



Report Summary

Social Security Administration
Office of the Inspector General

Profile of the Social Security Administration's Non-Work Alien File (Limited Distribution) (A-14-03-23071)

Our objective was to analyze the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Non-Work Alien (NWALIEN) file for Tax Year (TY) 2000 to describe individuals whose identities, Social Security number (SSN) and earnings were recorded on the file and to determine how long they have been working.

Each year, SSA informs the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) of non-citizens who are potentially working illegally. SSA sends BCIS information on individuals who have earnings recorded under the SSN assigned for non-work purposes in the form of an electronic data file, the NWALIEN file, 6 to 18 months after the earnings take place.

Our analysis of the file found that for TY 2000, SSA recorded 872,138 reports of earnings for 574,461 non-citizens who had been classified as not authorized to work by BCIS. The Agency also identified \$21.3 billion in earnings that were associated with these SSNs issued for non-work purposes.

We then matched NWALIEN records with SSA's earnings and employment information and found that:

- Employment histories began as long as 38 years ago for some non-work SSN records.
- The average earnings associated with unique non-work SSNs were higher than the average for full time workers in the U.S. economy.
- In an estimated 5,080 instances, earnings were recorded on both the Master Earnings File and the Earnings Suspense File for different individuals using the same not-authorized-for-employment SSN, suggesting possible illegal activity.
- Individuals having public responsibilities and positions of trust, primarily current Federal and active duty military employees, including SSA employees, are recorded on the unauthorized employment file.

A further review of the records found that some of these employees are now authorized to work and there was no evidence that the Agency was notified of the work status change.

SSA needs to obtain timely and accurate information from BCIS to ensure the validity and usefulness of data recorded on the NWALIEN file, with an emphasis on BCIS' accuracy of work status data for each non-work SSN. We also believe that SSA and BCIS need to establish compatible data fields that will allow the agencies to effectively match data records.

Specifically we recommended that SSA:

- Encourage BCIS to provide the data necessary to identify non-citizens who are allowed to work.
- Match BCIS records to appropriate SSA records, and, where warranted, remove non-work status from SSA records.
- Work with BCIS to determine what information would be most beneficial to meet organizational goals and how to establish compatibility between the files.

SSA agreed totally or in part with all three recommendations and will encourage BCIS to make its records compatible with the NWALIEN file. The Agency also advised us that once the compatibility occurs, it will modify its systems to accept BCIS data. In addition, it will also work with BCIS to determine what information would be beneficial to meet organizational goals and how to establish compatibility between files.

This report contains information that is sensitive and confidential. For security reasons, distribution of this report was limited to those with a need to know.