained from the Publications Staff, Office of Research and Statistics, Room 209, 4301 Connecticut Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20008. Phone, 202-282-7138.

The Office of Public Affairs has published numerous pamphlets concerning Administration programs. Single copies may be obtained at any of over 1,300 local offices.

Reading Rooms Requests for information, for copies of records, or to inspect or copy records may be made at any local office or the Headquarters Contact Unit, Room G-44, Altmeyer Building. Phone, 800-2345-SSA (toll-free answering service).

Speakers and Films It is the Administration's policy to make speakers, films, and exhibits available to public or private organizations, community groups, schools, etc., throughout the Nation. Requests for this service should be directed to the nearest Social Security Office or the Office of Public Affairs.

For further information concerning the Social Security Administration, contact the Office of Public Inquiries, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235. Phone, 410-965-7700.

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The Tennessee Valley Authority conducts a unified program of resource development for the advancement of economic growth in the Tennessee Valley region. The