

CONTENTS

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE..... 31
 Language Analysis 32

GENERAL STATEMENT 33
 Program Overview 33
 FY 2023 President’s Budget Request 36

BUDGETARY RESOURCES 37
 Analysis of Changes..... 38
 New Budget Authority and Obligations by Activity..... 41
 New Budget Authority and Obligations by Object 42

BACKGROUND 43
 Authorizing Legislation 43
 Appropriation History 44

FEDERAL BENEFIT PAYMENTS 47
 Purpose and Method of Operation 47
 Rationale for Budget Request 47
 SSI Recipient Population 48
 Benefit Payments 50

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES..... 52
 Purpose and Method of Operation 52
 Rationale for Budget Request 53

BENEFICIARY SERVICES 54
 Purpose and Method of Operation 54
 Rationale for Budget Request 55
 Additional Information on VR Cost Reimbursement and Ticket to Work Programs..... 56

RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS, AND OUTREACH 58
 Purpose and Method of Operation 58
 Rationale for budget Request..... 59
 Related Funding Sources..... 79
 Administration of Our Research Activities..... 81
 Research Investment Criteria 82

Supplemental Security Income Program

TABLES

Table 2.1—Appropriation Language Analysis	33
Table 2.2—Summary of Appropriations and Obligations	34
Table 2.3—Appropriation Detail	37
Table 2.4—Amounts Available for Obligation	37
Table 2.5—Summary of Changes.....	40
Table 2.6—Explanation of SSI Budget Changes from FY 2022 to FY 2023.....	40
Table 2.7—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Activity	41
Table 2.8—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Object.....	43
Table 2.9—Authorizing Legislation	43
Table 2.10—Appropriation History	44
Table 2.11—Federal Benefit Payments: New Budget Authority and Obligations.....	47
Table 2.12—SSI Recipients, Actual	50
Table 2.13—SSI Recipients, Projected.....	50
Table 2.14—Blind or Disabled Recipients as a Percentage of Total.....	51
Table 2.15—Maximum Benefit Rates	52
Table 2.16—Average Monthly Benefit Payments.....	52
Table 2.17—Check Payments by Fiscal Year	53
Table 2.18—Administrative Expenses: New Budget Authority and Obligations	54
Table 2.19—Beneficiary Services: New Budget Authority and Obligations	56
Table 2.20—SSI VR Reimbursement and Ticket to Work Payments	56
Table 2.21—Research, Outreach, and Early Intervention Demonstration Projects: Budget Authority and Obligations	60
Table 2.22—Major Research Areas and Outreach	62
Table 2.23—Research Projects Obligations as of FY 2021	82

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM

For carrying out titles XI and XVI of the Social Security Act, section 401 of Public Law 92-603, section 212 of Public Law 93-66, as amended, and section 405 of Public Law 95-216, including payment to the Social Security trust funds for administrative expenses incurred pursuant to section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act, \$48,828,722,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That any portion of the funds provided to a State in the current fiscal year and not obligated by the State during that year shall be returned to the Treasury: Provided further, That not more than \$86,000,000 shall be available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act, and remain available through September 30, 2025.

For making, after June 15 of the current fiscal year, benefit payments to individuals under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for unanticipated costs incurred for the current fiscal year, such sums as may be necessary.

For making benefit payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act for the first quarter of fiscal year 2024, \$15,800,000,000, to remain available until expended.

Note. – A full-year 2022 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2022 (Division A of Public Law 117-43, as amended). The amounts included for 2022 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.

Supplemental Security Income Program

LANGUAGE ANALYSIS

The appropriation language provides us with the funds needed to carry out our responsibilities under the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. This includes the funds needed to pay Federal benefits, administer the program, and provide beneficiary services to recipients. The budget authority for these activities is made available until expended, providing us the authority to carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years. Furthermore, a portion of this funding is made available for us to conduct research and demonstration projects, which is available for three years, providing us the authority to carry over unobligated balances into the next two fiscal years.

In addition, the language provides us with indefinite authority beginning June 15, in the event Federal benefit payment obligations in FY 2023 are higher than expected, and we do not have sufficient unobligated balances to cover the difference. Consistent with previous years, the appropriation also includes an advance appropriation for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of FY 2024 to ensure the timely payment of benefits in case of a delay in the FY 2024 appropriations bill.

Table 2.1—Appropriation Language Analysis

Language provision	Explanation
<i>"For carrying out titles XI and XVI of the Social Security Act... including payment to the Social Security trust funds for administrative expenses incurred pursuant to section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act, \$48,828,722,000, to remain available until expended:"</i>	Appropriates funds for Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration projects under the SSI program. We may carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years.
<i>"Provided, That any portion of the funds provided to a State in the current fiscal year and not obligated by the State during that year shall be returned to the Treasury."</i>	Ensures that States do not carry unobligated balances of Federal funds into the subsequent fiscal year. Applies primarily to the beneficiary services activity.
<i>Provided further, That not more than \$86,000,000 shall be available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act, and remain available through September 30, 2025.</i>	Specifies that not more than \$86 million of the SSI appropriation is available for research and demonstration projects. We may carry over unobligated balances through September 30, 2025, at which point, funds are expired.
<i>"For making, after June 15 of the current fiscal year, benefit payments to individuals under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for unanticipated costs incurred for the current fiscal year, such sums as may be necessary."</i>	Provides an indefinite appropriation to finance any shortfall in the definite appropriation for benefit payments during the last months of the fiscal year.
<i>"For making benefit payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act for the first quarter of fiscal year 2024, \$15,800,000,000, to remain available until expended."</i>	Appropriates funds for benefit payments in the first quarter of the subsequent fiscal year. Ensures that recipients will continue to receive benefits during the first quarter of FY 2024 in the event of a temporary funding delay.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The SSI program guarantees a minimum level of income to financially needy individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled. The program was created in 1972 by Title XVI of the Social Security Act and payments began January 1974. It is Federally-administered and funded from general revenues.

Prior to the establishment of the SSI program, the Social Security Act provided means-tested assistance through three separate programs—Old-Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, and Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled. Federal law only established broad guidelines, with each State largely responsible for setting its own eligibility and payment standards. The SSI program was established to provide uniform standards across States.

**Table 2.2—Summary of Appropriations and Obligations¹
(in thousands)**

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	Change
Appropriation	\$60,058,768	\$60,058,768	\$64,428,722	+ \$4,369,954
Obligations ²	\$60,245,189	\$65,901,300	\$64,498,510	- \$1,402,790
First Quarter Advance Appropriation for Subsequent Fiscal Year	\$19,600,000	\$15,600,000	\$15,800,000	+\$200,000

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Eligibility Standards

As a means-tested program, individuals must have income and resources below specified levels to be eligible for benefits. Program rules allow some specific categories of income and resources to be either totally or partially excluded.³ The process of evaluating eligibility and payment levels for the SSI program and addressing the accuracy of payments is inherently complex due to the program rules.

An individual’s benefit payment is reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of his or her “countable income”—income less all applicable exclusions—in a given month. Income in the SSI program includes “earned income,” such as wages and net earnings from self-employment and “unearned income,” such as Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, deemed income from a spouse or parent, and the value of in-kind support and maintenance, such as food and shelter. Different exclusion rules apply for different types of income.

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) appropriation.

² Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional \$18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President’s Budget Appendix.

³ The ABLE Act of 2014 created a new type of tax-advantaged account that has a limited effect on an individual’s eligibility for the SSI program and other Federal means-tested programs.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Benefit Payments

We estimate we will pay \$59.2 billion in Federal benefits to nearly 7.5 million SSI recipients in FY 2023. Including State supplementary payments, we expect to pay a total of \$62.4 billion and administer payments to over 7.6 million recipients.

Federal benefit payments represent approximately 92 percent of Federal SSI spending. Administrative expenses represent about 8 percent of spending; beneficiary services and research and demonstration projects make up the remaining less than half a percent.

Incentives for Work and Opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation

The SSI program is designed to help recipients with disabilities achieve independence by encouraging and supporting their attempts to work. The program includes a number of work incentive provisions that enable recipients who are blind or disabled to work and retain benefits. The program also includes provisions to help disabled beneficiaries obtain vocational rehabilitation and employment support services. These provisions were revised by legislation establishing the Ticket to Work program, which is discussed in more detail in the Beneficiary Services section.

State Supplementation

Supplementation is mandatory for certain recipients who were on State rolls just prior to the creation of the Federal program on January 1, 1974. Otherwise, States are encouraged to supplement the Federal benefit and may elect to have us administer their State supplementation program. States that choose to have us administer their program reimburse us in advance and we make the payment on behalf of the State. Participating States also reimburse us for the cost of administering their program, based on a user fee schedule established by the Social Security Act. The user fee is \$13.16 per SSI check payment in FY 2022 and is expected to increase to \$13.79 in FY 2023. The Department of the Treasury receives the first \$5.00 of each fee and we retain the amount over \$5.00. Additional information regarding State supplementation can be found within the LAE section.

Coordination with Other Programs

We play an important role in helping States administer Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Provisions in the SSI statute ensure that payments made by States or under the Social Security program are not duplicated by SSI benefits.

Generally, SSI recipients are categorically eligible for Medicaid. States may either use SSI eligibility criteria for determining Medicaid eligibility or use their own, provided the criteria are no more restrictive than the State's January 1972 medical assistance standards.

SSI recipients may also qualify for SNAP. Pursuant to section 11 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (P.L. 88-525, as amended through P.L. 116-260), we work with SSI applicants and recipients in a variety of ways to help them file for SNAP, including informing them of their potential benefits, making applications available to them, and in some cases helping them

Supplemental Security Income Program

complete their applications in our field offices. We also share applicant data with a number of States in support of SNAP.

Key Initiatives

We continue to pursue efforts to ensure the proper management and stewardship of the SSI program. This includes a focus on reducing the major factors affecting payment accuracy, processing CDRs and non-disability redeterminations, combatting fraud, improving our debt collection tools, and using our data matching systems to detect changes in circumstances that could affect SSI eligibility. Further information on these programs can be found in our Improper Payments exhibit and the Program Integrity exhibit of the LAE section. Additional detail is also included in our Annual Performance Report (APR) and Agency Financial Report (AFR)¹.

Outreach to People Facing Barriers

During the pandemic, we experienced a reduction in applications for benefits, particularly SSI and disability benefits, and we are concerned that there may be many underserved Americans who needed our help but were unable to reach us due to certain pandemic operating procedures, such as field office closures to walk-in services. We have developed several initiatives to expand access to the program, including streamlining and digitizing the SSI application, enlisting the assistance of third parties who work with people facing barriers, promoting our programs through paid social media, television, and radio advertising, and sending out targeted mailers to groups most likely to be eligible for SSI. Further information on our efforts to reach underserved communities can be found in our Outreach Efforts to People Facing Barriers exhibit in the LAE section of this Congressional Justification. These outreach efforts also contribute to our strategic goal to improve equity in SSI through increased outreach and improved benefit delivery, including to communities of color and underserved communities. (For additional information on the APG, please refer to page 148).

¹ Both the APR and AFR can be viewed online at <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/budget-and-performance.html>

Supplemental Security Income Program

FY 2023 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST

The SSI appropriation includes funds for Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration projects. In total, the FY 2023 President's Budget request is \$64,428,722,000. However, this includes \$15,600,000,000 made available for the first quarter of FY 2023, requested in the FY 2022 President's Budget. The appropriation language provides us with our remaining appropriation for FY 2023, \$48,828,722,000—the total amount requested for FY 2023 less the advance.

Similarly, in addition to the amount above, the request includes an advance appropriation of \$15,800,000,000 for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of FY 2024. This advance is to ensure recipients continue to receive their benefits at the beginning of the subsequent fiscal year in case there is a delay in passing that year's appropriation.

Table 2.3—Appropriation Detail ^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate³	FY 2023 Estimate	Change
Advance for Federal Benefits ⁴	\$19,900,000	\$19,600,000	\$15,600,000	
Regular for Federal Benefits	\$35,683,919	\$35,936,937	\$43,625,000	
Subtotal Federal Benefits	\$55,583,919	\$55,536,937	\$59,225,000	+ \$3,688,063
Base Administrative Expenses	\$3,004,410	\$3,281,036	\$3,489,786	+ \$208,750
Program Integrity (Base)	\$225,207	\$198,235	\$239,000	+ \$40,765
Program Integrity (Adjustment)	\$1,064,232	\$911,560	\$1,264,936	+ \$353,376
Subtotal Administrative Expenses	\$4,293,849	\$4,390,831	\$4,993,722	+ \$602,891
Beneficiary Services	\$95,000	\$45,000	\$124,000	+ \$79,000
Research and Demonstration	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$86,000	+ \$0
Subtotal Advanced Appropriation	\$19,900,000	\$19,600,000	\$15,600,000	
Subtotal Regular Appropriation	\$40,158,768	\$40,458,768	\$48,828,722	
Total Appropriation	\$60,058,768	\$60,058,768	\$64,428,722	+ \$4,369,954
Advance for Subsequent Year	\$19,600,000	\$15,600,000	\$15,800,000	+ \$200,000

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplementary user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ Assuming a full-year continuing resolution in FY 2022, we will have to invoke indefinite authority to cover for appropriation shortage for Federal benefit payments. We estimate we will need approximately \$3.3 billion in indefinite authority under a full-year continuing resolution level for FY 2022.

⁴ Amount provided or requested in the previous year's appropriation bill.

BUDGETARY RESOURCES

The SSI annual appropriation consists of a regular appropriation made available by the current year's appropriation bill and an advance made available by the prior year's appropriation. This advance is for Federal benefit payments in the first quarter of the subsequent fiscal year to ensure recipients continue to receive their benefits in case there is a delay in passing that year's appropriation bill. The FY 2023 President's Budget is \$64,428,722,000, including \$15,600,000,000, requested in the FY 2022 President's Budget.

