

Disability and Retirement Workload Plan

A. FUNDING TABLE:

Agency funding listed by program, project, and activity categories, as possible. Funds returned to the program or any offsetting collections received as a result of carrying out recovery actions are to be specifically identified.

Funding Table by Fiscal Year		
(Dollars in Millions)		
	FY 2009	FY 2010
Total Obligations	\$151*	\$349*
Salaries and benefits of new Federal employees and additional overtime	\$118	\$255
Salaries and benefits of new state employees and additional overtime (includes postage and cost of obtaining medical evidence necessary for case processing)	\$17	\$70
Video-Teleconferencing equipment, additional bandwidth to support the hearings process and workstations needed to accommodate new federal employees	\$16	\$0
Health Information Technology	\$0	\$24
* These planning estimates may change as specifics regarding health information technology spending are further developed.		

B. OBJECTIVES:

A general Recovery Act description of the program’s Recovery Act objectives and relationships with corresponding goals and objectives through on-going agency programs/activities. Expected public benefits should demonstrate cost-effectiveness and be clearly stated in concise, clear and plain language targeted to an audience with no in-depth knowledge of the program. To the extent possible, Recovery Act goals should be expressed in the same terms as programs’ goals in departmental Government Performance Results Act strategic plans.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) of 2009 provides SSA with an additional \$500 million to help address our increasing disability and retirement workloads caused by the combination of the economic downturn and the leading edge of the baby boomer retirement wave. The Recovery Act allows SSA to fund additional hiring and overtime, which will improve our ability to process additional requests for

hearings and continue to reduce the number of pending hearings. The staffing and overtime will also assist us in addressing our increasing disability and retirement workloads. The Recovery Act resources, because they enhance our ability to handle core mission workloads, directly support all four of our strategic goals:

- Eliminate Our Hearings Backlog and Prevent Its Recurrence;
- Improve the Speed and Quality of Our Disability Process;
- Improve Our Retiree and Other Core Services; and
- Preserve the Public's Trust in Our Programs.

Our strategic plan can be found at <http://www.ssa.gov/asp/index.htm>.

C. ACTIVITIES:

Kinds and scope of activities to be performed (e.g. construction, provision of services, conduct of research and development, assistance to governmental units or individuals, etc.)

SSA believes we have a moral imperative to provide quality, timely services to the public.

It is a challenge to meet this objective because of the significant growth in our workloads, due in part to the economic downturn and the beginning of the baby boomer retirement wave. This fiscal year (FY), we expect to receive over 300,000 more retirement claims, about a 9 percent increase, and 300,000 more disability claims, about a 12 percent increase, over last year. The Recovery Act funding will help SSA begin to lay the foundation for addressing this challenge.

For FY 2009, the Recovery Act funding will enable us to put significant front-line hires in place to address our growing critical workloads. Specifically:

- Our disability and retirement operations will hire 1,530 new employees in local field offices, teleservice centers, and processing centers and 300 new employees in the State Disability Determination Service centers (approximately \$105 million);
- Hearings offices will hire 550 support staff as well as 35 additional administrative law judges. This staff will be spread across the country to provide relief to those offices most in need (approximately \$30 million); and
- We will invest approximately \$16 million in information technology that directly supports our workload processing.

For FY 2010, the Recovery Act funding will enable us to continue to pay the salaries and benefits of the front-line hires made in FY 2009. These increases in staff will help facilitate workload processing in terms of case preparation and completion. This will also allow for additional interviews, whether in person or by telephone, and will help SSA keep up with inquiries to the National 800 Number network. We intend to spend

\$24 million to contract with the health care community to provide us with electronic health records to improve the speed and accuracy of our disability determination process.

In addition, Recovery Act funding will allow for additional overtime resources in FY 2009 and FY 2010. In FY 2009 approximately 37% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process additional workloads. In FY 2010 approximately 16% of these funds will be used to provide overtime.

D. CHARACTERISTICS:

Types of financial awards to be used (with estimated amount of funding for each), targeted type of recipients, beneficiaries and estimated dollar amounts of total Recovery Act funding for Federal in-house activity, non-federal recipients and methodology for award selection.

