



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Audit Report

Individuals Who Elect to Receive Retirement Benefits After Age 70

012306 June 2025



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 26, 2025

Refer to: 012306

To: Frank Bisignano
Commissioner

From: Michelle L. Anderson *Michelle L. Anderson*
Assistant Inspector General for Audit

Subject: Individuals Who Elect to Receive Retirement Benefits After Age 70

The attached final report presents the results of the Office of Audit's review. The objectives were to determine whether the Social Security Administration (1) correctly paid beneficiaries who filed for retirement benefits after age 70 according to policy and procedures and (2) reached out to individuals who were over age 70 and eligible to receive benefits

If you wish to discuss the final report, please contact Jennifer Storz, Director, Program Audit Division 4.

Attachment

Individuals Who Elect to Receive Retirement Benefits After Age 70

012306



June 2025

Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) (1) correctly paid beneficiaries who filed for retirement benefits after age 70 according to policy and procedures and (2) reached out to individuals who were over age 70 and eligible to receive benefits.

Background

Individuals may apply for retirement benefits as early as age 62; however, SSA must reduce their monthly benefit amount for each month they receive a benefit before they reach their full retirement age (FRA). To receive unreduced retirement benefits, an individual must wait until FRA. SSA bases an individual's FRA off the year an individual was born. Further, to qualify for retirement benefits, a claimant must have worked for a certain length of time to meet insured status. Fully insured status can also be thought of as a measure of the claimant's working life. If an individual files for retirement after FRA, SSA allows up to 6 months of retroactive benefits. If an individual chooses not to receive a monthly benefit check at FRA, SSA uses Delayed Retirement Credits to increase the amount of retirement benefits when the individual elects to receive benefits up to age 70. Once the beneficiary attains age 70, Delayed Retirement Credits no longer apply, and there is no benefit for the beneficiary to further delay receiving retirement benefits.

Results

SSA complied with its policy and procedures when it correctly paid most beneficiaries who filed for retirement benefits after age 70. Of the 184 beneficiaries we reviewed, SSA paid 168 correctly. However, SSA incorrectly paid 16 beneficiaries \$84,000. Although employees can use automated tools to calculate benefit rates, some of these tools require that employees input entitlement factors manually and therefore employees must be especially careful to review and verify all information. During our audit, SSA was working toward improving automation tools that include calculating benefit rates.

Additionally, SSA conducted outreach to individuals who were over age 70 and who had not filed for benefits. According to SSA, it "uses various strategies to communicate information about the retirement program, which are a part of our ongoing awareness and engagement activities." For example, SSA automatically mails annual Social Security statements to workers age 60 and older who do not have a [my Social Security](#) account and are not receiving benefits. According to SSA, in Fiscal Year 2024, it mailed 260,854 Social Security statements to workers age 69 and 7 months who were eligible, and had not filed, for retirement benefits.

Despite the outreach, we estimated about 88,000 individuals could have received approximately \$1.5 billion in benefits had they filed for retirement at age 70.

- Of the 125 sampled beneficiaries under age 95 who filed for retirement benefits after age 70, a beneficiary could have received an average \$37,000 over an average of 25 months.
- Of the 59 beneficiaries age 95 and older, a beneficiary could have received an average of \$128,000 over an average 20 years.

Although we contacted the beneficiaries in our review who had signed up to collect retirement benefits after age 70 to determine why they did not file for benefits at age 70, we did not receive a sufficient number of responses. For this reason, we are not making formal recommendations to SSA. SSA plans to continue exploring opportunities to share information about retirement benefits, including to beneficiaries who are approaching age 70 and still not receiving retirement benefits.

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ABBREVIATIONS

C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
DRC	Delayed Retirement Credits
FRA	Full Retirement Age
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
POMS	Program Operations Manual System
SSA	Social Security Administration
U.S.C.	United States Code

OBJECTIVE

Our objectives were to determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) (1) correctly paid beneficiaries who filed for retirement benefits after age 70 according to policy and procedures and (2) reached out to individuals who were over age 70 and eligible to receive benefits.