Table 2.4—Amounts Available for Obligation^{1,2}

(in thousands)

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Regular Appropriation	\$40,158,768	\$40,458,768	\$48,828,722
Advanced Appropriation	\$19,900,000	\$19,600,000	\$15,600,000
Total Annual Appropriation	\$60,058,768	\$60,058,768	\$64,428,722
Federal Unobligated Balance	\$4,823,933	\$4,649,075	\$2,145,439
Recovery of Prior-Year Obligations	\$9,433	\$0	\$0
Indefinite Authority ³	\$0	\$3,338,896	
Subtotal Federal Resources	\$64,892,134	\$68,046,739	\$66,574,161
State Supp. Reimbursements	\$2,429,819	\$3,197,000	\$3,144,000
State Supp. Unobligated Balance	\$212,699	\$201,287	\$243,287
Total Budgetary Resources	\$67,534,652	\$71,445,026	\$69,961,448
Federal Obligations⁴	\$60,245,189	\$65,901,300	\$64,498,510
State Supp. Obligations	\$2,441,231	\$3,155,000	\$3,145,000
Total Obligations	\$62,686,420	\$69,056,300	\$67,643,510
Federal Unobligated Balance	\$4,649,075	\$2,145,439	\$2,075,651
State Supp. Unobligated Balance	\$201,287	\$243,287	\$242,287
Total Unobligated Balance	\$4,850,362	\$2,388,726	\$2,317,938

¹ Does not include State supplementary user fees; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ Any portion of the Federal benefits carryover shown that results from indefinite authority will be returned to Treasury in the new year, as soon as the actual amount is determined.

⁴ Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional \$18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President's Budget Appendix.

Supplemental Security Income Program

The SSI annual appropriation was \$60.1 billion in FY 2021. The estimated FY 2022 appropriation is also \$60.1 billion, reflecting the annualized level provided by the Further Additional Continuing Resolution, 2022 (P.L. 117-86). We have the authority to carry over unobligated balances for use in future fiscal years for Federal benefit payments administrative expenses, and beneficiary services because the amounts appropriated are made available until expended. We carried over approximately \$4.6 billion in Federal unobligated balances into FY 2022. We expect to carry over approximately \$2.1 billion into FY 2023.

In addition to these appropriated amounts, we have spending authority in the amount of the advance reimbursement we receive from States to pay their State supplementary benefits. Because States reimburse us in advance, we carry over the amount received for the October 1 payment, reimbursed at the end of September in the prior fiscal year, for use in the subsequent fiscal year.

ANALYSIS OF CHANGES

The FY 2023 request represents an increase of over \$4 billion from the FY 2022 level. Assuming an FY 2022 full-year continuing resolution, we plan to use indefinite authority and unobligated balances to partially fund Federal Benefit Payments. We also plan to use unobligated balances to partially fund beneficiary services, research and demonstration projects, and administrative expenses in FY 2022. In FY 2023, we plan to use unobligated balances to fund administrative expenses and research and demonstration projects. We plan to use approximately \$2.5 billion in unobligated balances and recoveries in FY 2022 and approximately \$70 million in FY 2023.

Federal Benefit Payments

The FY 2023 request for Federal Benefit payments is nearly \$3.7 billion more than the FY 2022 level. The increase in the request is due primarily to the FY 2022 annualized continuing resolution funding level. The increase is also bolstered by the the January 2022 COLA and partially offset by an increase in carryover spending and the impact of Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) COLAs on concurrent SSI/OASDI recipients. Since OASDI benefits are counted as income in the SSI program, the annual OASDI COLA decreases the SSI benefit payment for concurrent recipients.

Assuming a full-year continuing resolution for FY 2022, we will need to use \$3.3 billion in indefinite authority¹ to cover for appropriation shortages for Federal benefit payments. We do not anticipate the need for any indefinite authority funding for FY 2023.

We estimate the first quarter advance for FY 2024 will be \$200 million more than that of FY 2023. Monthly SSI benefit payments are made on the first of the month, unless the first falls on a weekend or Federal holiday. In that case, the payment is made on the prior business day at the end of the previous month. When October 1 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the payment is made in the prior fiscal year at the end of September. This timing of payments results in 11, 12, or 13 payments in a given fiscal year, and three or four in a given quarter. The

¹ Any portion of the Federal benefits carryover shown that results from indefinite authority will be returned to Treasury in the new year, as soon as the actual amount is determined.

Supplemental Security Income Program

first quarter in FY 2024 will only have three benefit payments, instead of the usual four payments because October 1, 2023, falls on a Sunday.

Administrative Expenses

The FY 2023 request for administrative expenses is \$603 million more than the FY 2022 level, and includes almost \$1.3 billion in allocation adjustment funding for program integrity work in the SSI program. We expect to use \$88 million in carryover funds in FY 2022 and \$52 million in carryover funds in FY 2023 to cover estimated obligations. For details about program integrity funding and activities, please refer to the Program Integrity exhibit in the LAE section.

Beneficiary Services

We are requesting \$124 million in new authority for FY 2023. This is \$79 million more than our FY 2022 estimate. Our estimate reflects the use of all carryover in FY 2022, a steady level of vocational rehabilitation reimbursement awards, and Ticket payments to Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work program. The FY 2023 request funds an estimated 5 percent increase in obligations above the FY 2022 level.

Research and Demonstrations

The FY 2023 request for research and demonstration projects is identical to the FY 2022 level. We expect to use \$12 million in carryover funds in FY 2022 and \$18 million in FY 2023 in addition to our requested appropriation to cover our estimated obligations.

Table 2.5—Summary of Changes^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	<i>Change</i>
Appropriation	\$60,058,768	\$64,428,722	+ \$4,369,954
Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balances and Recoveries net of estimated carryover from appropriation	\$2,503,636	\$69,788	- \$2,433,848
Obligations Funded from Indefinite Authority	\$3,338,896		- \$3,338,896
Estimated Federal Obligations³	\$65,901,300	\$64,498,510	- \$1,402,790

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional \$18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President’s Budget Appendix.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Table 2.6—Explanation of SSI Budget Changes from FY 2022 to FY 2023
(in thousands)

	FY 2022 Obligations	Change
Federal Benefit Payments	\$55,536,937	
• COLA – 4.3% beginning January 2023		+\$3,567,000
• Net change due to annualized closings and awards		-\$654,000
• Net decrease due to adjustment back to 12 payments in FY 2023, down from 13 in FY 2022		-\$4,142,000
• Effect of OASDI COLA for concurrent SSI/OASDI Recipients		-\$897,000
• October FY 2023 payment obligated during FY 2022		-\$4,141,000
• October FY 2024 payment obligated during FY 2023		+\$4,286,000
• Indefinite Authority	\$3,338,896	
Federal Benefit Payments – Carryover	\$2,347,687	
• Net change in obligations from carryover	-\$17,520	
Administrative Expenses	\$4,390,831	
• Increase in base funding		+\$602,891
Administrative Expenses – Carryover	\$88,334	
• Decrease in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2022		-\$36,209
Beneficiary Services	\$45,000	
• Increase in base funding		+\$79,000
Beneficiary Services – Carryover	\$55,480	
• Decrease in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2023		-\$73,000
• Transfer from Federal Benefits	\$17,520	
Research and Demonstration	\$86,000	
Research and Demonstration – Carryover	\$12,135	
• Increase in amount of carryover funding planned for obligation in FY 2023		+\$5,528
Total Obligations Requested, Net Change	\$65,901,300	- \$1,402,790

Supplemental Security Income Program

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS BY ACTIVITY

The table below displays budget authority and obligations for the five main SSI activities – Federal benefit payments, administrative expenses, program integrity, beneficiary services, and research and demonstration.

Table 2.7—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Activity^{1,2} (in thousands)

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate ^{3,4}	FY 2023 Estimate ⁵
<u>Federal Benefit Payments</u>			
Appropriation	\$55,583,919	\$55,536,937	\$59,225,000
Obligations	\$55,717,175	\$61,206,000	\$59,225,000
Monthly Check Payments	12	13	12
<u>Base Administrative Expenses</u>			
Appropriation	\$3,004,410	\$3,281,036	\$3,489,786
Obligations	\$3,032,923	\$3,369,370	\$3,541,911
<u>Program Integrity (Base)</u>			
Appropriation	\$225,207	\$198,235	\$239,000
Obligations	\$225,207	\$198,235	\$239,000
<u>Program Integrity (Adjustment)</u>			
Appropriation	\$1,064,232	\$911,560	\$1,264,936
Obligations	\$1,064,232	\$911,560	\$1,264,936
<u>Beneficiary Services</u>			
Appropriation	\$95,000	\$45,000	\$124,000
Obligations	\$103,152	\$118,000	\$124,000
<u>Research and Demonstration</u>			
Appropriation	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$86,000
Obligations ²²	\$102,500	\$98,135	\$103,663
Total Appropriation	\$60,058,768	\$60,058,768	\$64,428,722
Total Federal Obligations⁶	\$60,245,189	\$65,901,300	\$64,498,510

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ We expect to use carryover of prior year unobligated balances and recoveries for FY 2022 obligations as follows: Federal benefits, \$2,330 million; beneficiary services, \$55 million; administrative expenses, \$88 million; and research and demonstration, \$12 million. We may require a transfer of \$18 million from Federal unobligated balances for beneficiary services. We will reassess the transfer amount as we receive more data.

⁴ SSA also expects to use \$3.3 billion in indefinite authority for FY 2022 Federal benefit obligations. Any carryover that results from indefinite authority will be returned to Treasury in the new year, as soon as the actual amount is determined.

⁴ In addition to the FY 2023 President's Budget request, we expect to use carryover of prior year unobligated balances and recoveries for FY 2023 obligations as follows: administrative expenses, \$52 million; and research and demonstration, \$18 million.

⁶ Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional \$18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President's Budget Appendix.

Supplemental Security Income Program

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS BY OBJECT

In the table below, “Other Services” includes administrative expenses, program integrity, and beneficiary services.

Table 2.8—New Budget Authority and Obligations by Object ^{1,2}
(in thousands)

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
<u>Other Services³</u>			
Appropriation	\$4,388,849	\$4,435,831	\$5,117,722
Obligations	\$4,425,514	\$4,597,165	\$5,169,847
<u>Federal Benefits and Research</u>			
Appropriation	\$55,669,919	\$55,622,937	\$59,311,000
Obligations	\$55,819,675	\$61,304,135	\$59,328,663
Total Appropriation⁴	\$60,058,768	\$60,058,768	\$64,428,722
Total Obligations⁵	\$60,245,189	\$65,901,300	\$64,498,510

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ The administrative portion of these services includes the SSI’s prorated share of unobligated LAE money that has been converted into no-year IT funds. It is not part of the annual administrative appropriation.

⁴ Assuming a full-year continuing resolution in FY 2022, we will have to invoke indefinite authority to cover for appropriation shortage for Federal benefit payments. We estimate we will need approximately \$3.3 billion in indefinite authority under a full-year continuing resolution level for FY 2022.

⁵ Total FY 2023 obligations include an additional \$18 million for research and demonstration projects and will not match the amount included in the President’s Budget Appendix.

BACKGROUND

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The SSI program is authorized by Title XVI of the Social Security Act. Section 1601 of the Act authorizes such sums as are sufficient to carry out the Title.

Table 2.9—Authorizing Legislation

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	FY Amount Authorized
Title XVI of the Social Security Act, Section 401 of P.L. 92-603 and Section 212 of P.L. 93-66, as amended, and Section 405 of P.L. 92-216 ¹	\$60,058,768,000	\$60,058,768,000	\$64,428,722,000	<i>Indefinite</i>
First Quarter Advance Appropriation for Subsequent Fiscal Year	\$19,600,000,000	\$15,600,000,000	\$15,800,000,000	---

¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State supplement user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.

Supplemental Security Income Program

APPROPRIATION HISTORY

The table below displays the President’s Budget request, amounts passed by the House and Senate, and the actual amount appropriated, for the period FY 2012 to FY 2022. Indefinite budget authority is requested when actual Federal benefit payments exceed the amounts available for Federal benefit payments in a given fiscal year.

