

Social Security Administration

In Social Security Field Offices, Tele-Service Centers, Workload Support Units, Offices of Quality Review, Payment Centers, Offices of Hearing and Appellate Operations, the Data Operations Center, and Headquarters AFGE represents 44,200 SSA workers nationwide serving as stewards of the \$3 trillion Social Security trust fund reserves

built by working families through their paycheck Federal Insurance Contributions (FICA). The number of Social

Social Security workers administer \$1.5 trillion in benefits annually (on average \$1,700 in OASDI a month per individual) to 66 million beneficiaries, of which 52 million are 65 or older.

SSA workers provide frontline support services to millions of public customers each year and work diligently to carry out the mission of the Agency: to pay the right person, the right amount, at the right time.

Security beneficiaries has gone up by almost 25% since 2010 due to the Baby Boomer generation reaching their full retirement age at a rate of 10,000 a day.

For over a decade, Congress has failed to meet public demand by slashing SSA's operating budget by 17%, considering inflation.



In a time when the SSA workforce needs to increase to meet public demand, due to chronic underfunding for over a decade, the SSA workforce has been reduced by over **11,000 fewer workers**.

By October 1, 2023, SSA reached its lowest staffing level in 25 years.

The effects of SSA understaffing have caused significant service delays:

- Initial disability claims processing has more than doubled in the last 5 years, now lasting 7.5 months as of December 2023, with now a million claims pending for a medical determination.
- Average wait times for public calls to be answered have increased from 3 minutes in 2010 to 36 minutes in 2023.
- There are now 4.2 million backlogged items pending at the payment centers.
- Average wait times for disability hearings increased from 11 months in FY 22 to 15 months in FY 23.
- Today it takes on average 2.5 years to get a hearing decision after initially applying.
- According to a GAO report, 10,000 Americans are going bankrupt and another 10,000 are dying a year while awaiting their decision.

According to SSA, “Our administrative costs are only about 1 percent of our total costs. Our programs are the largest anti-poverty programs in the nation. Further, people spend their benefits to pay for living expenses like housing, clothing, and food, putting money into local and State economies.”

AFGE is asking that Congress fund SSA to meet public demand and pass a \$20 billion/10-year supplemental funding bill to replace staffing losses, modernize technology, improve service delivery, and fully revitalize SSA.