BACKGROUND

SSA administers the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program under Title II of the *Social Security Act* to provide monthly benefits to retired workers, including their dependents and survivors.¹ Individuals may apply for retirement benefits as early as age 62;² however, SSA must reduce their monthly benefit amount for each month they receive a benefit before their full retirement age (FRA).³ To receive the full retirement benefit amount, an individual must wait until FRA to receive benefits.⁴ SSA bases an individual's FRA off the year they were born.⁵ Further, to be eligible for retirement benefits, a claimant must have worked for a certain length of time to be insured.⁶ Fully insured status can also be thought of as a measure of the claimant's working life.⁷

If an individual files for retirement after FRA, SSA allows up to 6 months of retroactive benefits.⁸ If an individual chooses not to receive a monthly benefit check at FRA, SSA uses Delayed Retirement Credits (DRC) to increase the amount of retirement benefits when the individual elects to receive benefits up to age 70. Once the beneficiary attains age 70, DRCs no longer apply, and there is no benefit for the beneficiary to further delay receiving retirement benefits.⁹

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

We identified 129,585 beneficiaries who were eligible, and filed, for retirement benefits after age 70 during Calendar Years 2021 through 2023. From this population, we reviewed 184 cases to determine (a) whether these beneficiaries were paid according to policy and procedures and (b) any dollar amount that could have been paid had the beneficiary filed at or before age 70 and received all unreduced benefits.

¹ *Social Security Act* §§ 201(a), 202.; 42 U.S.C. §§ 401(a), 402.

² *Social Security Act*, § 202(a)(2); 42 U.S.C. § 402(a)(2).

³ *Social Security Act* § 202(a), (q)(1); 42 U.S.C. § 402(a), (q)(1).

⁴ *Social Security Act* § 202(a), (q)(1); 42 U.S.C. § 402(a), (q)(1); 20 C.F.R. § 404.409.

⁵ *Social Security Act* § 216(l); 42 U.S.C. § 416(l).

⁶ *Social Security Act* §§ 202(a)(1), 214(a); 42 U.S.C. §§ 402(a)(1), 414(a). To qualify for retirement benefits, individuals earn "credits" through their work, up to four each year. 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.140 – 404.146. An individual must earn enough credits to be fully insured and qualify for benefits. 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.110, 404.120.

⁷ SSA, *POMS*, RS 00301.105, A.1 (October 10, 2023).

⁸ SSA, *POMS*, GN 00204.030, B.2 (July 14, 2023).

⁹ 20 C.F.R. § 404.313.

The 184 cases we reviewed comprised

- a random sample of 125 beneficiaries who were age 70 through 94 and
- all 59 beneficiaries who were age 95 or older.

See Appendix A for our scope and methodology and Appendix B for our sampling methodology.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

SSA correctly paid most beneficiaries who filed for retirement benefits after age 70 according to policy and procedures. Additionally, SSA conducted outreach to individuals who were over age 70 and had not filed for benefits. Despite the outreach, we estimated about 88,000 individuals could have received approximately \$1.5 billion in benefits had they filed for retirement benefits when they attained age 70. Within our sample, a beneficiary could have received an average of \$37,000 over an average of 25 months.

Payments to Beneficiaries

SSA correctly paid most beneficiaries we reviewed. Of the 184 beneficiaries we reviewed, SSA paid 168 correctly. However, SSA incorrectly paid 16 beneficiaries \$84,000. Of the \$84,000, approximately \$77,000 was overpayments and almost \$7,500 was underpayments.