Table 2.10—Appropriation History¹

Fiscal Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Committee Passed	Senate Committee Passed	Enacted Appropriation
Q1 Advance	\$18,200,000,000		\$18,200,000,000	\$18,200,000,000
Current Year	\$40,043,000,000 ²	--- ³	\$40,043,000,000 ⁴	\$32,782,991,000 ⁵
2013 Total	\$58,243,000,000 ⁶		\$58,243,000,000	\$50,982,991,000
2013 Rescission				\$32,779,347,000
2013 Sequester ⁷				
Q1 Advance	\$19,300,000,000		\$19,300,000,000	\$19,300,000,000
Current Year	\$40,737,000,000 ⁸		\$40,568,741,000 ⁹	\$41,249,064,000 ¹⁰
2014 Total	\$60,037,000,000		\$59,868,741,000	\$60,549,064,000
Q1 Advance	\$19,700,000,000		\$19,700,000,000	\$19,700,000,000
Current Year	\$40,927,000,000			\$41,232,978,000 ¹²
2015 Total	\$60,627,000,000			\$60,932,978,000 ¹³
Q1 Advance	\$19,200,000,000			\$19,200,000,000
Current Year	\$46,422,000,000	\$46,232,978,000 ¹⁴	\$46,110,777,000 ¹⁵	\$46,305,733,000 ¹⁶
2016 Total	\$65,622,000,000	\$65,432,978,000	\$65,310,777,000	\$65,505,733,000 ¹⁷
Q1 Advance	\$14,500,000,000			\$14,500,000,000
Current Year	\$43,824,868,000	\$43,162,469,000 ¹⁸	\$43,618,163,000 ¹⁹	\$43,618,163,000 ²⁰
2017 Total	\$58,324,868,000	\$57,662,469,000	\$58,118,163,000	\$58,118,163,000 ²¹
Q1 Advance	\$15,000,000,000			\$15,000,000,000
Current Year	\$38,557,000,000	\$38,591,635,000 ²²	\$38,450,927,000 ²³	\$38,487,277,000 ²⁴
2018 Total	\$53,557,000,000	\$53,591,635,000	\$53,450,927,000	\$53,487,227,000 ²⁵
Q1 Advance	\$19,500,000,000			\$19,500,000,000
Current Year	\$41,208,000,000	\$41,251,000,000 ²⁶	\$41,390,721,000 ²⁷	\$41,366,203,000 ²⁸
2019 Total	\$60,708,000,000	\$60,751,000,000	\$60,890,721,000	\$60,866,203,000 ²⁹
Q1 Advance	\$19,700,000,000			\$19,700,000,000
Current Year	\$41,832,000,000	\$41,938,540,000 ³⁰	--- ³¹	\$41,714,889,000 ³²
2020 Total	\$61,532,000,000	\$61,638,540,000		\$61,414,889,000³³
Q1 Advance	\$19,900,000,000			\$19,900,000,000
Current Year	\$40,308,177,000	\$40,172,492,000 ³⁴	--- ³⁵	\$40,158,768,000 ³⁶
2021 Total	\$60,208,177,000	\$60,072,492,000		\$60,058,768,000³⁷

Table Continues on the Next Page

Supplemental Security Income Program

Fiscal Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Committee Passed	Senate Committee Passed	Enacted Appropriation
Q1 Advance	\$19,600,000,000			\$19,600,000,000
Current Year	\$46,210,256,000 ³⁸	\$46,167,573,000 ³⁹	--- ⁴⁰	
2022 Total	\$65,810,256,000	\$65,767,573,000		--- ⁴¹
Q1 Advance	\$15,600,000,000			
Current Year	\$48,828,722,000			
2023 Total	\$64,428,722,000			
Q1 Advance	\$15,800,000,000			
Current Year				
2024 Total				

- ¹ Does not include State supplementary payments and reimbursements or the corresponding State user fee collections; user fees are included in the LAE appropriation.
- ² Of this amount, not more than \$48,000,000 was for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ³ The House Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which included \$39,335,614,000 for fiscal year 2013. Of this amount, not more than \$8,000,000 was made available for research and demonstrations under sections 1110 and 1144 of the Social Security Act and to remain available until the end of fiscal year 2014. In addition, the draft bill included \$19,300,000,000 for benefit payments for the first quarter of fiscal year 2014.
- ⁴ S. 3295.
- ⁵ Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6).
- ⁶ The President's Budget proposed to provide \$266 million in mandatory administrative funding in FY 2013. Of the \$266 million, the SSI portion totals \$106 million.
- ⁷ SSI was exempt from sequestration in FY 2013.
- ⁸ Of this amount, not more than \$54,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ⁹ S. 1284.
- ¹⁰ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76).
- ¹¹ The President's Budget proposed to provide \$1.2 billion in mandatory administrative funding in FY 2014. Of the \$1.2 billion, the SSI portion totals \$587 million.
- ¹² Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).
- ¹³ Of this amount, not more than \$48,000,000 is for research and demonstrations and not more than \$35,000,000 is for early intervention demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ¹⁴ H.R. 3020.
- ¹⁵ S. 1695
- ¹⁶ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113).
- ¹⁷ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ¹⁸ H.R. 5926.
- ¹⁹ S. 3040.
- ²⁰ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31).
- ²¹ Of this amount, not more than \$58,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ²² H.R. 3358.
- ²³ S. 1771.

Supplemental Security Income Program

- ²⁴ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141).
- ²⁵ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ²⁶ H.R. 6470.
- ²⁷ S. 3158.
- ²⁸ Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245).
- ²⁹ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ³⁰ H.R. 2740.
- ³¹ The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill. The Committee posted a draft bill which mirrored the FY 2020 President's Budget request for \$41,832,000,000.
- ³² Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94)
- ³³ Of this amount, not more than \$101,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ³⁴ H.R. 7614.
- ³⁵ The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill but provided a draft showing \$40,136,324,000.
- ³⁶ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260)
- ³⁷ Of this amount, not more than \$86,000,000 is for research and demonstrations under sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.
- ³⁸ The FY 2022 Federal Benefit Payment total includes \$18 million of SSI program effects related to the Afghan SIV and Liberian DED programs.
- ³⁹ H.R. 4502.
- ⁴⁰ The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not report a bill but provided a draft showing \$46,122,423,000.
- ⁴¹ A full-year appropriation for FY 2022 was not enacted at the time the FY 2023 President's Budget was prepared. All FY 2022 figures for Administrative Expenses assume funding at the annualized funding level provided in FY 2022 under P.L. 117-86 – Further Additional Continuing Resolution, 2022, but Base Administrative Expenses does not reflect the President's Budget appendix amount. The FY 2022 Federal benefits numbers reflect the most recent estimates from SSA's Office of the Chief Actuary. FY 2022 funding for beneficiary services and research and demonstration reflect the FY 2022 President's Budget levels.

FEDERAL BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Authorizing Legislation: Section 1602, 1611, and 1617 of the Social Security Act.

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

The SSI program was established to pay needy aged, blind, and disabled individuals a minimum level of income through Federally-administered monthly cash payments. In many cases, these payments supplement income from other sources, including Social Security benefits and State programs. In FY 2023, we estimate benefit payments will total approximately \$59.2 billion for approximately 7.5 million Federal SSI recipients.

**Table 2.11—Federal Benefit Payments: New Budget Authority and Obligations¹
(in thousands)**

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	<i>Change</i>
Appropriation	\$55,583,919	\$55,536,937	\$59,225,000	+ \$3,688,063
Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balance and Recoveries	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$2,330,167</i>	<i>\$0</i>	- \$2,330,167
Indefinite Authority	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$3,338,896</i>	<i>\$0</i>	- \$3,338,896
Obligations	\$55,717,175	\$61,206,000	\$59,225,000	- \$1,981,000
Advance for subsequent fiscal year	<i>\$19,600,000</i>	<i>\$15,600,000</i>	<i>\$15,800,000</i>	+ \$200,000

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are requesting \$59.2 billion in new budget authority for Federal benefit payments in FY 2023. We estimate benefit payments based on a number of interrelated factors including the number of SSI recipients, number of applications, award and termination rates, cost-of-living adjustments, maximum benefit rates, average payment amounts, and number of payments per fiscal year.

¹ Federal benefit numbers reflect the most recent estimates from our Office of the Chief Actuary.

Supplemental Security Income Program

SSI RECIPIENT POPULATION

The number of Federal SSI recipients has decreased from 8 million in FY 2018 to an estimated 7.6 million in FY 2022, and is expected to decrease to 7.5 million in FY 2023. The estimated decrease in Federal recipients in FY 2023 represents a 1.4 percent decrease compared to the FY 2022 level. We estimate the number of SSI recipients by analyzing a number of factors including applications, award and termination rates, and funding for program integrity initiatives. Please refer to the Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility exhibit in the LAE section for additional information on how we are investigating this trend.

Table 2.12—SSI Recipients, Actual ¹
(average over fiscal year, in thousands)

	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Aged	1,119	1,114	1,109	1,076
Blind or Disabled	6,924	6,842	6,802	6,666
Total Federal	8,043	7,957	7,911	7,742
<i>Year-to-Year Change</i>	<i>- 0.7%</i>	<i>- 1.1%</i>	<i>- 0.6%</i>	<i>- 2.1%</i>
State Supplement Only	158	151	146	137
Total Federally Administered	8,202	8,108	8,057	7,879

In addition to Federal SSI recipients, we currently administer State supplementary payments for 20 States and the District of Columbia. We administer payments for approximately 1.4 million State supplement recipients, of which approximately 140,000 do not receive a Federal SSI benefit and only receive the State supplementary payment.

Table 2.13—SSI Recipients, Projected ¹
(average over fiscal year, in thousands)

	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	Change
Aged	1,077	1,085	+ 0.7%
Blind or Disabled	6,496	6,384	- 1.7%
Total Federal	7,573	7,469	- 1.4%
State Supplement only	137	144	+ 5.1%
Total Federally Administered	7,711	7,613	- 1.3%

¹ Totals may not add due to rounding.

SSI Disabled vs. Aged Recipient Population

The number of Federal blind or disabled SSI recipients as a percentage of all Federal SSI recipients remains steady at 86 percent from FY 2018 to FY 2021 and is projected to decrease slightly to 85.8 percent in FY 2022 and 85.5 percent in FY 2023.

**Table 2.14—Blind or Disabled Recipients as a Percentage of Total ¹
(average over fiscal year, in thousands)**

Fiscal Year	Total Federal	Aged	Blind or Disabled	Blind or Disabled as % of Total
2018	8,043	1,119	6,924	86.1%
2019	7,957	1,114	6,842	86.0%
2020	7,911	1,109	6,802	86.0%
2021	7,742	1,076	6,666	86.1%
2022 Estimate	7,573	1,077	6,496	85.8%
2023 Estimate	7,469	1,085	6,384	85.5%

Concurrent SSI/OASDI Recipients

SSI recipients also receiving Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) or DI benefits have their SSI benefit reduced, less applicable exclusions, by the amount of their OASDI benefit. Approximately 33 percent of all SSI recipients (including those only receiving a State supplement) also receive Social Security benefits. Approximately 57 percent of the SSI aged and 29 percent of the SSI blind and disabled populations receive concurrent payments.

¹ Totals may not add due to rounding.

Supplemental Security Income Program

BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Maximum Monthly Federal Payments

The maximum monthly Federal benefit rate (FBR) is increased each January when there are increases in the cost-of-living. There is a 5.9 percent cost of living increase in calendar year (CY) 2022. An increase of 4.3 percent is projected for January 2023. The FBR increased from \$794 for an individual and \$1,191 for a couple for CY 2021 to \$841 for an individual and \$1,261 for a couple in CY 2022. We estimate the FBR will increase to \$877 for an individual and \$1,315 for a couple in CY 2023. The COLA will be effective in January 2023, raising the maximum benefit rate to higher levels than the first 3 months of the fiscal year.

Table 2.15—Maximum Benefit Rates

	FY 2022		FY 2023	
	First 3 Months	Last 9 Months	First 3 Months	Last 9 Months
Individual	\$794	\$841	\$841	\$877
Couple	\$1,191	\$1,261	\$1,261	\$1,315

Average Monthly Benefit Payments

The amount actually paid to a recipient can vary from the FBR based on their income received (e.g., earnings and Social Security benefits) and the living arrangement of the recipient (e.g., residence in one's own home, the household of another person, or in a nursing home which meets Medicaid standards). The average monthly benefit is expected to increase from \$591 in FY 2021 to \$620 in FY 2022 and \$651 in FY 2023. The increase in the average benefit payment is driven by COLAs and recipient population characteristics.

Table 2.16—Average Monthly Benefit Payments

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Aged	\$431	\$456	\$481
Blind or Disabled	\$617	\$648	\$680
All SSI Recipients	\$591	\$620	\$651

Cost of Living Adjustments

When applicable, COLAs increase both the maximum and average monthly benefit payment. However, for concurrent SSI/OASDI recipients, increases in SSI benefit payments are partially offset by increases in Social Security benefits resulting from the same COLA. Social Security benefits are counted as income in the SSI program. Therefore, any increase in Social Security benefits resulting from the annual COLA increases countable income in the SSI benefit computation.

Program Integrity Funding

Annual benefit payment estimates are dependent on us performing a certain level of SSI CDRs and redeterminations. Specifically, the FY 2023 estimate assumes we will conduct approximately 510,000 SSI CDRs and 2,200,000 non-medical redeterminations using both base and adjustment dedicated program integrity funds. For details about program integrity funding and activities, please refer to page ## (link to the LAE section – as the funds outlay from LAE and it provides a comprehensive picture).

Timing of Monthly Benefit Payments

Monthly SSI benefit payments are made on the first of the month, unless the first falls on a weekend or Federal holiday. In that case, the payment is made on the prior business day at the end of the previous month. When October 1 falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the payment is made in the prior fiscal year at the end of September. This timing of payments results in 11, 12, or 13 payments in a given fiscal year.

Table 2.17—Check Payments by Fiscal Year

	Number of Check Payments	Federal Benefit Obligations
FY 2014	12	\$53,849,499,196
FY 2015	12	\$54,706,388,183
FY 2016	13	\$59,044,228,391
FY 2017	12	\$54,729,471,841
FY 2018	11	\$50,949,421,097
FY 2019	12	\$55,590,534,196
FY 2020	12	\$56,161,567,718
FY 2021	12	\$55,717,174,588
FY 2022	13	\$61,206,000,000
FY 2023	12	\$59,225,000,000

Supplemental Security Income Program

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Authorizing Legislation: Sections 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act.

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

Administrative expenses for the SSI program are funded from general revenues. Section 201(g)(1) of the Social Security Act provides that administrative expenses for the SSI program, including Federal administration of State supplementary payments, may be financed from the Social Security trust funds with reimbursement, including any interest lost, to the trust funds from general revenues.

This appropriation funds the SSI program share of administrative expenses incurred through the LAE account. Amounts appropriated are available for current year SSI administrative expenses, as well as for prior year administrative expenses that exceeded the amount available through this account for the prior year. If those excess prior year amounts were paid out of the Social Security trust funds, then current year SSI funds must be used to reimburse these trust funds with interest.

The legislative history of the 1972 amendments (which established this funding mechanism) indicates a desire to obtain economy of administration by giving us the responsibility for the SSI program because of its existing field office network and its administrative and automated data processing facilities. Because of the integration of the administration of the SSI and Social Security programs, it was desirable to fund them from a single source (the LAE account). This process requires that the trust funds and the SSI account pay their appropriate shares to the LAE account, which in turn manages the administrative expenses on behalf of the paying accounts. The determination is based on a Government Accountability Office approved method of cost analysis of the respective expenses of the SSI and Social Security insurance programs, and statute mandates a final settlement by the end of the subsequent fiscal year.