The majority of SSA's Recovery Act funding will be used for Federal in-house activities. We will be hiring employees and using overtime to provide service to individuals filing for disability and retirement benefits. We will invest approximately \$16 million in information technology that directly supports our workload processing. SSA plans to use fully competed existing contract vehicles to acquire the majority of the video-teleconferencing services, additional bandwidth, and personal computers required to accommodate new employees.

For FY 2009, the Recovery Act funding will enable us to put significant front-line hires in place to address our growing critical workloads. Specifically:

- Our disability and retirement operations will hire 1,530 new employees in local field offices, teleservice centers, and processing centers and 300 new employees in the State disability determination service centers (DDSs) (approximately \$105 million); and
- Hearings offices will hire 550 support staff as well as 35 additional administrative law judges. This staff will be spread across the country to provide relief to those offices most in need (approximately \$30 million).

For FY 2010, the Recovery Act funding will enable us to continue to pay the salaries and benefits of the front-line hires made in FY 2009. These increases in staff will help facilitate workload processing in terms of case preparation and completion. This will also allow for additional interviews, whether in person or by telephone, and will help SSA keep up with inquiries to the National 800 Number network. We intend to spend \$24 million to contract with the health care community to provide us with electronic health records to improve the speed and accuracy of our disability determination process.

In addition, Recovery Act funding will allow for additional overtime resources in FY 2009 and FY 2010. In FY 2009 approximately 37% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process additional workloads. In FY 2010 approximately 16% of these funds will be used to provide overtime.

E. DELIVERY SCHEDULE:

Schedule with milestones for major phases of the program’s activities (e.g. the procurement phase, planning phase, project execution phase, etc., or comparable) with planned delivery date(s).

FY 2009	
April - June 3rd Quarter \$67,500,000	With Recovery Act funds, SSA plans to hire approximately 2,115 Federal employees by the end of June 2009 and provide state funding for 300 additional employees. Additional overtime will be available to process increased workloads. Approximately 37% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process additional workloads.
July - September 4th Quarter \$83,500,000	Pay salaries and benefits of new hires and provide overtime to process additional workloads. Approximately 37% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process additional workloads. Spend \$16 million on video-teleconferencing equipment and additional bandwidth to support the hearings process, as well as workstations needed to accommodate new federal employees. Continue hiring as needed to planned level (2,115 hires).
FY 2010	
October - December 1st Quarter \$81,300,000	Pay salaries and benefits of new hires and provide overtime to process critical workloads. Approximately 16% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process these workloads.
January - March 2nd Quarter \$105,300,000	Pay salaries and benefits of new hires and provide overtime to process critical workloads. Approximately 16% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process these workloads. Spend \$24 million on Health Information Technology.
April - June 3rd Quarter \$81,300,000	Pay salaries and benefits of new hires and provide overtime to process critical workloads. Approximately 16% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process these workloads.
July - September 4th Quarter \$81,300,000	Pay salaries and benefits of new hires and provide overtime to process critical workloads. Approximately 16% of these funds will be used to provide overtime to process these workloads.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMPLIANCE:

Description of the status of compliance with *National Environmental Policy Act*, *National Historic Preservation Act*, and related statutes.

The Recovery Act funding will be used for hiring and overtime in SSA which has no identifiable issues with the *National Environmental Policy Act*, the *National Historic Preservation Act*, or related statutes.

G. SAVINGS OR COSTS:

Expected increases or reductions in future operational costs (e.g., savings due to energy efficient facilities or increased operational costs as a result of having more buildings to manage and maintain).

SSA is using Recovery Act funding to hire employees and fund additional overtime. We will have to pay salaries and benefits for these employees beyond the FY 2010 timeframe for which the Recovery Act provides funding. Normal attrition of the SSA workforce will assist in funding the cost of these employees beyond FY 2010; however, decisions will need to be made to determine how to fund the remaining costs.