SSA did not pay these individuals the correct amount because SSA employees did not correctly input entitlement factors when they calculated the rate. Although employees can use automated tools to calculate benefit rates, some of these tools require that employees input entitlement factors manually and therefore employees must be especially careful to review and verify all information.¹⁰ In our 2022 review, we recommended SSA, “. . . improve Agency systems to automate benefit computations and reduce the need for manual processing.”¹¹ However, as of April 2025, SSA had not addressed this recommendation, but it was working toward improving automation tools that include calculating benefit rates. Therefore, we are not making a recommendation related to this issue.

The Agency’s Outreach to Individuals over Age 70

SSA conducted outreach to individuals who could have been eligible to file for retirement benefits at age 70. According to SSA, it uses “various strategies to communicate information about the retirement program, which are a part of our ongoing awareness and engagement activities.” For example, SSA automatically mails annual Social Security statements to workers age 60 and older who do not have a [my Social Security](#) account and are not receiving benefits.¹² According to SSA, in Fiscal Year 2024, it mailed Social Security statements to 260,854 workers older than 69 and 7 months who were eligible for retirement benefits and had

¹⁰ SSA. *Office of Learning Course Template: Rates Tool*, pp.5 and 6, (last visited January 15, 2025).

¹¹ SSA, OIG, *Incorrect Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Benefit Payment Computations that Resulted in Overpayments*, A-07-18-50674 (May 2022).

¹² SSA stated it automatically emails workers age 60 and older who have a [my Social Security](#) account and are not receiving benefits. The email encourages these workers to sign into their account to review their Social Security statement.

not filed (see Appendix C for an example of a Social Security statement).¹³ To mail the statements, SSA either uses the address it has on file or requests address information from the Internal Revenue Service, which has addresses provided by taxpayers themselves, generally at least yearly.¹⁴ However, SSA does not re-mail Social Security statements that are returned as undeliverable. If a person (a) has not filed a tax return with the Internal Revenue Service, (b) has not provided SSA with an address, and (c) does not have an online *my Social Security* account, then they might not receive a Social Security statement.

In January 2019, an SSA workgroup conducted a one-time effort to mail notices to 10,396 Medicare-only beneficiaries age 70 or over who had not filed for retirement benefits. Based on these notices, 2,084 (20 percent) of these beneficiaries filed a retirement claim and began receiving benefits within 1 year. However, SSA did not have any information on why the remaining 8,233 (79 percent) Medicare beneficiaries did not file for retirement benefits.¹⁵ After SSA did the one-time study, in October 2021, SSA made supplement fact sheets available that provided targeted information to people based on their age and earnings. For example, one available fact sheet is titled, *Retirement Ready (Fact Sheet For Workers Ages 70 And Up)*. These fact sheets are available if an individual accesses their Social Security statement online with a *my Social Security* account or through an Internet search.

We found evidence in SSA's systems that SSA had sent notices to at least 30 of the 127 beneficiaries we reviewed who were over age 70 when they filed for benefits and who could have received additional benefits if they had filed at age 70. The notices urged the individuals to apply for monthly Social Security retirement benefits. These individuals filed for retirement benefits an average 58 days after the dates SSA contacted them. We could not find evidence in SSA's system that the Agency sent the remaining 97 individuals notices. We do not know whether any of these individuals looked online for information about retirement benefits after they turned 70.

In addition, we surveyed 136 of the 184 beneficiaries included in our review who had started receiving retirement benefits after age 70 to determine why they waited until after they turned age 70 to file for retirement benefits.¹⁶ Over half of the 56 beneficiaries who responded did not (1) know how to apply for retirement benefits and/or that they were eligible or (2) realize they could file for retirement benefits at age 70 and continue working without affecting their benefits.

¹³ SSA automatically mailed these Social Security statements 3 months before a person's birthday.

¹⁴ SSA, *POMS*, RM 01305.001, C.4 (December 12, 2023).