**Table 2.18—Administrative Expenses: New Budget Authority and Obligations
(in thousands)**

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	Change
Total Appropriation	\$4,293,849	\$4,390,831	\$4,993,722	+ \$602,891
Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balance	\$28,513	\$88,334	\$52,125	- \$36,209
Obligations	\$4,322,362	\$4,479,165	\$5,045,847	+ \$566,682

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

Our administrative budget is driven by the programs we administer – both in terms of the amount of work performed and the number of people needed to process it – and by our continuing efforts to improve service, stewardship, and efficiency.

The FY 2023 request for SSI administrative expenses is \$5 billion. This appropriation is used to reimburse the trust funds for the SSI program’s share of administrative expenses. This amount includes \$1.5 billion specifically for FY 2023 SSI program integrity activities.

These amounts exclude funding made available in the LAE account from State user fees for our expenses for administering SSI State supplementary payments. The LAE account assumes funding of up to \$140 million in FY 2023 to administer SSI state supplementary payments.

Supplemental Security Income Program

BENEFICIARY SERVICES

Authorizing Legislation: Sections 1148 and 1615(d) of the Social Security Act

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

Beneficiary services consist of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Ticket to Work (TTW) programs. The objective of the programs is to help disabled individuals return to work. The trust funds and general revenues fund beneficiary services. Section 222(d)(1) of the Social Security Act authorizes transfers from the OASI and DI trust funds to reimburse for reasonable and necessary costs of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals. The OASI and DI trust funds also fund payments to Employment Networks as part of the TTW program. The general revenues described in the request below fund beneficiary services for disabled Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients as described below.

**Table 2.19—Beneficiary Services: New Budget Authority and Obligations
(in thousands)**

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate¹	FY 2023 Estimate	<i>FY 2022 to FY 2023 Change</i>
Appropriation	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$124,000	+\$79,000
Prior-Year Unobligated Balances and Recoveries	\$63,632	\$55,480	\$0	-\$55,480
Transfer from Unobligated Federal Benefit Payments ²	\$50,000	\$17,520	\$0	-\$17,520
Total Budgetary Resources	\$158,632	\$118,000	\$124,000	+\$6,000
Obligations	\$103,152	\$118,000	\$124,000	+\$6,000

Under the VR program, we repay State VR agencies for the reasonable and necessary costs of services that successfully help disabled recipients return to work. VR agencies are successful when a disabled recipient performs substantial gainful activity (SGA) for a continuous period of 9 out of 12 months.³ VR agencies can serve as Employment Networks (EN) in the TTW program or under our VR reimbursement program.

¹ A full-year appropriation for FY 2022 was not enacted at the time the FY 2023 President's Budget was prepared. All FY 2022 figures assume funding at the FY 2021 enacted level.

² Increased productivity in processing Ticket and VR payments is driving the estimated increase in FY 2022 obligations. We expect a continued increase in VR payments as we address the backlog of VR claims. We will reassess the transfer amount as we receive more data and we may require a reapportionment from OMB later in FY 2022.

³ In 2022, we consider non-blind and blind disabled recipients to be performing SGA if they earn more than \$1,350 and \$2,260 per month, respectively.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Under the TTW program, authorized by the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-170), we pay ENs for providing vocational rehabilitation, employment, and other support services to disabled SSI recipients. These recipients select an EN, which we pay when EN services result in prescribed work milestones and outcomes that may reduce reliance on Federal cash benefits.

Ticket payments, unlike VR reimbursement awards, are not based on the costs of specific services provided by the EN. We pay ENs using either an outcome-milestone payment method or an outcome-only payment method.

We base Ticket payment amounts for SSI recipients on the prior year's average disability benefit payable under Title XVI. While we previously made Ticket payments only upon request, we now also initiate payments to ENs when information in our records indicates the recipient has achieved the prerequisite earnings and all other requirements qualifying the EN for a payment are met.

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are requesting \$124 million in new budget authority for beneficiary services in FY 2023. The FY 2023 forecast is based on an econometric model which uses prior payments as well as historical economic and demographic characteristics to predict future spending. The FY 2023 request funds an estimated 5 percent increase in obligations above the FY 2022 level.

Automation of payments through TTW resulted in an initial increase in the amount paid to ENs and VRs. While the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the expected growth of TTW payments in FY 2020, our actual payments for FY 2021 increased by 6 percent over FY 2020. As a result, we expect the amount of TTW payments to continue to increase in FY 2022 and FY 2023.

The implementation of the Internet Ticket Operations Provider Support System (iTOPSS) resulted in an increase in the number of claims submitted by VR agencies, which led to an increase of backlogged claims awaiting payment. We expect to eliminate the backlog by FY 2023 once we have trained additional contractor resources to process the VR payment workload.

A new Ticket Program Manager (TPM) contract was awarded on September 1, 2021, which requires the TPM to process VR payments. In November 2021, we began training the contractor on VR payment processing. By June 2022, we expect the contractor to take over the VR case processing workload. By FY 2023, we expect the backlog to be eliminated and the contractor to process all VR payments within the contractually obligated timeframe of 30 days from receipt. The new contractor resources will result in an increase in the amount paid to VR agencies in FY 2022 and FY 2023. Considering all the factors above, and assuming that more beneficiaries will return to work, we estimate an increase in cost reimbursement awards and an increase in the number of milestone and outcome payments in FY 2023.

We continue our efforts to improve management and oversight of the VR and Ticket programs to ensure effectiveness. These efforts are solidified in the current EN agreements and include ongoing quality reviews of State reimbursement claims and internal audits of the agency's

Supplemental Security Income Program

payment process. ENs and VR agencies help our beneficiaries attain higher levels of sustained employment success.

Table 2.20—SSI VR Reimbursement and Ticket to Work Payments¹

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
<u>Vocational Rehabilitation</u>			
SSI Only Reimbursement Awards	5,936	6,511	6,719
SSI/DI Concurrent Reimbursement Awards	3,464	3,800	3,921
Total Reimbursement Awards	9,400	10,311	10,641
VR Obligations (in thousands)	\$88,429	\$97,000	\$100,100
<u>Ticket to Work</u>			
SSI Only Milestone Payments	4,795	6,839	7,784
SSI Only Outcome Payments	18,125	25,852	29,423
SSI/DI Concurrent Milestone Payments	6,108	8,712	9,915
SSI/DI Concurrent Outcome Payments	7,503	10,702	12,180
Total Ticket Payments	36,531	52,106	59,301
Ticket Obligations (in thousands)	\$14,723	\$21,000	\$23,900
Total VR Awards & Ticket Payments	45,931	62,417	69,942
Total Obligations (in thousands)	\$103,152	\$118,000	\$124,000

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON VR COST REIMBURSEMENT AND TICKET TO WORK PROGRAMS

The State VR agency may decide on a case-by-case basis whether to receive compensation under the longstanding VR cost reimbursement payment option or one of the two TTW payment methods described below. VR agencies have 90 days after they open a case (ticket assignment) to decide if they want to be reimbursed for their expenses under the Cost Reimbursement program or if they want to be paid under the Ticket program. Most agencies select cost reimbursement as the initial payment option and then switch to Ticket after further evaluation of a case. Regardless of the payment method the State VR agency chooses, the recipient must have agreed to use the Ticket with the State VR agency for the agency to be eligible for either type of payment.

Outcome-Milestone Payment Method:

- There are two phases of outcome-milestone payments. Phase I allows 4 payments, and Phase II allows 18 payments.

¹ Totals may not add due to rounding.

Supplemental Security Income Program

- We begin paying the EN when the recipient successfully achieves certain predetermined work-related milestones while still receiving Federal benefits.
- We stop paying milestone payments and begin outcome payments when the recipient's monthly Federal cash benefits are not payable because of work and earnings.

Outcome-Payment Method:

- Outcome payments are payable for a maximum of 60 months (consecutive or otherwise).
- We begin issuing monthly outcome payments after the individual's monthly Federal cash benefit payments cease and the individual earns above the SGA level in a month.
- The dollar amounts of the monthly outcome payments are larger when the EN elects not to receive milestone payments while the recipient still receives benefits.

When a State VR agency provides services to a recipient under the cost reimbursement payment option, and the recipient later seeks support services from an EN, we may pay the State VR agency and the EN for sequential periods of service. However, the EN is not eligible for Phase I Ticket payments, since the State VR agency would have provided initial services.

Supplemental Security Income Program

RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS, AND OUTREACH

Authorizing Legislation: Sections 1110, 1115, and 1144 of the Social Security Act.

PURPOSE AND METHOD OF OPERATION

We conduct extramural research, demonstrations, and outreach under Sections 1110, 1115, 1144, and 234 of the Social Security Act (Act). Projects funded under Section 234 are essential to our demonstration portfolio, but we are not including them in our appropriations request since they are part of the mandatory budget. We currently fund a range of Section 1110 and 234 projects designed to:

- Help us keep pace with advancements in medicine and technology;
- Modernize our vocational rules;
- Evaluate the impact of early intervention efforts;
- Test work support models;
- Analyze program trends, gaps, and inconsistencies; and
- Measure the public’s understanding of the program, as well as the impact of program changes.

**Table 2.21 - Research, Outreach, and Demonstration Projects:
Budget Authority and Obligations
(in thousands)**

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	Change
Appropriation	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$0
Obligations Funded from Prior-Year Unobligated Balance and Recoveries	\$67,818	\$51,318	\$39,183	-\$12,135
Total Budgetary Resources	\$153,818	\$137,318	\$125,183	-\$12,135
Total Obligations	\$102,500	\$98,135	\$103,663	\$5,528
Total Unobligated Balance	\$51,318	\$39,183	\$21,520	-\$17,663

Section 1110 of the Act provides the Commissioner of Social Security the authority to conduct broad-based, cross-programmatic projects for the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability (OASDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. This section provides for waiver authorities for the SSI program, as well as projects dealing with specific SSI issues. Under Section 1110, we fund a range of extramural projects: disability and retirement policy research, demonstration projects to test creative and effective ways to promote greater labor force participation among people with disabilities (including early intervention rehabilitation strategies), evaluations of proposed or newly enacted legislative changes, and projects to maintain and improve basic data about our programs and beneficiaries.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Many of our Section 1110 projects support our fiscal years (FY) 2022-2026 Learning Agenda and our annual Evaluation Plans that are required under the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018. Our Learning Agenda describes our evidence-building roadmap to support the goals in our FYs 2022–2026 Agency Strategic Plan (ASP). We identified 10 priority questions for our Learning Agenda that correspond to the ASP goals. The priority questions include short-term and long-term questions related to our mission, strategic plans, and agency operations. We expect that answers to our priority questions will provide valuable information about our agency’s performance and promote evidence-based decision-making, informing our efforts to improve service delivery, enhance the customer experience, and advance equity. Our FY 2023 Annual Evaluation Plan describes the most significant evidence-building activities that we will complete during the fiscal year. We define significant activities as those that are required by law, address the President’s priorities, or support the goals in our FYs 2022–2026 ASP. Performance documents are available here [Agency Strategic Plan | SSA](#)

Section 1144 requires us to conduct outreach to individuals with Medicare who are potentially eligible for State-administered Medicaid programs or Medicare prescription drug subsidies under Medicare Part D. We identify these potential beneficiaries, inform them about these programs, and notify State Medicaid agencies. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, within Health and Human Services (HHS), oversees both the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Section 1115 provides the Secretary of HHS with the funding and authority to waive compliance with Medicaid requirements to enable States to participate in our specific research and disability demonstration projects. There are currently no research projects funded under this section.

Section 234 gives the Commissioner of Social Security the authority to conduct research and demonstration projects testing alternative Disability Insurance (DI) benefit rules. We use trust fund dollars, which are permanently appropriated and not part of our request, to conduct various demonstration projects, including projects that examine alternative program rules for treating work activity of individuals entitled to DI benefits. Section 234 covers both applicants and current beneficiaries of the program. Our authority to initiate new projects under Section 234 expired on December 31, 2021, and we are required to complete our remaining Promoting Opportunity Demonstration, and Ohio Direct Referral Demonstration projects under this authority by December 31, 2022.

RATIONALE FOR BUDGET REQUEST

We are committed to improving the quality, consistency, and timeliness of our disability decisions; maximizing efficiencies throughout the disability program; and enhancing employment support programs to create new opportunities for returning beneficiaries to the workforce. Our research activities are critical to our efforts in all three areas.

In FY 2023, we estimate that we will need \$86 million in new budget authority for traditional research activities under Sections 1110 and 1144.

Our FY 2023 budget request builds upon the progress we have made in previous years with initiatives like our data collection and analysis efforts regarding the Occupational Information

Supplemental Security Income Program

System (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT) project. Our advisory services contract with the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Health and Medicine Division (HMD) will help us identify ways to strengthen our disability policy. In addition, Work Disability - Functional Assessment Battery (WD-FAB) studies will help us evaluate the usefulness of the WD-FAB to our continuing disability review (CDR) process. Our demonstration portfolio provides evidence on the effectiveness of potential policies and programs for our current and potential beneficiaries.

Extension of 234 Authority

In addition to the Section 1110 and 1144 projects, we are interested in working with Congress to extend Section 234 authority in order to provide sufficient time to conduct ongoing and new demonstrations.

The table and discussion that follows provides more details on the research and outreach efforts we plan to fund in FY 2023.

Table 2.22—Major Research Areas, Outreach, and Demonstration Obligations and New Budget Authority (in thousands)^{1,2}

	Obligations³		
	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Improving the Way We Do Business	\$80,248	\$73,247	\$78,918
Advisory Services to Assist SSA with Disability Issues	\$2,453	\$4,607	\$5,980
Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)	\$300	\$450	\$450
Beyond Benefits Study (previously Exits from Disability) Evidence Study	\$2,743	\$0	\$0
Blanket Purchase Agreement for Time Sensitive Research Projects	\$1,439	\$2,000	\$2,000
Disability Analysis File (DAF)	\$885	\$1,323	\$1,237
Disability Perceptions Survey	\$63	\$69	\$5,000
Disability Research Survey	\$0	\$14,000	\$0
Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)	\$4,326	\$6,080	\$9,080
National Beneficiary Survey (NBS)	\$227	\$56	\$77
New and Emerging Research – Disability	\$0	\$1,285	\$2,000
National Institutes of Health Research on Data Analytics and the Functional Assessment Battery Development	\$4,195	\$4,299	\$4,300
Occupational Information Systems (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT)	\$30,150	\$39,078	\$41,794

¹ Does not include funding authorized under Section 234.