H. MEASURES:

Expected quantifiable outcomes consistent with the intent and requirements of the legislation and the risk management requirements of Section 3.5, with each outcome supported by a corresponding quantifiable output(s) (in terms of incremental change against present level of performance of related agency programs or projects/activities specified in the plan) – agencies must specify the length of the period between measurements (e.g., monthly, quarterly), the measurement methodology, and how the results will be made readily accessible to the public. The measures currently used to report programs’ performance in relationship to these goals (consistent with Administration policy) should be retained. In addition to reducing burden on grant recipients and contractors, use of existing measures will allow the public to see the marginal performance impact of Recovery Act investments.

SSA developed the following measures to assess the impact of the Recovery Act funding provided to process disability and retirement workloads:

1. Number of Initial Disability Claims Processed

FY 2009 Target: 50,000

FY 2010 Target: 183,000

Data definition: The number of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income initial disability claims processed in the Disability Determination Services and other agency components in the current fiscal year up to the budgeted number.

Data source: *National Disability Determination Services System and Disability Operational Data Store*

Methodology: The Recovery Act overtime workyears will be calculated based on a ratio of Recovery Act overtime workyears to total budgeted overtime workyears. The Recovery Act productive new hire and Recovery Act overtime workyears will be prorated against the Recovery Act targeted workloads. The Recovery Act productive new hire and overtime workyears for each targeted workload are multiplied by the corresponding production per workyear to calculate the number of Recovery Act processed counts.

Frequency reported: Monthly

2. Number of Retirement Claims Processed

FY 2009 Target: 243,000

FY 2010 Target: 869,000

Data definition: The number of retirement and survivors claims processed in the current fiscal year up to the budgeted number.

Data source: *Social Security Unified Measurement System Operational Data Store*

Methodology: The Recovery Act overtime workyears will be calculated based on a ratio of Recovery Act overtime workyears to total budgeted overtime workyears. The Recovery Act productive new hire and Recovery Act overtime workyears will be prorated against the Recovery Act targeted workloads. The Recovery Act productive new hire and overtime workyears for each targeted workload are multiplied by the corresponding production per workyear to calculate the number of Recovery Act processed counts.

Frequency reported: Monthly

3. Number of Hearings Processed

FY 2009 Target: 37,000

FY 2010 Target: 88,000

Data definition: The number of hearing requests processed in the current fiscal year up to the number budgeted.

Data source: *Case Processing and Management System*

Methodology: The Recovery Act overtime workyears will be calculated based on a ratio of Recovery Act overtime workyears to total budgeted overtime workyears. The Recovery Act productive new hire and Recovery Act overtime workyears will be prorated against the Recovery Act targeted workloads. The Recovery Act productive new hire and overtime workyears for each targeted workload are multiplied by the corresponding production per workyear to calculate the number of Recovery Act processed counts.

Frequency reported: Monthly

4. Number of Staff Hired

FY 2009 Target: 2,115 SSA and 300 State Disability Determination Service employees hired

Data definition: Number of new employees hired as a result of Recovery Act funding in SSA and the State Disability Determination Service centers

Data source: The FPPS DataMart for SSA hires and the FD-15 Disability Determination Service Staffing and Workload Analysis Report for State Disability Determination Service hires

Frequency Reported: Monthly until all hiring is completed

The first three measures are very similar to performance measures contained in our *Annual Performance Plan for FY 2010 and Revised Final Annual Performance Plan for FY 2009*. SSA has developed a methodology for estimating the extent current workloads are processed with the additional Recovery Act funding received. The fourth measure will track the exact number of staff hired.

SSA will report actual performance for these measures on a monthly basis through our periodic reports posted on SSA's Recovery Act website <http://www.ssa.gov/recovery/>.

I. MONITORING/EVALUATION:

Description of the agency process for periodic review of program's progress to identify areas of high risk, high and low performance, and any plans for longer term impact evaluation.

As SSA builds on existing processes to implement the activities in this plan, we will utilize established review and evaluation programs to assess risks and ensure adequate controls have been effectively implemented. Three of the major monitoring programs are the Financial Management System (FMS) Review Program, the Management Control Review (MCR) Program, and the internal control testing required by OMB Circular A-123, Appendix A. The FMS Review Program identifies risks to SSA's programmatic and financial systems and tests the controls in place to mitigate these risks. The MCR Program ensures SSA's front line operations comply with SSA's operational, security and administrative policies. The OMB Circular A-123, Appendix A program ensures the controls supporting SSA's financial reporting processes are working properly. All three of these review programs will provide periodic recommendations and evaluations that determine if controls can be improved and the agency's Senior Accountable Official will monitor these programs to ensure corrective action is taken.