¹⁵ SSA, Potential Entitlement Workgroup, *Potential Entitlement Evaluation, A-10 / Medicare only beneficiaries who are age 70 or older, and did not file for Retirement Insurance Benefits* (December 2019). The report notes that 2,077 filed for retirement and 7 filed for retirement and Supplemental Security Income (for total of 2,084). Of the 10,396 beneficiaries in the study, 79 (1 percent) received auxiliary spouse or survivor spouse benefits (instead of retirement benefits) because the spousal benefits were higher than what they would have received under the retirement program.

¹⁶ We contacted 136 beneficiaries. We excluded beneficiaries (a) who had died during the audit, (b) whose benefits SSA suspended pending an updated address, or (c) who SSA determined were not lawfully present (non-U.S. citizens outside the United States for more than 6 full calendar months). The survey was optional, and 80 beneficiaries did not respond. One beneficiary responded to our survey but died before the end of our review. (See Table B-3 in Appendix B for the survey results.)

However, because of the low response rate to our survey,¹⁷ we could not draw a conclusion as to why the individuals in our population waited until after age 70 to file for benefits. For this reason, we are not making formal recommendations to SSA.

For the 127 beneficiaries in our review who could have received benefits earlier had they filed for retirement benefits at age 70, these are not over- or underpayments but rather funds the beneficiary was entitled to but did not receive because they filed for retirement benefits after age 70.

- Of the 125 sampled beneficiaries under age 95 who filed for retirement benefits after age 70, 85 could have received a total of \$3.1 million in benefits for months before their actual filing date had they filed at age 70. A beneficiary could have received an average of \$37,000 over an average of 25 months.
- For the 59 beneficiaries age 95 and older, 42 could have received a total of \$5.4 million in benefits for months before their actual filing date had they filed at age 70. A beneficiary could have received an average of \$128,000 over an average of 20 years.

Based on this, we estimated approximately 88,000 beneficiaries could have received approximately \$1.5 billion in benefits had they filed at age 70.¹⁸ For example, a claimant turned 70 in December 2017 and filed for retirement benefits in April 2021. Based on the April 2021 filing date, the claimant's first date of eligibility for retirement benefits was October 2020.¹⁹ Had the claimant filed for, and received, all unreduced benefits from December 2017 through September 2020, we estimate he could have received an additional \$126,000 in benefits for the months he received no benefit.

Although SSA conducts outreach to alert individuals that they could receive full retirement benefits once they reach age 70, we suggest SSA use the information in this report to determine whether it should do more outreach to individuals who have not filed for retirement benefits.

AGENCY COMMENTS

SSA plans to continue exploring opportunities to share information about retirement benefits, including to beneficiaries who are approaching age 70 and still not receiving retirement benefits, see Appendix D.

¹⁷ We did not receive responses from 59 percent of the beneficiaries to whom we sent the survey. Therefore, we could not draw any conclusions since the response rate did not meet the criteria required per our statistical guidance on generalizing survey results.

¹⁸ The \$1.5 billion consists of the lower limit estimate for the sample (as shown in Table B–2) plus the \$5.3 million from our review of all the beneficiaries who were age 95 and older. We used the lower limit instead of the point estimate to be more conservative in our estimate.

¹⁹ Since the claimant filed in April 2021, based on policy, he was only due 6 months of retroactive benefits (October 2020 through April 2021). SSA, *POMS*, GN 00204.030.B.2 (July 14, 2023).

APPENDICES

Appendix A – SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our objectives, we:

- Reviewed laws, policies, and procedures related to case processing for this workload, such as the *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015*, for filing for retirement and spousal benefits, including rules for retroactive benefit payments.
- Interviewed Social Security Administration (SSA) subject-matter experts to understand this workload’s design and internal control.