² Totals may not add due to rounding.

³ This amount includes obligations funded from prior-year unobligated balances.

Supplemental Security Income Program

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN)	\$31,932	\$0	\$0
Supported Employment Demonstration (SED)	\$1,535	\$0	\$0
Ticket to Work Evaluation	\$0	\$0	\$7,000
Deliver Services Effectively	\$5,890	\$8,721	\$8,723
Data Development in an Enterprise Business Platform	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Understanding America Study (UAS) Enhancements	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$5,002
Medicare Outreach (1144)	\$890	\$1,721	\$1,721
Ensuring Stewardship	\$16,362	\$16,167	\$16,022
Census Surveys	\$950	\$750	\$750
Data Development	\$1,267	\$1,262	\$1,117
Health & Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC)	\$4,155	\$4,155	\$4,155
	\$9,990	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total Research Obligations¹	\$102,500	\$98,135	\$103,663
New Budget Authority	\$86,000	\$86,000	\$86,000

Improving the Way We Do Business

Advisory Services to Assist SSA with Disability Projects/National Academy of Sciences Multi-Year Contract

Current Multi-Year Contract with National Academy of Sciences

We are engaged in a five-year contract, initiated in FY 2019, with the NAS-HMD to conduct research and answer specific questions related to medical and vocational assessment at steps three, four, and five of the sequential disability evaluation process². Information from HMD assures our disability evaluations reflect the latest knowledge and practice in a wide range of medical disciplines, and supports data-driven changes to our regulations and policies. The current contract provides for Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)-compliant Consensus Committees of medical and other experts to evaluate the effectiveness of our disability programs for adults and children. Per our requirements, the NAS will establish and manage FACA compliant consensus study committees; organize and lead workshops with subject matter experts; and plan and organize outreach conferences with members of the public. With the first task order awarded under this contract, HMD established a standing committee of medical, vocational, and other experts to assist with policy issues. We also awarded a task order for a consensus study committee to identify and investigate impairments likely to improve with treatment.

In FY 2021, we awarded task orders to:

¹ This amount includes obligations funded from prior-year unobligated balances.

² See [DI 22001.001](#) for a description of the sequential evaluation process.

Supplemental Security Income Program

- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals to discuss the current state of stem cell-based treatments. This is a rapidly evolving field of medicine; the most up to date information in this arena will provide us with valuable insight with which we can enhance our medical evidence and documentation policies.
- Create a consensus committee to provide information on new or improved diagnostic or evaluative techniques. This information will enhance our ability to effectively evaluate the severity of impairments, particularly in the CDR process.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals to discuss recent advances in the utilization of tele-presence and videoconference technology to deliver remote healthcare services. We are interested in learning about current and future capabilities of medical professionals to perform physical and mental examinations through videoconferencing equipment, including various issues and limitations related to this technology. This information will enable us to consider whether to expand use of telehealth and videoconference technology as a way to perform consultative examinations.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop comprised of health care and allied professionals and researchers to explore and discuss the emerging evidence on long-term effects of Coronavirus Disease 2019, (COVID-19). This workshop will provide us information about the long-term health effects of COVID-19, the effectiveness and availability of treatments, how to best evaluate the long-term impact of the virus on survivors' ability to work, and whether additional agency-sponsored research is needed.

In FY 2022, we are considering task orders to:

- Create a consensus committee on the long-term health effects of COVID-19 as it relates to our disability program. This committee will enable us to comprehensively consider the latest findings and research data related to COVID-19. The information we gather will assist our agency in responding to changing pressures on our service delivery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also enable us to provide guidance to adjudicators for accurately and efficiently deciding cases involving effects from a COVID-19 infection.
- Create a consensus committee on infants with extremely low birth weight and infants who are small for gestational age. This information will enable us to increase our accuracy and consistency when assessing functional limitations in children with low birth weight that may have affected their development.
- Plan and conduct a public workshop bringing together experts on health disparities for people facing barriers. This workshop would offer a synthesis of information on the health consequences of barriers to service from a health science perspective as well as other social determinants of health. This information will allow our agency to effectively consider and address systemic issues in the provision of health services that take place prior to our agency's involvement.

New Multi-Year Contract with The National Academy of Sciences

In FY 2023, we plan to award a five-year contract to the NAS to continue their work on research into disability issues, particularly at steps three, four, and five of the disability sequential

Supplemental Security Income Program

evaluation process. The NAS will establish and manage FACA compliant consensus study committees, organize and lead workshops with subject matter experts, and plan and organize outreach conferences with members of the public.

In FY 2023, we are considering task orders to:

- Create a new standing committee of medical, vocational, and other experts to assist our agency with disability policy issues. The committee members will survey medical literature and clinical practices to keep us informed and assist us in addressing disability issues identified by our agency.
- Create a consensus committee on newly emerging psychological treatment modalities, including recently developed and approved psychotropics medications, and how they relate to the long-term outlook for people with otherwise intractable mental illness. This information will allow us to issue the most relevant and timely guidance possible to our adjudicators.

Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW)

The ARDRAW program supports young and emerging scholars pursuing careers in public policy research who have a special interest in our beneficiaries' quality of life and disability program issues, challenges, and outcomes. We recruit graduate students, faculty, and administrators of accredited programs with an academic emphasis in public health, social work, economics, occupational medicine, vocational and rehabilitation counseling, public policy and administration, sociology, psychology, education, medicine, and law.

In FY 2021, we awarded the fifth ARDRAW cohort grants and received final project papers from the fourth ARDRAW cohort. We granted no-cost extensions that will extend beyond FY 2021 to a few participants in our fourth ARDRAW cohort, due to COVID-19 disruptions to their project plans. ARDRAW was originally a five-year program, but we extended the current ARDRAW grant agreement by one year. With the additional year, in FY 2022, we will award the sixth and final ARDRAW cohort and receive final project papers from the fifth ARDRAW cohort. In FY 2023, we will receive final project papers from the sixth ARDRAW cohort and close out the existing ARDRAW grant agreement.

The purpose of the one-year extension is to provide additional time to plan for recompetes of the ARDRAW program. In FY 2022, we will conduct a competition for a grants management organization to oversee the small grant program. In FY 2023, we will conduct start up activities for the new grant agreement and request applications for the first cohort of the new program.

The new ARDRAW will be similar to the current ARDRAW. It will support young and emerging scholars pursuing careers in public policy research who have a special interest in our beneficiaries' quality of life and disability program issues, challenges, and outcomes, with additional emphasis on access and equity issues. We are increasing the grant amounts to cover an increase to the student stipend amount from \$300,000 to \$450,000.

For more information, please see the ARDRAW website: <https://ardraw.policyresearchinc.org>.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Beyond Benefits Study (formerly known as Exits from Disability Evidence Study)

We terminate the benefits of thousands of DI beneficiaries and SSI recipients based on medical improvement each year. However, many individuals whose benefits are terminated later return to disability programs. About 30 percent of adult SSI-only recipients and 20 percent of DI-only working beneficiaries who stop receiving benefits because of medical improvement return to these programs within 8 years. Among the working DI beneficiaries whose benefits stop, few maintain employment or work above common thresholds of self-sufficiency.

In FY 2021, we awarded a contract and finalized the study schedule to collect information about the service, medical, and employment needs of working-age adults (i.e., 18 to 64 years of age) exiting Social Security disability programs because of medical improvement, including age-18 redeterminations. In this study, we will gather evidence through surveys, focus groups, and other means on the barriers to employment and other needs of this population.

In FY 2022, we obtained generic Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance and began qualitative data collections (i.e., focus groups with professional, practicing motivational interviewers and interviews with 30 people who no longer collect disability payments [“exiters”] or may lose disability payments soon [“possible exiters”] due to medical improvement in their disabling impairment). These data will inform the process plan for a small motivational interviewing pilot program that is scheduled next. The small, non-random motivational interviewing pilot will accomplish two goals. First, it will help provide a sense of the duration and intensity of supports that are necessary for such an intervention. Second, it will assist data-gathering efforts by providing additional context to the needs of the former DI beneficiary population. The information gained from this counseling will provide information on how providing motivational support for individuals terminated from the disability programs may facilitate their attempts work. All data collected in FY 2022 will be used to inform the development of a survey to be conducted with 4,000 exiters and possible exiters in FY 2023.

We expect to complete all qualitative data collection and conduct most survey activities by the end of FY 2023 and receive a final report by FY 2024.

Blanket Purchase Order Agreement for Time Sensitive Research Projects

In FY 2018, we awarded a blanket purchase agreement (BPA) to provide an alternate research channel for policy and program assessments and studies related to social science, medical, or vocational rehabilitation topics. The BPA allows for multiple research projects to occur simultaneously in relatively short timeframes. We can expect deliverables in the range of 4 to 6 months, which is considerably quicker than the 18-plus months expected from traditional contracts. We build an interactive process with the contractors as the projects proceed, allowing us to course-correct as the work progresses. By drawing on our research methods’ expertise and content knowledge, we produce effective research objectives and relevant data analysis. The BPA also provides the option to contract with a trusted agent to develop and assess research questions, provide subject matter expertise, and evaluate research products to support policy decisions. The use of a trusted agent is optional and is considered on a case-by-case basis

Supplemental Security Income Program

depending upon the nature or sensitivity of the research topics. The BPA remains in effect today.

In FY 2021, we funded three research study awards.

- We secured the consulting services of an industrial/organizational psychology expert to help our agency: (1) utilize Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) data; and (2) identify areas where the survey elements which are not reported by Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), particularly some physical and mental/cognitive requirements, could be either estimated from current publicly reported results or better measured in the future to best meet the needs of our disability program. This task order award includes an option year that can be exercised in FY 2022 if continued support is needed through FY 2023.
- We awarded study for a comprehensive assessment of the Program Data Disclosure Review Board public use file disclosure limitation methods and requirements. Given rapidly changing technology, coupled with the proliferation of publicly and privately available data sources, the nature of disclosure risk is constantly changing. To respond to this evolving disclosure risk, we seek to review the current disclosure checklist and identify potential updates to strengthen the methodology of disclosure control and confidentiality protection of our agency's public use files (PUF).
- We awarded a study aimed at developing and updating the OASDI and SSI PUFs. This project addresses the need for high quality up-to-date data for research that at the same time protects the confidentiality of individuals included in the PUFs. Results from these projects will be available at the end of the 12-month period of performance.

In FY 2022, we have three new projects planned along with the second year of the consulting work from the industrial/organizational psychologist that began in FY 2021.

- We plan to secure expert insight on how the functional profiles we define from BLS/ORS would be supported by particular conditions or findings in the medical evidence we consider.
- Another study will be the review of Work Smart system effectiveness to identify beneficiaries completing their Trial Work Period or engaging in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA).
- The final planned study is a review of the Quick Disability Determinations (QDD) process. We developed the QDD process in order to expedite claims from a fragile population whose severe medical conditions clearly meet the agency's disability standards. The QDD process uses a computer-based predictive model to screen initial applications to identify cases where a favorable disability determination is highly likely and medical evidence is readily available. By identifying QDD claims early in the process, we prioritize that workload and expedite case processing. The purpose of this study is to ensure the equity of the QDD model and process by reviewing the current QDD process to identify any potential bias within the system. An investigation concerning the presence of bias within the QDD process will allow us to identify unintended inequity among disability applicants.

In FY 2023, we plan to continue studies in support of the Occupations Information System Initiative. We are also in the planning phase regarding possible FY 2023 research topics in

Supplemental Security Income Program

support of *Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*.

Disability Analysis File (DAF)

Our administrative systems contain the data that underly and support our programs. Our data are generally available to researchers in raw, unformatted, and undocumented extracts. Administrative data are critical to our understanding of beneficiaries with disabilities, providing details on the entire population and allowing for the analysis of small subpopulations which we cannot generally study with survey data based on population samples. The DAF takes data from our 10 most relevant administrative files and creates an annual, formatted database that is ready for analysis, easy to use, and well-documented. We create two versions of the DAF each year—a restricted use version for SSA staff, grantees, contractors, and federal partners, and a de-identified public use (PUF) version available to the public through our website. The DAF focuses on data needed to answer questions about disability and work. It complements the National Beneficiary Survey (NBS), which provides information that is not available from our administrative sources, such as veterans status, interest in work, barriers to work, hours of work, wages, and how disability affects activities. When combined, the DAF and NBS provide a complete picture of demographics, benefits, work, and work attitudes for all SSI and DI beneficiaries with disabilities.

We use the DAF for internal research, to support demonstration development and evaluation, and to answer any questions that may arise. For example, we use the DAF to examine the costs and benefits of the Ticket to Work (TTW) program, the effectiveness of TTW mailings, and the characteristics associated with successful return to work by beneficiaries. We use the DAF to model and forecast payments to Employment Network and Vocational Rehabilitation under the TTW program. We also use the DAF to support oversight by the Social Security Advisory Board, our Office of the Inspector General, OMB, Congress, the Government Accountability Office, and others. Additionally, we allow non-SSA researchers to use the DAF, primarily through the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC), and through a public use version of the DAF available at www.data.gov.

