



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 18, 2025

Refer To: 062324

To: Frank Bisignano
Commissioner

From: Michelle L. Anderson *Michelle L. Anderson*
Acting Inspector General

Subject: Consolidated Claims Experience for Supplemental Security Income

We initiated a review in June 2024, the objective of which was to determine whether the Social Security Administration (SSA) met its expectations of reducing improper payments in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program and improving both frontline productivity and service to the public through its Consolidated Claims Experience (CCE). Because SSA continues to develop and release functionality for CCE with its completion expected no earlier than 2027, we have determined it premature to evaluate whether the Agency met its goals for CCE. With this memorandum, we are closing our review and sharing the below information for the Agency's consideration as it continues to develop and release CCE.

Modernizing Supplemental Security Income Systems

SSA administers the SSI program to provide monthly cash assistance to people who are aged, blind, or disabled with limited income and resources.¹ To receive SSI payments, an individual must file an application, which can be done online or through an interview with an SSA employee.² During an interview, the SSA employee records the applicant's responses in SSI systems. Afterward, the SSA employee continues working on the claim, a process that may take several days.

SSA modernized the SSI systems through various initiatives. In 2018, under its *IT Modernization Plan*, SSA began developing CCE using the Agile software development methodology. SSA envisioned CCE as a dynamic system to lead employees through an intuitive, flexible, and accurate claims-taking experience that would improve processing times.

Using an Agile approach, SSA would release CCE in increments. On June 12, 2021, SSA implemented the first increment of CCE for SSI claims processing. Since then, SSA continued developing and releasing functionality for CCE, while retiring older technologies.

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 1382.

² SSA, *POMS*, SI 00601.010 (June 22, 2016).

As of the date of this memorandum, SSA had not completed CCE for SSI claims processing. In May 2025, an SSA subject matter expert reported SSA did not schedule a completion date for CCE but planned to finish this initiative after 2027.

Processing Time

One of SSA's goals for CCE is to improve processing times; however, the Agency has not established a process for evaluating whether the system will achieve this goal.

We compared data between two judgmentally selected fiscal years (FY) to observe changes in the time employees took to process claims in SSI systems after SSA implemented the first increment of CCE in June 2021. From SSI payment records, we randomly selected:

- 70 SSI applicants from 1,879,220 individuals whose payment records indicated they filed initial SSI applications in FY 2018, before SSA employees began using CCE; and
- 70 SSI applicants from 1,627,358 individuals whose payment records indicated they filed initial SSI applications in FY 2023, after SSA employees began using CCE.³

For our sample cases, we obtained Audit Trail System data to identify the number of minutes employees worked on SSI claims during interviews. From SSA records, we identified how many days employees spent processing SSI claims.

For the SSI claims in our samples, employees required more time to process those that were processed after employees began using CCE. On average, employees took approximately 15 additional minutes (26 minutes in FY 2018 to 41 minutes in FY 2023) to record an application in SSI systems and approximately 10 additional days (15 days in FY 2018 to 25 days in FY 2023) to process each claim.

We did not design our sampling methodology to enable us to estimate processing times for all claims. In addition, we note that factors beyond CCE could have contributed to the increase in processing times. For example, SSA stated the increase in days was due to such factors as staffing decreases and the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions.

Nonetheless, we believe our limited analysis demonstrates that SSA could use its Audit Trail System to establish a baseline and track interview times as it continues developing CCE. Other factors that impact processing time notwithstanding, the Agency would expect to see a reduction in the overall SSI claims processing time as it expands the use and functionality of CCE.

³ One individual filed two claims in FY 2018. Two individuals filed two claims in FY 2023.

User Involvement

SSA did not (1) consistently obtain direct, ongoing feedback from frontline employees during the development of CCE; nor (2) conduct baseline testing with frontline employees to evaluate how CCE's releases impacted SSI processing. Without feedback and insights from frontline employees, SSA limited its ability to fully understand user needs and implement productivity-enhancing improvements for SSI claims processing.

The Agile software development methodology recommends obtaining continuous feedback from target users—in this case, frontline employees who use CCE to process claims.⁴ We suggest SSA resume engaging frontline employees to fully understand user needs to implement productivity-enhancing improvements. We also suggest—as the Agency's User Experience Group (a team of Agency user interface professionals) also suggested—that SSA conduct baseline testing to provide an indication of whether changes have helped or hurt in accomplishing a goal.

Conclusion

If you wish to discuss this memorandum, please call me or have your staff contact Jeffrey Brown, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audit.

⁴ Government Accountability Office, *Agile Assessment Guide*, GAO-24-105506 (November 2023).