Obtained information from SSA to determine whether it implemented the recommendations from the Office of Analytics, Review, and Oversight’s Fiscal Year 2017 quality review.¹

- Identified a population of 129,585 beneficiaries who filed for retirement benefits after age 70 during Calendar Years 2021 through 2023. We tested the data by reviewing (1) available management information that reported on the number of claimants who filed for retirement awards by age and (2) a sample of cases to determine whether they all met the criteria for an individual filing for retirement benefits after age 70. We concluded the data were sufficiently reliable given the audit objectives and intended use of the data.
- Identified and reviewed the following from the population of 129,585 beneficiaries.
 - A random sample of 125 beneficiaries under age 95 who filed for retirement benefits after age 70 and were eligible for retirement benefits before age 70.
 - All 59 beneficiaries age 95 or older who filed for retirement benefits after full retirement age and were eligible for retirement benefits before age 70.
 - For beneficiaries in each group listed above we reviewed SSA’s records to determine whether the payments were correct. See Appendix B for more information on the sample.
- Performed testing for both groups of beneficiaries to determine the dollar amount that could have been paid had the beneficiary filed at or before age 70 and received all unreduced benefits.
 - Reviewed any evidence in SSA’s records and sent surveys to beneficiaries who could have received additional benefits had they filed at age 70 to determine why they waited to file for benefits.
- Obtained information from SSA about any outreach efforts to educate the public about the benefits for filing for retirement benefits at or before age 70.

¹ SSA, Office of Analytics, Review, and Oversight, *Fiscal Year 2017 Title II Voluntary Suspension Review* (April 2018).

- Projected the number of beneficiaries who could have received benefits had they filed at age 70 and the corresponding amount.

The principal entity audited was the Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Operations. We assessed the significance of internal controls necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. This included an assessment of the five internal control components, including control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring. In addition, we reviewed the principles of internal controls associated with the audit objectives. We identified the following component and principles as significant to the audit objectives.

- Component 1: Control Environment
 - Principle 4: Demonstrate Commitment to Competence
- Component 3: Control Activities
 - Principle 10: Design Control Activities
- Information and Communication
 - Principle 14: Communicate Internally
 - Principle 15: Communicate Externally
- Component 5: Monitoring
 - Principle 16: Perform Monitoring Activities
 - Principle 17: Remediate Deficiencies

We conducted our review between October 2024 and April 2025. We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix B – SAMPLING METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

We identified a population of 129,585 beneficiaries who were eligible, and filed, for retirement benefits after age 70 during Calendar Years 2021 through 2023. From this population, we reviewed (1) a random sample of 125 beneficiaries who were ages 70 through 94 and (2) all 59 beneficiaries who were age 95 or older to determine whether they were correctly paid and any dollar amount that could have been paid had the beneficiary filed at or before age 70 and received all unreduced benefits.

We used a simple random sample statistical approach for the beneficiaries who were age 70 through 94. This is a standard statistical approach used for creating a sample from a population completely at random. As a result, each sample item had an equal chance of being selected throughout the sampling process, and the selection of one item has no impact on the selection of other items. Therefore, we guaranteed to choose a sample that represented the population, absent human biases, and ensured statistically valid conclusions of, and projections to, the entire population under review. Our sampling approach for this review ensures that our reported projections are statistically sound and defensible.

Table B–1: Individuals Who Filed for Retirement Benefits After Age 70 (Through Age 94) Population and Sample Size

Description	Number of Beneficiaries
Population	129,526
Sample Size	125

Table B–2: Benefits Not Paid Because the Individual Filed After Age 70

Description	Individuals Who Filed After Age 70	Benefits Not Paid Because Individuals Filed After Age 70
Sample Results	85	\$3,149,663
Point Estimate	88,078	\$2,056,593,147
Projection – Lower Limit	78,321	\$1,533,878,760
Projection – Upper Limit	96,988	\$2,579,307,535

Notes: All statistical projections are at the 90-percent confidence level. Originally there were 85 errors, but six were flagged as outliers and removed. Therefore, the point estimate and upper and lower limit for the dollar projections are based on 79 errors.