Since we first published public use data from the DAF in November 2018, there has been significant interest in using this file, with 55 downloads per month on average. Since its launch, the DAF-PUF has consistently been a popular data download. In the last year, downloads of the DAF data user's guide averaged 37 per month while downloads of NBS data user's guide averaged nine per month over the same period. Twelve research papers put forth in 2020, and five in 2021, utilized either the public or restricted versions of the DAF for their analysis. We awarded a competitive contract in FY 2022 to continue building the DAF for FYs 2022-2026. Over this period, we are transitioning from mainframe administrative data files to a cloud server environment for storage and processing. In FY 2022, we will begin to transition DAF construction from mainframe to cloud storage and processing and expect to complete most DAF construction in the cloud environment in FY 2023. As part of this transition, we will explore opportunities for streamlining the DAF construction process and/or shortening the DAF construction timeline. We expect the cloud environment will make DAF more accessible to a broader range of users beginning in FY 2023.

Disability Perceptions Survey (DPS)

In FY 2020, we awarded a contract for a DPS that will gather information on knowledge, perceptions, and opinions working adults have about the DI program. We will use data from the survey to assess whether individuals' current knowledge of DI affects future decisions to seek benefits. We expect the survey will also provide information about the anticipated need for future DI benefits among working age adults and insight into the most effective ways to communicate with the public about the DI program. In FY 2021, we finalized the survey and sampling plan, received OMB approval to conduct a pre-test, and submitted a system security plan for review. We anticipate fielding this survey in August 2022. We may award a contract for a second round of the DPS in FY 2023.

Disability Research Surveys (DRS)

In FY 2021, we developed a new survey platform, the DRS, that will broaden the scope of information we collect about beneficiaries. The DRS will include three separate surveys. We will fund and award task orders for each survey separately.

The first of the three DRS surveys will be an additional round of the NBS. It was awarded in FY 2022 and will be fielded in FY 2023. The New Applicant Survey will be the second survey developed under the DRS, will help us better understand DI and SSI applicants' experiences, their use of services, and the pathways they take before and after application. We will fund the New Application Survey in FY 2022 and field it in FY 2025.

We will determine the final new survey in the future based on topics of greatest interest at that time. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, beneficiaries at transition ages, veterans, and underserved populations. We anticipate funding the third survey in FY 2024 and fielding it in FY 2026.

Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)

The ICAP encourages employment of individuals with disabilities through cooperative agreements with States, private foundations, and other stakeholders who have an interest in and ability to identify, operate, and partially fund interventional research.

The research and interventions under this program target the increased employment and self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities (whether beneficiaries, applicants, or potential applicants of the DI or SSI programs). This includes interventions that may demonstrate a reduction in DI or SSI participation or focus on policies that improve the administration and effectiveness of programs carried on or assisted under the Social Security Act. This program provides a process through which we can systematically review demonstration proposals from outside organizations and enter into collaboration agreements. The program complements our own demonstration projects and coordinate with our own projects. The ICAP is distinct from our other research grant programs – ARDRAW and the RDRC – which focus on “observational” research as contrasted with “experimental” research.

Supplemental Security Income Program

The awards for the ICAP will be tiered, with funding eligibility and funding level based upon the level of evidence that exists for the proposed intervention. Feasibility studies with little or no existing causal evidence would be eligible for much smaller awards than studies that are based on or will produce causal evidence.

In FY 2021, we awarded our first two cooperative agreements. We awarded \$3 million to the Kessler Foundation to conduct a randomized controlled trial of a Vocational Resource Facilitation Demonstration employment intervention for adults who have experienced a brain injury or spinal cord injury. This project will promote self-sufficiency by helping people who want to work enter, stay in, or return to the labor force. We awarded \$1.3 million to the State of Georgia's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to conduct a feasibility study of the implementation of the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery model in county jails with inmates with serious and persistent mental illness across the state. This project will help to assist claimants in underserved communities learn about their eligibility and apply for DI and SSI benefits.

In FY 2022, we will conduct start-up activities with the initial FY 2021 awardees, including setting up data sharing agreements and completing Paperwork Reduction Act packages for OMB clearance. We will also solicit applications for additional projects.

In FY 2023, we will continue with the FY 2021 projects for which we have secured data sharing agreements and obtained OMB approval. We will also conduct start-up activities for the FY 2022 projects, including setting up data sharing agreements and completing Paperwork Reduction Act packages for OMB clearance. We will also solicit applications for a third round of projects.

National Beneficiary Survey (NBS)

The NBS collects data from a nationally representative sample of DI beneficiaries and SSI recipients on a wide range of topics not available in our administrative data or in other public databases. The data include health and functional status, health insurance coverage, interest in work, barriers to work, use of services, work history, income, and experience with Social Security programs. The collection of this data improves our ability to conduct useful analysis regarding factors that facilitate DI beneficiary and SSI recipient employment and conversely, factors that impede their efforts to maintain employment.

Our researchers and analysts, along with researchers at other Federal agencies, research organizations, and academic institutions, use NBS data extensively to evaluate the TTW program and other DI and SSI work incentive programs and policies.

The NBS gathers information through three samples.

- One is a nationally representative sample of DI beneficiaries and SSI recipients called the Representative Beneficiary Sample (RBS), which collects information on their health and well-being, employment-related goals and activities, and use of programs and services.

Supplemental Security Income Program

- In 2017, we added a Successful Workers Sample (SWS) to the NBS, which focuses on beneficiaries who have experienced employment success as demonstrated by their attainment of earnings at amounts sufficient to have their benefits suspended due to work.
- The 2019 NBS contains both the RBS and SWS components and also includes a longitudinal sample of successful workers who were part of the 2017 SWS.

We developed PUFs and associated documentation conveying the results of the 2017 NBS in FY 2020, and produced various quality reviews and data reports on the 2019 NBS results. In FY 2021, we compiled data files, for both restricted access and public use, codebooks, and a user's guide conveying information and results from the 2019 NBS. We posted the NBS PUFs and associated documentation on our website at the end of 2021. In FYs 2022 and 2023, the NBS contractor will estimate final statistical weights for prior survey rounds and will then develop final data files and documentation covering all rounds of the NBS in preparation for contract closeout. Future rounds of the NBS will be included in the Disability Research Surveys project.

Reports and public use files containing data from prior rounds of the NBS are available on our website at: <http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/nbs.html>.

New and Emerging Research – Disability

Given the size and scope of our research agenda, this category allows us the flexibility to cover unanticipated cost increases and the development of new research projects due to changes in laws, regulations, policy, and agency or administration priorities. Projects under this category typically include studies of program policy issues and the identification of trends in the disability program.

The “New and Emerging Research – Disability” line item allows us to allocate funding to cover the costs of small initiatives or initial project development for larger initiatives. If we assess that a project will translate into a larger, multi-year initiative, the project will receive its own line item in future budget planning activities. Factors that determine this transition include project scope, duration, and cost.

NIH Research on Data Analytics and the Work Disability-Functional Assessment Battery (WD-FAB)

Under an Interagency Agreement, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center provides in-depth analysis of our existing data and supports testing the WD-FAB in our CDR process. The WD-FAB aims to provide uniform information about individuals' self-reported functional ability that we can use to inform our disability data collection and determination processes.

In FY 2021, NIH continued their WD-FAB related work by providing an analysis of WD-FAB data collected during the Supported Employment Demonstration (SED), along with other SSA administrative data, to analyze how WD-FAB scores change over time. NIH also continued development of natural language processing (NLP) methods to identify functional terminology within the unstructured text of medical evidence. Specifically, NIH developed methods to compare medical records information to residual functional capacity assessment information by

Supplemental Security Income Program

extracting physical exam and other body function information from the records. These research methods will help us to identify, extract, and analyze medical records information as data to inform adjudicator decision support projects. In addition, NIH continued its work to expand and update a version of the functional terminology ontology¹ originally delivered to us at the end of FY 2019.

In FY 2022, NIH will conduct the initial analysis of the FY 2022 WD-FAB data collected under the WD-FAB Data Collections contract. This analysis will assist in evaluating the value and feasibility of incorporating the WD-FAB into our CDR business process. NIH will also finalize its analysis and evaluation of WD-FAB data collected during the SED. NIH will initiate research efforts to explore the use of additional data sources to identify characteristics of beneficiaries most likely to return to work to inform ongoing TTW program efforts, and will continue its NLP work identifying functional terminology within medical evidence to expand the associated functional terminology ontology.

In FY 2023, NIH will finalize and deliver the analysis comparing WD-FAB data to our CDR predictive model scores, responses to CDR Mailer (Form SSA-455) questions, and CDR full medical review outcomes for participating study beneficiaries. Once received, we will use the evidence and findings in the report to evaluate the value and feasibility of incorporating the WD-FAB into our CDR business process. NIH will also expand upon its work to develop NLP methods to assist us in identifying functional terminology within the unstructured text of medical evidence and based on analysis of our administrative data, NIH will continue its efforts to identify characteristics of beneficiaries most likely to return to work.

Occupational Information System (OIS) and Vocational Information Tool (VIT)

In 1991, the Department of Labor (DOL) stopped updating the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) and replaced it with the Occupational Information Network, a system that was developed as a career exploration tool. We are developing a new Occupational Information System (OIS) that could replace the DOL's DOT as the primary source of occupational information in our disability adjudication.

We began collaborating with DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in FY 2012 on development of the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS) to collect updated information on the requirements of work in the national economy. We will use the ORS data, along with information from other occupational sources, to create the new OIS. The OIS will classify occupations using the Federally mandated Standard Occupational Classification system and include data elements to measure the physical demands, environmental conditions, and mental and cognitive requirements of work, as well as the education and training needed to gain average proficiency in a job. We will house, access, and operationalize the OIS through the Vocational Information Tool (VIT), a web-based information technology platform.

¹ A functional terminology ontology groups similar terms into functional domains. For example, the ontology would group similar terms like walking and ambulating into the Mobility domain since both terms relate to mobility.

Supplemental Security Income Program

In FY 2021, BLS completed the third year of Wave 2 data collection, began collecting the fourth year, and published estimates from the second year of Wave 2. SSA analyzed Wave 1 and 2 microdata to determine the number of workers in the national economy who fulfill combinations of RFC and Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP)¹ elements, to identify the most prevalent occupations of those workers and to evaluate mental/cognitive ORS requirements. VIT development included upgrading the system's architecture to comply with our new user experience framework and conducting detailed user experience testing.

In FY 2022, BLS will complete the fourth year and begin the fifth and final year of Wave 2 data collection. In November 2021, BLS published the data from the third year of Wave 2. SSA and BLS will assess the results of BLS testing and research on previously proposed third wave measurement changes. We will work with BLS to develop the Wave 3 sample design methodology and continue our analysis of the ORS microdata.

In FY 2023, BLS will complete Wave 2 data collection, begin collecting the first year of Wave 3 and publish data from the fourth year of Wave 2.

Ticket to Work (TTW) Evaluation

To meet the continued obligations in the *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999*, P.L. 106-170, for on-going evaluations and to assess the current landscape of the TTW program, we are undertaking an evaluation of the TTW program operations and experiences of TTW users. This evaluation will include consumer and provider experiences for both the Employment Networks (EN) and the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects.

In FY 2023, we will solicit applications to conduct an evaluation using surveys, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, an analysis of program data, and other data collection methodologies, as appropriate. The topics and questions we intend to answer with this evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- **Program Effectiveness and Opportunities for Improvement:** To what extent are the TTW and WIPA programs working effectively and efficiently? In what areas can we improve? What additional services or program improvements can be helpful to beneficiaries? To what extent are beneficiaries aware of the programs? Why do beneficiaries use the programs? Why do they not? What role does SSA play in the TTW program and what, if any, changes to that role might improve service delivery and program outcomes?
- **Consumer Characteristics:** Who is using TTW and WIPA services? What services are most effective for different demographic groups?
- **Service Provision:** To what extent are services keeping up with modern technological changes? Who are the effective service providers and what do they do differently from less effective service providers?

¹ SSA defines SVP as the amount of time required to learn the techniques, acquire information, and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job-worker situation. See [POMS DI 25001.001A.77](#), effective 01/28/22.

Supplemental Security Income Program

- **Service Equity:** Are the TTW services broadly available to everyone or are there disparities between which populations have access to these services? What barriers exist, if any, to service provision, including service market provider entry, in economically disadvantaged, racially diverse, and rural communities? How do program rules, such as the Ticket payment system, affect service availability?

We expect to award an evaluation contract to answer these questions in FY 2023. The contractor will design an evaluation study, field the data collection activities, and produce reports on its findings. This evaluation will supplement findings from the previous TTW evaluation. In FYs 2023 and 2024, we expect to work with the contractor to finalize the evaluation design and obtain approval for data collection activities. We expect to field the data collection activities in FYs 2025 and 2026 and expect a final evaluation report in FY 2027.

Project Updates (no funding required)

Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE)

PROMISE is a joint pilot demonstration project with the Department of Education and DOL. The goal is to test interventions that improve the health, education, and post-school outcomes of children who receive SSI, including the completion of postsecondary education and employment. We also hope to improve family or household outcomes through improved services and supports, such as education and job training for parents.

In FY 2013, we awarded a contract to evaluate the PROMISE model demonstration projects. In FY 2019, we released an interim services and impact report showing that the individual projects increased the receipt of youth-based transition services and family receipt of services and increased youth employment. From FY 2019 through FY 2021, we conducted a survey of participants in the project. We expect to produce a final evaluation report, including a cost-benefit analysis in FY 2022.

Promoting Work through Early Interventions Project (PWEIP)

The PWEIP is a joint undertaking with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within HHS. The project will identify, select, and evaluate programs likely to improve the employment and economic outcomes of individuals who have not yet applied for SSI and have little or no work history, current or foreseeable disabilities, and ties to U.S. safety net programs. Evaluations of programs will include impact assessments and implementation research. A select number of evaluations will also include a cost analysis.

In FY 2019, we developed and entered into a jointly financed cooperative arrangement with ACF and transferred \$25 million to support the evaluation and/or service provisions of selected intervention programs. In FY 2020, we worked with ACF to engage in site assessment and selection activities for programs to participate in an evaluation under ACF's Building Evidence on Employment Strategies (BEES) and Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies (NextGen) projects.

