



# SSA IN CRISIS

## AFGE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET

SSA is in a dire **state of emergency** after years of underfunding. SSA's administrative funding for basic operations fell by more than 17 percent from 2010 to 2022, after accounting for inflation.

Failing to properly fund SSA will prevent people from accessing their benefits and leave the most vulnerable Americans without a lifeline. Field offices will be closed in many communities, those that remain open will have shortened hours and see minimal seniors and individuals with disabilities that are facing long wait times to get help. Phone access to both field offices and the national 800 number will be reduced or nearly eliminated.

## Our lawmakers **MUST:**

1

Avoid a government shutdown

2

Fully fund SSA's \$17.4B budget

3

Urge the Senate to confirm a permanent Commissioner

CALL

**(315) 817-5437...**

Encourage your Congressperson in the House and Senate to back all legislation that supports Social Security's long-term solvency without increasing the retirement age or any further cuts to benefits, as well as the public's ability to access Social Security's benefits and services timely.

[AFGEC220.ORG](https://afge220.org)

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## **A SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION IN CRISIS**

### **AFGE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET TALKING POINTS**

1. Social Security was created 88 years ago and has kept millions of individuals who cannot work because of age or disability out of poverty. It is strongly supported by the American public, with the Social Security Administration (SSA) one of the most trusted government agencies. Polling done in January of 2023 shows 78% of American citizens support increased funding for SSA.
2. SSA is in a dire state of emergency after years of underfunding. SSA's administrative funding for basic operations fell by more than 17% from 2010 to 2022, after accounting for inflation. Staffing for SSA is at a 25-year low. SSA is ranked as the worst federal agency to work for, leading to high attrition rates and the frequent loss of highly trained workers.
3. In 2011, Baby Boomers began to reach their traditional retirement age of 65 at a rate of 10,000 a day and they will continue to do so until at least 2030. Since this time, the rate of beneficiaries has increased by 25%, yet budgets have failed to fund SSA at a level that keeps pace with inflation and meets public demand.
4. Today, someone calling SSA's helpline faces an antiquated phone system that frequently drops their calls, and the average wait time is almost 40 minutes. A worker with disabilities trying to claim their earned disability benefit faces a wait time of over seven months to get an initial decision and up to two years or longer to schedule a disability hearing. More than 10,000 Americans die, and another 10,000 Americans are forced to declare bankruptcy, every year while waiting for their disability hearing.
5. Failing to properly fund SSA will prevent people from accessing their benefits and leave the most vulnerable Americans without a lifeline. Field offices will be closed in many communities while those that remain open will have shortened hours and see seniors and disabled individuals facing long wait times to get help. Phone access to both field offices and the national 800 number will be reduced or nearly eliminated.

6. The current Continuing Resolution spending bill Congress passed at the end of September 2023 to avoid a government-wide shut down will expire November 17, 2023. Failing to keep the government open will cause SSA workers income, housing, and food insecurity as they are already experiencing a pay gap of 24% to similar work in the private sector and, like 60% of Americans, many live paycheck to paycheck. 2.2 million Federal workers, SSA workers included, will be required to work during the shutdown - but will not get paid until the government reopens. For many SSA workers, this means defaulting on housing payments, daycare bills, etc.

A shutdown will also affect the public they serve as many beneficiaries will be confused about the effects of said shutdown on their benefits and applications. Benefit processing will halt as SSA workers will be managing an increased volume of calls from the public about shutdown concerns. Needed services like benefit verifications for low-income housing renewals, congressional status inquiries, suspensions, overpayment processing, and new hire training will halt during a shutdown.

7. SSA has not been able to replace 10,000 workers since 2010. Failing to fund SSA to meet public demand once the government reopens will cause a hiring freeze, elimination of needed overtime to process historic backlogs, a potential for furloughs of the SSA workforce for up to 30 days or longer per worker, and a potential for a reduction in force.

8. In September 2023, over 190 House Republicans voted to cut SSA by another 30%. In October the Acting Commissioner of SSA, Kilolo Kijakazi, said in a hearing held by the US House of Representatives that this cut would create “more of a crisis than what we are experiencing now.” She stated, “If we receive a cut of this magnitude, what would happen is that many of the offices in your districts would have to close.”

9. In Fiscal Year 2024, it is time for Congress to keep the government open, increase SSA funding to a minimum of the President’s requested \$15.5 billion, or better yet AFGE’s request of \$17.4 billion to increase staff back to 2010 levels to meet public demand, and confirm a permanent commissioner.

10. According to the 2023 report from the Social Security Board of Trustees, trust fund reserves become depleted and unable to pay scheduled benefits in full on a timely basis in 2033, at which time only 77% of scheduled benefits will be able to be paid out.

11. Please call 315-817-5437 and encourage your US Congressperson in the House and Senate to support all legislation that supports Social Security’s long-term solvency without increasing the retirement age or any further cuts to benefits, as well as the public’s ability to access Social Security’s benefits and services timely.

12. Visit [AFGE C220.org](https://www.afge.org) and [facebook.com/AFGECouncil220](https://facebook.com/AFGECouncil220) for more information.

AFSCME LTE

As a dedicated public servant of AFSCME Local XXX, I am standing up for my brothers and sisters who work for the federal government. Congress is playing roulette with the well-being of the dedicated federal employees in STATE.

Federal employees are once again facing the threat of losing their paychecks in 45 days. The constant threat of government shutdowns creates an environment of perpetual instability. It's a never-ending source of stress and anxiety, being asked to go without a paycheck while they serve our nation.

All government employees take pride in our jobs, serving the public, and upholding the values of our government. However, the recurring budget crises and political gridlock hit federal employees hard. They face the threat of lost paychecks over and over again this fall while Congress shirks its responsibilities. ALL government employees – all people, for that matter - deserve better than constant uncertainty.

Congress keeps kicking the can on passing a budget. This isn't enough for federal employees and their families. We need Congress to prioritize job security and financial stability so that ALL government employees can serve our nation effectively. Congress: do better.