Table B–3: Beneficiary Survey Responses

Reason for Filing for Benefits After Age 70	Number of Beneficiaries
Not Enough Quarters of Coverage	6
Was Unaware They Could Apply	18
Did Not Know How to Apply	5
Did Not Need to Apply ¹	13
Did Not Understand Option to Apply and Continue Working	14
Subtotal	56 (41%)
Non responders	80 (59%)
Total	136 (100%)²

¹ For example, individuals did not apply for retirement benefits because they were receiving spousal benefits higher than what they would receive had they filed for retirement benefits under their own record at age 70.

² We contacted 136 beneficiaries. We excluded 48 beneficiaries (a) who had died during the audit, (b) whose benefits SSA suspended pending an updated address, or (c) who SSA determined were not lawfully present (non-U.S. citizens outside the U.S. for more than six full calendar months).

Appendix C – SOCIAL SECURITY STATEMENT EXAMPLE

Your *Statement* and other planning tools are available online anytime with a *my* Social Security account, and it's easier than ever to sign up.

myaccount.ssa.gov



Your Social Security Statement

ssa.gov

WANDA WORKER
456 ANYWHERE AVENUE
MAINTOWN USA 11111-1111

February 2, 2023

Retirement Benefits

You have earned enough credits to qualify for retirement benefits. To qualify for benefits, you earn "credits" through your work — up to four each year. Your full retirement age is 67, based on your date of birth: April 5, 1962. As shown in the chart, you can start your benefits at any time between ages 62 and 70. For each month you wait to start your benefits, your monthly benefit will be higher—for the rest of your life.

These personalized estimates are based on your earnings to date and assume you continue to earn \$54,489 per year until you start your benefits. Learn more at ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/learn.html.

Disability Benefits

You have earned enough credits to qualify for disability benefits. If you became disabled right now and you have enough recent work, your monthly payment would be about \$2,083. Learn more at ssa.gov/disability.

Survivors Benefits

You have earned enough credits for your eligible family members to receive survivors benefits. If you die this year, members of your family who may qualify for monthly benefits include:

Minor child:	\$1,562
Spouse, if caring for a disabled child or child younger than age 16:	\$1,562
Spouse, if benefits start at full retirement age:	\$2,083
Total family benefits cannot be more than:	\$3,802

Your spouse or minor child may be eligible for an additional one-time death benefit of \$255. Learn more at ssa.gov/survivors.

Personalized Monthly Retirement Benefit Estimates (Depending on the Age You Start)

Age Retirement Benefits Start	62		\$1,465
	63		\$1,569
	64		\$1,681
	65		\$1,827
	66		\$1,973
	67		\$2,119
	68		\$2,291
	69		\$2,463
	70		\$2,634

Monthly Benefit Amount

Medicare

You have enough credits to qualify for Medicare at age 65. Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people:

- age 65 and older,
- under 65 with certain disabilities, and
- of any age with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant).

Even if you do not retire at age 65, you may need to sign up for Medicare within 3 months of your 65th birthday to avoid a lifetime late enrollment penalty. Special rules may apply if you are covered by certain group health plans through work.

For more information about Medicare, visit medicare.gov or ssa.gov/medicare or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) (TTY 1-877-486-2048).

We base benefit estimates on current law, which Congress has revised before and may revise again to address needed changes. Learn more about Social Security's future at ssa.gov/ThereForMe.

Earnings Record

Review your earnings history below to ensure it is accurate because we base your future benefits on our record of your earnings. There's a limit to the amount of earnings you pay Social Security taxes on each year. Earnings above the limit do not appear on your earnings record. We have combined your earlier years of earnings below, but you can view your complete earnings record online with *my Social Security*. If you find an error, let us know by visiting myaccount.ssa.gov or calling 1-800-772-1213.