Supplemental Security Income Program

We approved nine programs that will participate in BEES or NextGen and will be supported with our agency's transferred funds. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY 2020 and its continuation into FY 2021 has led to delays in, or suspension of, some study activities. Depending on the trajectory of the pandemic and continued implications for selected programs, by the end of FY 2022 we anticipate all programs will have launched study enrollment and will be actively engaged in study activities. These activities will continue beyond FY 2022, given study enrollment periods vary by program and the potential for continued study delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Demonstration

RETAIN is a joint demonstration with DOL. The demonstration is developing, implementing, evaluating, and scaling effective stay-at-work and return-to-work early intervention strategies to support injured or ill workers in employment, including workers with COVID-19-related illnesses.

In FY 2019, DOL awarded eight States (California, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, Vermont, and Washington) up to \$2.5 million for 24-month pilot grants as Phase 1 of the project. DOL extended the Phase 1 pilot grants and increased the duration of the Phase 2 grants to allow more time for enrollment activities and increased the evaluation contract period of performance by an equivalent number of months. In early FY 2021, the evaluation contractor produced assessment reports to aid DOL in selecting a subset of the Phase 1 States for full-implementation. In FY 2021, DOL awarded Phase 2 grants to Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Vermont to improve the coordination of health care and employment-related supports and services to new geographic areas and larger populations within these States. DOL will maintain a technical assistance contract to support RETAIN grantees, and we will maintain a contract for conducting a rigorous evaluation of the projects.

Phase 2 grantees began recruiting participants into the full program in FY 2022. In FY 2022, the evaluation contractor began administering surveys to both enrollees and service providers. Grantees will enroll participants through the spring of FY 2024 and provide services through the summer of FY 2025. The evaluation contractor will produce an interim impact report in FY 2025 and the final impact evaluation report in FY 2026.

Supported Employment Demonstration (SED)

While many demonstrations for existing DI beneficiaries have shown positive results (e.g., increased earnings), they have not identified interventions that would return beneficiaries to substantial and sustained employment. Research indicates that health problems materialize in advance of complete disability onset and that earnings begin to decline well before DI benefits are awarded. The SED evaluates whether offering evidence-based packages of vocational, medical, and mental health services to recently denied DI and SSI applicants (ages 18 to 50 with a mental impairment) can reduce the demand for DI benefits. The SED provides participants with long-term employment services and intensive behavioral health and related services beyond what is available through their existing health plans.

Supplemental Security Income Program

We awarded a contract to implement and evaluate the SED in August 2016. The contractor completed enrollment in FY 2019. In FY 2020, all sites delivered interventions and the contractor conducted regular monitoring and fidelity site visits that included ethnographic observations and interviews with key informants and participants. In FY 2021, the study moved to virtual activities and data collection processes due to COVID-19 restrictions as full interventions continued. In FYs 2020 and 2021, participants began transitioning out of the study after 3 years of services; transitions continue until March 2022 when interventions end. The timeline for the study was extended by four months (from August to December 2022) to accommodate COVID-19-associated delays and earlier start-up delays. We released a special topics report, presenting and analyzing effects of innovative enrollment and study retention strategies developed for the study Supported Employment Demonstration Enrollment Analysis Report. We will receive the final evaluation reports (impact and cost-benefit analyses) and data files for the SED in the first quarter of FY 2023. The study ends December 31, 2022.

TTW Notice Optimization

We mail notices of TTW eligibility to beneficiaries approximately 2 months after we award disability benefits and at the 12 month and 36 month anniversary dates post-award. The TTW Notice Optimization project seeks to increase participation in the TTW program by developing an evidence-based approach to targeting outreach to eligible beneficiaries. The project will test changes to TTW notices including the types of notices we send, the language we use, and the timing of our notices.

In FY 2019, we analyzed administrative data to identify patterns of responses to past mailings and characteristics associated with TTW participation and work. We also worked with the General Services Administration's (GSA) Office of Evaluation Sciences to develop prototype notices. In FY 2020, we worked with GSA to develop the evaluation design and finalize the notice prototypes to send beneficiaries (upon award, one year after award, and two years after award). We modified the system needed to randomize notice mailings and began mailing out notices in September 2020.

In FY 2021, we tested prototype notices and conducted data analyses. We extended the mailings from 9 months to 18 months. We will continue to send the revised notices through March 2022. Along with GSA, we will conduct the final analyses of the new mailings in FY 2023.

Deliver Services Effectively

Data Development in an Enterprise Business Intelligence (EBI) Platform

EBI provides advanced analytics and data integration tools for efficient access and analysis of our records to support data driven decision-making. Section 1110 funds support a subset of activities to enhance research and statistical functions, primarily the publication of statistics from administrative records.

Some of our legacy processes used for producing statistics still require significant manual intervention. We generate reports and data files monthly, quarterly, yearly, and on an ad-hoc basis. We are improving the report and data production efficiency and accuracy by modernizing

Supplemental Security Income Program

and automating the application processes that we use to create statistical data, tables, and reports for research.

Our FY 2021 work included:

- Modernizing and automating processes including validating and streamlining business processes for the OASDI publication data development and monthly statistical publication reports.
- Modernizing and automating manual SSI Yearly data files processing. We use the files in SSI annual publications.
- Maintaining the automated publication process for Windfall Elimination Provision – Government Pension Offset (WEP-GPO), SSI, Earnings Geography (GEO), Earnings Publication, and Representative-Payee data.
- Using EBI tools to support the production of statistics or data extracts for ongoing publications and critical ad-hoc research projects

FY 2022 work will focus on:

- Developing automation processes for the OASDI statistical summary data development and yearly statistical publication reports generation.
- Maintaining the automated publication process for WEP-GPO, SSI, GEO, Earnings Publication, and Representative Payee data.
- Using EBI tools to support the production of statistics or data extracts for ongoing publications and critical ad-hoc research projects.

In FY 2023, we will build tools to enhance our research and statistical reports. We will replace obsolete data collecting methodologies in the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS). Additionally, FYs 2022 and 2023 work will include:

- Modernizing and automating Cell Suppression methods for OASDI and SSI files.
- Streamlining the business process for our Fast Facts Figures publication.
- Computerizing end-to-end validation process of OASDI and SSI statistical publication tables and reports using modern SAS statistical tools.
- Maintaining and upgrading the publication process for: WEP-GPO, SSI, GEO, Earnings Publications, and Representative Payee data from SAS 9.4 M5 version to SAS 9.4 M7/SAS Viya.

Understanding America Study (UAS) Enhancements

UAS is an innovative, nationally representative longitudinal internet panel funded through a jointly financed cooperative agreement with the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Our support will allow the grantee to maintain and expand the sample size to 20,000 panel members by the end of the grant.

The planned improvements to the UAS will allow us to make informed decisions about initiating new policies, procedures, and educational products to enhance retirement security and administer the program. For example, we used longitudinal data to inform updates to the *Social Security*

Supplemental Security Income Program

Statement and its supplemental fact sheets that were released online in the [my Social Security](#) portal and by mail in FY 2021. In FYs 2022 and 2023, we will use the longitudinal data from the UAS to assess whether the redesigned *Social Security Statement* and new supplemental fact sheets improve the public's understanding of our programs. The UAS data set is also available for external researchers to use in addressing research questions. For example, researchers used UAS data to explain financial literacy and financial behavior at older ages (Clark, Mitchell & Lusardi, 2021)¹, build life-cycle models of consumption, savings, labor supply, and Social Security claiming decisions (Bairoliya & McKiernan, 2021)², and evaluate the potential impact of policies to reduce Social Security funding shortfalls on consumers (Perez-Arce, Rabinovich, & Yoong, 2021)³. Lastly, we will use the UAS data to publish research papers on changes in Social Security program knowledge, retirement savings behavior, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Medicare Outreach – Section 1144

We target outreach to income-tested, Medicare-eligible beneficiaries and those who have experienced a decrease in income under the Medicare Prescription Drug, Modernization, and Improvement Act of 2003, P.L. 108-173, which expanded outreach requirements of Section 1144, and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, P.L. 110-275, which deemed every Extra Help application filed with our agency to be a protective filing for the State-administered Medicare Savings Programs (MSP), unless the claimant objects. We send outreach letters to beneficiaries with incomes below 135 percent of the poverty level. These letters provide help with “traditional” Medicare and include information about Extra Help, when appropriate. Rather than notify all potentially eligible beneficiaries each year, we annually notify 20 percent of those who previously received an outreach letter, have not received the benefits, and continue to meet the income test.

In addition, we share lists of individuals potentially eligible for cost sharing with State Medicaid agencies. The major objective of these projects is to increase the enrollment of eligible low-income individuals into programs that assist Medicare beneficiaries with their out-of-pocket medical expenses, including prescription drug coverage premiums. HHS fully reimburses our costs in an amount not exceeding \$3 million per year.

In FY 2021, we mailed approximately 1.6 million outreach letters to those who potentially qualified for MSP or Extra Help. In FYs 2022 to 2024, we anticipate mailing a similar number of outreach letters each year. However, we factor in a contingency amount for possible increases in enrollment, for beneficiaries who experience a decline in income, and other expected costs such as an increase in postage.

¹ Clark, R. L., Lusardi, A., & Mitchell, O. S. (2021, May). Financial Fragility During the COVID-19 Pandemic. In *AEA Papers and Proceedings* (Vol. 111, pp. 292-96).

² Bairoliya, N., & McKiernan, K. (2021). Revisiting Retirement and Social Security Claiming Decisions. *Available at SSRN 3896031*.

³ Perez-Arce, F., Rabinovich, L., & Yoong, J. (2021). The Potential Impact of Policies to Reduce Social Security Funding Shortfalls on Consumers' Expected Benefits and Behavior. *Journal of Pension Economics & Finance*, 20(4), 482-495.

Ensuring Stewardship

Census Surveys

The Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is the foundation for much of our policy analysis and modeling efforts. We support efforts to improve the quality and content of the Census Bureau's SIPP data to improve the ability to match SIPP data to our administrative data on benefits and earnings. We rely upon SIPP data matched to our records to study OASI, DI, SSI, and related programs and to analyze the effect of changes to these programs on individuals, the economy, and program solvency.

We developed new questions, which the Census Bureau integrated into the existing SIPP content, beginning with the 2021 SIPP data collection. This new content will be repeated in the annual SIPP interviews conducted in 2022 and beyond, but our annual cost will decline because there will be no need to test new data collection instruments.

Data Development

One of the main objectives of our extramural research program is to provide information for decision-makers on the OASI, DI, and SSI programs. We develop and maintain a series of detailed, statistical databases drawn from our major administrative data systems and prepare a broad range of statistical tables. We also publish statistical compilations and develop information for research, evaluation, and modeling that relies on survey data collected by our agency, other Federal agencies, and Federally-sponsored institutions.

In FY 2021, we entered into a new agreement with the Census Bureau for the "Ask US" Panel (i.e., Census Address-and Probability-Based Online Panel). The focus of the interagency agreement is to collaborate on designing, building, and maintaining an address-based, probability-based, online research panel that will be available for the Federal Statistical System to conduct robust public opinion and methodological research. The Census Bureau, in collaboration with several agencies, has entered into a cooperative agreement with RTI International to build this panel. In FY 2022, we continue to support the Census Bureau's efforts to build the panel. Our partnership allows the use of a readily available, vetted, and Government-wide online research platform to conduct regular as well as rapid-response surveys, thereby avoiding the continual process and costs of selecting outside vendors to fulfill our survey research needs. Additionally, the partnership will facilitate longitudinal probability-based research that many Government agencies are interested in conducting.

As part of our efforts related to the President's Executive Order on racial equity, [Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, \(E.O. 13958\)](#), we want to use our programmatic data on race and ethnicity for research. Our challenge is to determine whether we have sufficiently reliable, quality program data on race and ethnicity. In FY 2022, we are assessing the quality of our data, developing metrics and thresholds for reliability, enhancing the data through statistical imputations and other techniques, and publishing statistics and research on those segments of our populations for which we have adequate data on race and ethnicity. In FYs 2023 and 2024, we plan to develop research data files for use by agency researchers and others, to produce statistical data products related to

Supplemental Security Income Program

equity, race, and ethnicity. For more information on our equity efforts, please see the Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility exhibit in the LAE section.

As part of data development, we are providing support to the Committee on National Statistics of the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to improve statistical methods and information. Recent Committee topics include redesigning the Consumer Expenditure Surveys and improving healthcare cost projections for the Medicare population.

Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement

The University of Michigan's HRS surveys more than 22,000 Americans over the age of 50 every 2 years and provides an ongoing source of longitudinal data for research on retirement and aging. The study provides data on health and economic well-being after retirement that is not available in our program data. HRS data helps us assess a wide range of issues, including pre-retirement saving, health insurance, employment and retirement patterns, and projected benefits of disabled and retired workers. Through jointly financed cooperative agreements with the NIA, we have supported the HRS from its inception. HRS has become the premier source of data on the retirement-age population, especially when linked with our administrative records on benefits and earnings.

We use the HRS for research by our staff or for projects funded through the RDRC regarding disability, pension participation, differences in contributions to tax-deferred savings accounts among different birth cohorts, and retirement income resources of near-retirees. For example, in FY 2021, our researchers continued to use the HRS for a study analyzing the accuracy of our *Income of the Aged Population* publications and for a study measuring total retirement resources (wealth and income) from 1998-2016, including in-kind transfer payments. The HRS data we support is also available for external researchers to better understand the American population aged 50 and older, including measuring income, poverty, and wealth for black and white elderly households.

Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC)

The RDRC is a key tool for maintaining a strong capability to produce a large body of policy-relevant research on our programs. The RDRC comprises four competitively selected research centers based at the University of Michigan, Boston College, the National Bureau of Economic Research, and the University of Wisconsin. We broadly charge these research centers with planning, initiating, and maintaining a high quality, multidisciplinary research program that covers retirement, disability, and Social Security program issues. The centers perform valuable research and evaluation of retirement and disability policy, disseminate results, provide training awards, and facilitate the use of our program data by outside researchers.