Although SSA will develop mechanisms to separately track the spending of Recovery Act dollars, these workloads will be processed in the same manner as other disability and retirement workloads. Therefore, SSA can leverage the risk assessments and control testing programs discussed above to ensure these funds are accounted for appropriately.

SSA also will monitor the overall progress in achieving the objectives of this program plan through the oversight and leadership of our Senior Accountable Official. The Senior Accountable Official will work with the SSA executives who have the lead responsibility for the planning and execution of the program plan. We have set up an infrastructure of periodic status meetings at both the executive and staff levels to discuss the status of implementation efforts to date and future issues that may arise. We will monitor the progress in achieving the performance targets discussed above (*Section H. Measures*) in these status meetings.

J. TRANSPARENCY:

Description of agency program plans to organize program cost and performance information available at applicable recipient levels.

The Recovery Act funding will be used primarily for hiring and overtime and therefore, recipient level data is not applicable.

K. ACCOUNTABILITY:

Description of agency program plans for holding managers accountable for achieving Recovery Act program goals and improvement actions identified.

SSA has taken many steps to hold executives and staff accountable for achieving the goals of this project. First, SSA's Executive Internal Control Committee (EIC) will oversee Recovery Act performance across SSA. The Deputy Commissioner of Social Security chairs the EIC, which also includes the Inspector General and Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance and Management (DCBFM). Most other Deputy Commissioners also participate in EIC meetings. This level of oversight provides a strong message throughout SSA that accomplishment of Recovery Act objectives is a top priority.

The DCBFM will serve as SSA's Senior Accountable Official. The performance expectations of our Senior Accountable Official were modified to specifically address the monitoring of this initiative as well as all of SSA's responsibilities under the Recovery Act. In addition, SSA's components such as our Office of Operations; Office of Disability Adjudication and Review; Office of Systems; Office of Communications; and Office of Budget, Finance and Management have taken measures such as ongoing status meetings to make sure they fulfill their responsibilities under the Recovery Act. Management within these organizations monitor progress in meeting their organizations' responsibilities associated with successful implementation of the Recovery Act. They will reallocate resources as needed as issues arise.

These same components are also represented on oversight groups at both the executive and staff level to assist SSA in properly coordinating our efforts across components to execute the requirements of the Recovery Act as well as the requirements of OMB Memorandum M-09-15, *Updated Implementing Guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*.

The Commissioner named a Special Advisor for Health IT to provide leadership and oversight for all of SSA's Health IT initiatives, including those funded through the Recovery Act. The Special Advisor established an executive group, which meets bi-monthly, to consult on external and strategic issues; a program group, which meets bi-weekly, to provide governance for cross-component Health IT initiatives; and a procurement group to oversee Health IT acquisitions funded through the Recovery Act. The Inspector General is a non-voting member of the executive group and consultations with the Office of the Inspector General on the program governance and procurement will take place regularly.

Finally, all of our front-line employees are accountable through their Performance and Communications System (PACS) plans and appraisals. PACS allows all of SSA's employees to understand their expectations and how their job is directly aligned with the agency's core mission.

L. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION:

A list and description of statutory and regulatory requirements, or other known matters, which may impede effective implementation of Recovery Act activities and proposed solutions to resolve by a certain date.

One potential barrier to effective implementation that exists would be if SSA's front line employees choose not to use the overtime funded by the Recovery Act. To mitigate the risk of this happening, SSA will monitor overtime usage through our regional and area offices and redistribute overtime if necessary.

M. FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS:

A description of agency plans to spend funds effectively to comply with energy efficiency and green building requirements and to demonstrate Federal leadership in sustainability, energy efficiency and reducing the agency's environmental impact.

The funding is being used for labor costs. These funds are not related to Federal infrastructure investments.