Work Year	Earnings Taxed for Social Security	Earnings Taxed for Medicare (began 1966)
1971-1980	\$ 2,142	\$ 2,142
1981-1990	87,102	87,102
1991-2000	246,069	246,069
2001	34,147	34,147
2002	34,846	34,846
2003	36,021	36,021
2004	38,032	38,032
2005	39,711	39,711
2006	41,829	41,829
2007	43,971	43,971
2008	45,170	45,170
2009	44,603	44,603
2010	45,666	45,847
2011	47,093	47,093
2012	48,560	48,560
2013	49,095	49,095
2014	50,605	50,605
2015	51,996	51,996
2016	52,108	52,108
2017	53,251	53,251
2018	53,966	53,966
2019	54,559	54,559
2020	54,489	54,489
2021	Not yet recorded	

Taxes Paid

Total estimated Social Security and Medicare taxes paid over your working career based on your Earnings Record:

Social Security taxes	Medicare taxes
You paid: \$75,568	You paid: \$18,158
Employer(s) paid: \$77,498	Employer(s) paid: \$18,158

Earnings Not Covered by Social Security

You may also have earnings from work not covered by Social Security, where you did not pay Social Security taxes. This work may have been for federal, state, or local government or in a foreign country. If you participate in a retirement plan or receive a pension based on work for which you did not pay Social Security tax, it could lower your benefits. Learn more at ssa.gov/gpo-wep.

Important Things to Know about Your Social Security Benefits

- Social Security benefits are not intended to be your only source of retirement income. You may need other savings, investments, pensions, or retirement accounts to make sure you have enough money when you retire.
- You need at least 10 years of work (40 credits) to qualify for retirement benefits. Your benefit amount is based on your highest 35 years of earnings. If you have fewer than 35 years of earnings, years without work count as 0 and may reduce your benefit amount.
- To keep up with inflation, benefits are adjusted through "cost of living adjustments."
- If you get retirement or disability benefits, your spouse and children may qualify for benefits.
- When you apply for either retirement or spousal benefits, you may be required to apply for both benefits at the same time.
- If you and your spouse both work, use the *my Social Security Retirement Calculator* to estimate spousal benefits.
- The age you claim benefits will affect the benefit amount for your surviving spouse. For example, claiming benefits after your full retirement age may increase the *Spouse, if benefits start at full retirement age* amount on page 1; claiming early may reduce it.
- If you are divorced and were married for 10 years, you may be able to claim benefits on your ex-spouse's record. If your ex-spouse receives benefits on your record, that does not affect your or your current spouse's benefit amounts.
- Learn more about benefits for you and your family at ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/applying7.html.
- When you are ready to apply, visit ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/apply.html.
- The *Statement* is updated annually. It is available online, or by mail upon request.

[SSA.gov](https://ssa.gov) | Follow us on social media ssa.gov/socialmedia

Form SSA-7005-SM-SI (02/23) | Enclosures: Publication XX-XXXXX, Publication XX-XXXXX

Source: SSA, Form SSA-7005-SM-SI, SSA.gov (February 2023).

Appendix D – AGENCY COMMENTS



SOCIAL SECURITY Office of the Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 11, 2025 Refer To: TQA-1

To: Michelle L. Anderson
Acting Inspector General for Audit

From: Chad Poist
Chief of Staff

Subject: Office of the Inspector General Draft Memorandum "Individuals Who Elect to Receive Retirement Benefits After Age 70" (012306) -- INFORMATION

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft report. We will continue to explore opportunities to share information about retirement benefits, including to beneficiaries who are approaching age 70 and still not receiving retirement benefits.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance. You may direct staff inquiries to Amy Gao, the Director of the Audit Liaison Staff, at (410) 966-1711.

Sincerely,

Chad Poist
Chief of Staff

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BALTIMORE, MD 21235-0001

**Mission:**

The Social Security Office of the Inspector General (OIG) serves the public through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations.

Report:

Social Security-related scams and Social Security fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, at oig.ssa.gov/report.

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