We awarded the current set of five-year cooperative agreements for the RDRC at the end of FY 2018. The next set of five-year cooperative agreements will be awarded in FY 2023

Supplemental Security Income Program

following a competition open to all research organizations, universities, and associations of research organizations and universities in the United States.

The RDRC is actively used to support the agency's equity initiatives, including two ongoing training programs co-administered by an HBCU (Howard University) and an MSI/AANAPSI (the University of Illinois Chicago), and various research projects that include scholars from an HBCU/MSI and/or focus on a topic relating to racial or ethnic disparities. For example, eight of the FY 2021 projects include scholars from HBCUs or MSIs, including at Bowie State University, Howard University, Spelman University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, among others. We continue to strongly encourage the four RDRC centers to expand their collaborations with these institutions and to consider equity in all of their research activities.

FY 2021 funding supported 64 projects to be conducted by the end of FY 2022 on a variety of topics. In FYs 2022 and 2023, we anticipate funding around the same number of projects annually. Focal areas for projects to be conducted in FY 2022 include: trends in population health, functional ability, and disability; work in the modern economy; disabled beneficiaries and return-to-work; informing the economic and demographic assumptions underlying trust fund projections; improving our communication and outreach; the economic security of our beneficiaries; understanding disparities by race and ethnicity; and improving service delivery. Within each topic, we provided the centers with specific research questions to consider when developing their research proposals.

In addition to supporting research activities, the RDRC will continue to prepare future experts on retirement and disability issues and policy through research training fellowships, dissertation support, pre- and post-doctoral fellowships, early investigator grants, and junior scholar workshops. This includes three new training programs introduced in FY 2021 that target junior scholars affiliated with minority serving institutions and/or scholars whose research focuses on issues of equity among historically disadvantaged populations.

RELATED FUNDING SOURCES

The Commissioner of Social Security has the authority to conduct research and demonstration projects under Section 234 of the Act. We use trust fund monies to conduct various demonstration projects, including alternative methods of treating work activity of individuals entitled to DI benefits. These demonstration projects, authorized under the 1999 Ticket to Work Act and the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2015, are funded from the trust funds and are not part of the annual research appropriation request. OMB apportions Section 234 funds. The BBA provided authorization to initiate such projects until December 31, 2021, and to carry out such projects through December 31, 2022.

Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND)

BOND tests the effect of a \$1-for-\$2 offset of benefits for DI beneficiaries when earnings are above the SGA level. We published the final evaluation report in FY 2019. We are providing

Supplemental Security Income Program

work incentive counseling services to the remaining BOND participants who are eligible to use the offset until December 31, 2022.

Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD)

Section 823 of the BBA amended Section 234 of the Act and instructed us to carry out a demonstration project testing a \$1-for-\$2 benefit offset. This project differs from BOND in several ways. Among these differences, POD applies a monthly offset to earnings above either a standard threshold (the Trial Work Period level) or an itemized Impairment Related Work Expenses level. Participation is voluntary, and individuals can withdraw from the project at any time.

Participation for beneficiaries in the POD ended June 2021, and all participants returned to current law rules as of July 1, 2021. In FY 2021, we released the Interim Evaluation Report. We also completed the final survey of participants in FY 2021, and we will complete the evaluation in FY 2022.

The effects of COVID-19 on POD will affect the interpretation of the final 2020 impact estimates due to the resulting economic recession and increased unemployment rate.

**Table 2.23—Current Research Projects Obligations through FY 2021
(in thousands)**

	Years	Total
Improving the Way We Do Business		\$481,175
Advisory Services to Assist. SSA with Disability Issues	2008-2021	\$32,324
Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation and Work: A Small Grant Program (ARDRAW)	2016-2021	\$1,800
Beyond Benefits Study (previously Exits from Disability) Evidence Study	2001	\$2,743
BPA Time Sensitive (previously Research and Innovation Lab)	2018-2021	\$5,361
Disability Analysis File (DAF)	2008-2021	\$16,780
Disability Perceptions Survey	2020-2021	\$1,147
Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP)	2021	\$4,326
National Beneficiary Survey	2008-2021	\$19,850
New and Emerging Research Disability	2008-2021	\$7,131
NIH Research on Data Analytics and the FAB	2008-2021	\$32,829
Occupational Information System and Vocational Info Tool	2012-2021	\$205,832
Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN)	2019-2021	\$74,662
Supported Employment Demonstration (SED)	2016-2021	\$76,390
Deliver Services Effectively		\$48,521
Enterprise Business Platform	2015-2021	\$11,449
Understanding America Survey	2009-2021	\$20,698
Medicare Outreach (1144)	2008-2021	\$16,374

Supplemental Security Income Program

	Years	Total
Ensuring Stewardship		\$205,288
Census Surveys	2008-2021	\$10,500
Data Development ¹	2008-2021	\$6,936
Health and Retirement Study (HRS) and Supplement	2008-2021	\$56,817
Retirement and Disability Research Consortium ²	2008-2021	\$131,035
Total Section 1110 and 1144 Obligations		\$734,984
Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND)	2008-2021	\$135,341
Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD)	2016-2021	\$49,074
Total Section 234		\$184,491

ADMINISTRATION OF OUR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Our primary research components are housed within the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy (ORDP). ORDP is responsible for all major activities in the areas of strategic and program policy planning, policy research and evaluation, statistical programs, and overall policy development, analysis, and implementation. Within ORDP, the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support, the Office of Disability Policy, and the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics, share the responsibility of administering projects funded under our research appropriation.

Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support (ORDES) - ORDES conducts research and analysis related to the DI and SSI programs. ORDES implements demonstration projects to test changes to the disability programs primarily aimed at improving program administration and supporting employment. It also conducts research, analysis, evaluations, and statistical modeling that support our goals to strengthen our disability programs and improve program integrity. The Associate Commissioner for ORDES is our Evaluation Officer³.

Office of Disability Policy (ODP) - ODP oversees and supports the planning, development, evaluation, and issuance of substantive regulations, policies, and procedures for our disability programs; development and promulgation of policies and guidelines for use by State, Federal, or private contractor providers who implement the disability provisions of the Social Security Act; and evaluation of the effects of proposed legislation and legislation pending before Congress to determine the impact on disability programs. ODP uses research to identify opportunities for policy improvement and for keeping medical, vocational, childhood, disability, and CDR policies up to date.

¹ Data Development now reflects total obligations for current research projects only.

² The Disability and Research Consortium (DRC) and the Retirement Research Consortium (RRC) were separate grant programs until FY 2017.

³ As described in [M-19-23](#), the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act of 2018 requires CFO-Act agencies to designate a senior staff member with authority and responsibility for providing leadership over the agency's evaluation and learning agenda activities.

Supplemental Security Income Program

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (ORES) - ORES is a statistical unit responsible for the production and dissemination of research and data on our programs. ORES produces findings on our retirement, disability, and SSI programs from research and microsimulation projects supported through intramural and extramural programs. As a principal statistical unit of the agency, ORES develops program and survey data to support our research and statistical objectives. In addition, ORES maintains a schedule of research and statistical publications. ORES statisticians and researchers provide reliable data about our key program variables, information about the design of social insurance programs around the world to support comparative research, as well as social and behavioral research related to our programs. ORES also provides policymakers and stakeholders with research on retirement security. The Associate Commissioner for ORES is the agency's Chief Statistical Officer¹.

Implementation of the Evidence Act

The Foundations for *Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) of 2018* requires us to develop a Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, and Capacity Assessment. For more information on our implementation of the Evidence Act, please see the 2023 Agency Evidence Submission exhibit [following this exhibit](#), and documents posted on <https://www.ssa.gov/data>.

RESEARCH INVESTMENT CRITERIA

We support research that fosters a better understanding of the socio-economic status and other characteristics of Americans under the program we administer; how changes in demography and the economy might alter the well-being of the program and those it covers; the interrelationships between the program and other private and public programs; and the impact of the program on the overall economy. Within this framework, our extramural program places the best available evidence into the hands of policymakers to inform policy development and program administration. We have established guidelines for developing, managing, and vetting projects for inclusion in our long-term research and demonstration agenda. We employ a variety of methods to ensure we meet the funding requirements of the sections of the Act that authorize our extramural research and demonstration activities and our extramural research activities meet high standards for relevance, quality, and performance.

Relevance

The primary purpose of our extramural research is to support evidence-building to inform the improvement of our programs, especially for individuals facing barriers to economic security. We seek to support research and demonstrations that clearly connect with this goal. A fundamental step in our review is assuring that each project responds to issues facing the OASDI and/or SSI programs, with priority towards contemporaneous challenges, such as advancing equity. Our review process includes obtaining the advice and recommendations of researchers with technical expertise, program managers, and agency executives. We also receive input on

¹ Chief Statistical Officer, Katherine Bent, Associate Commissioner, Office of Research, Demonstration and Employment Support, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy.

Supplemental Security Income Program

our research program from the Social Security Advisory Board. The extramural research budget undergoes both our careful scrutiny and that of external monitoring authorities.

Internal reviews also help to ensure that funded activities reflect our strategic goals and objectives and help us respond to legislative requirements and address high-priority issues. Many of our extramural research activities are directed toward providing policymakers and the public with the analytical and data resources they need to assess our current programs and the implications of reform proposals.

Our budget request reflects our support of the ongoing goals to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to maximize their self-sufficiency through work and to increase the American public's basic financial management skills. For example, through the RETAIN project, we are working collaboratively with DOL to test interventions that will improve the ability of individuals to remain in the labor force when they acquire an illness or injury.

We are also working with DOL and with HHS' Administration for Children and Families to test early intervention and return-to-work services for individuals who may be potential future applicants for DI or SSI.

Finally, in support of the Administration's commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities we participate in cross-agency working groups, as appropriate. We are supportive of exploring ways to leverage our data and research portfolio to buttress these efforts.

Quality

Our extramural program provides access to analysts at top research institutions from around the country to expand our base of expertise to produce the best evidence in support of our program. We use a competitive, merit-based, peer reviewed procurement process to ensure that our extramural research program selects the most appropriate individuals and techniques to produce high quality results. We award our extramural research projects conducted by private-sector organizations through competitive contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements. As a result, our extramural program features internationally recognized scholars including many that have held important Federal posts (e.g., Council of Economic Advisors) and received significant recognition for their research contributions (e.g., the John Bates Clark Medal).

We also use Technical Expert Panels to review projects while they are in progress to provide feedback and suggestions to the agency. These panels include internal experts in relevant disciplines, such as statistics, economics, and survey design. They help ensure that our sponsored research projects are methodologically sound and consistent with professional standards. The research projects we sponsor through the RDRC are often discussed in formal seminars or workshops, as well as published in top peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Performance

We carry out our extramural research and evaluation projects primarily through contracts, jointly funded cooperative agreements, and grants that identify specific deliverables and timetables.

Supplemental Security Income Program

The agency has sent a strong message to contractors that they must complete projects on time and within budget. Contracting officers, contracting officer's representatives, analysts, and senior executives monitor the progress of all research contracts and agreements. These agreements are also subject to audits by the Office of the Inspector General.

Consistent with the Administration's encouragement to support evidence-based evaluations, we produce reports and data files for each research and evaluation project in an effort to determine whether existing or proposed programs work as designed. Where appropriate, we make these reports publicly available or announce their availability in the *Social Security Bulletin* and online.¹ The RDRC also disseminates output at annual meetings, online, and through a variety of publications, workshops, and conferences. Finally, our research projects are widely cited in both peer-reviewed publications and the press. For example, the *Expenditures of the Aged Chartbook* was referenced in the Bloomberg article, "Health, Housing Hit Budgets of Older Americans Even Before Covid" and the research paper, "Immigrants' Economic Assimilation: Evidence from Longitudinal Earnings Records" was cited in the journal, *American Sociological Review*.

¹ Our extramural partners often publish supported research in scholarly journals. Recent examples include, but are not limited to: Rennane, Stephanie (2020). "A Double Safety Net? Understanding Interactions between Disability Benefits, Formal Assistance, and Family Support." *Journal of Health Economics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2019.102248>; Börsch-Supan, Axel, Tabea Bucher-Koenen, and Felizia Hanemann (2020) "Early Determinants of Work Disability in an International Perspective." *Demography*, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13524-020-00902-7>; Coile, Courtney, Mark Duggan, and Audrey Guo (2020) "To Work for Yourself, for Others, or Not at All? How Disability Benefits Affect the Employment Decisions of Older Veterans." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22261>; Quinby, Laura D., Alicia H. Munnell, Wenliang Hou, Anek Belbase and Geoffrey T. Sanzenbacher (2020) "Participation and Pre-Retirement Withdrawals in Oregon's Auto-IRA." *The Journal of Retirement*, <https://doi.org/10.3905/jor.2020.1.069>; Munnell, Alicia H., Abigail N. Walters, Anek Belbase, and Wenliang Hou (2020). "Are homeownership patterns stable enough to tap home equity?" *The Journal of the Economics of Ageing*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeoa.2020.100277>; Maurer, Raimond and Olivia Mitchell (2020). "Older peoples' willingness to delay social security claiming." *Journal of Pension Economics and Finance*, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474747219000404>; Been, Jim, Susann Rohwedder, and Michael Hurd (2020). "Does Home Production Replace Consumption Spending? Evidence from Shocks in Housing Wealth in the Great Recession," *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7597678>; Haurin, Donald, Stephanie Moulton, Căzilia Loibl, Julia K Brown (2020). "Debt Stress and Debt Illusion: The Role of Consumer Credit, Reverse and Standard Mortgages," *The Journals of Gerontology*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa167>; Loibl, Căzilia, Stephanie Moulton, Donald Haurin & Chrise Edmunds (2020) "The role of consumer and mortgage debt for financial stress." *Aging & Mental Health*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2020.1843000>.