

Social Security Administration

A Report to Congress on Sources and Access to Death Data

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BACKGROUND

The mission of the Social Security Administration (SSA) is to deliver quality Social Security services to the public. SSA administers two programs under the Social Security Act: the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The agency serves the public from a network of offices across the country and administers programs through more than 1,200 field offices. SSA collects death information to administer their programs – to remove deceased individuals from the beneficiary rolls and to alert individuals to pursue claims for benefits to surviving spouses and children. Under current law, SSA obtains death information to administer its programs and shares data it collects with qualifying agencies.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Per Section 802 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, the Academy is pleased to conduct a Study and Report to Congress on the Sources of and Access to Death Data for SSA. Death data are important to SSA, the Department of the Treasury, and other federal agencies in their efforts to eliminate improper payments. However, the data are initially collected at the state level, which raises a series of budgetary, information security, and reporting issues. As required by the Appropriations Act, the Academy will conduct an:

1. “Analysis of the following:
 - (A) The sources and owners of the death data.
 - (B) The timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of State-owned death data, including the process for correcting inaccuracies.
 - (C) Federal and State laws that may affect legal access to, and protections for, State-owned death data.
 - (D) Federalism and the appropriate roles of the relevant Federal and State entities, including States' role in recording vital records and the core mission and responsibility of any Federal agency involved.
 - (E) The costs incurred for each step of the death data collection, management, protection (legal and otherwise), and transmission processes, and the challenges to adequate funding of State vital records programs.
 - (F) Unmet needs (if any) for these data among Federal agencies or programs.
 - (G) Options for providing Federal agencies with limited access to State-owned death data, including Federal agencies contracting directly with States for access to such data or distribution of such data via the Commissioner of Social Security or another Federal agency or program, and corresponding options for appropriate reimbursement structures.
2. An assessment of the strengths and limitations of the options for distribution and reimbursement identified in paragraph (1)(G).”

ACADEMY STUDY PANEL

Barbara Bovbjerg, *Panel Chair, Former* Managing Director, Education, Workforce and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office. Former positions at U.S. Government Accountability Office: Director, Retirement Income Security Issues; Assistant Director, Budget Issues. Former Chief, City-wide & Special Issues Analysis, Office of the Budget, District of Columbia Government; Research Associate, Public Finance Center, Urban Institute; Financial Analyst, Office of Institutional Analysis, Cornell University.

Alan Balutis, Director and Distinguished Fellow, Internet Business Solutions Group, Cisco. Former President and Chief Executive Officer, INPUT; President and Chief Operating Officer, Veridyne Inc.; Deputy Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of Commerce. Former positions with the U.S. Department of Commerce: Director, Office of Budget, Management, and Information, and Acting Chief Information Officer; Director, Budget, Planning, and Organization; Director, Office of Management and Organization; Director, Office of Systems and Special Projects; Chief, Policy and System Staff; Senior Analyst, Office of Program Evaluation. Increasingly responsible positions with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the areas of budget, personnel, policy, legislation, and management.

Gary Glickman, Former Managing Director, Health & Public Service Innovation, Accenture. Senior Policy Advisor, US Department of Treasury; Coordinator, Partnership Fund for Program Integrity Innovation, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Executive Office of the President; President and CEO, Imadgen LLC; President and CEO, Giesecke and Devrient Cardtech; President and Chief Marketing Officer, Maximus; President, Phoenix Planning & Evaluation, Ltd.; Principal/ National Director, Federal Consulting, Laventhol & Horwath; Practice leader, Financial Institutions Division, Orkand Corporation; Senior Consultant, Deloitte Consulting, LLP.; Team Member, Office of the Secretary, US Department of the Treasury; Chief, Financial Management Division, Office of the Comptroller of the City of New York.

Nick Hart, President, Data Coalition; Adjunct Faculty, Trachtenberg School, George Washington University; Fellow, Bipartisan Policy Center. Former Director, Evidence Project, Bipartisan Policy Center; Policy and Research Director, U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking; Senior Program Examiner, Education, Income Maintenance, and Labor, White House Office of Management and Budget; Special Assistant, White House Office of Management and Budget; Program Examiner, Natural Resources, White House Office of Management and Budget; Economic Research Analyst, Indiana Business Research Center.

Barry Van Lare, Independent Consultant, Management and Public Policy; Former Deputy Executive Director and Director of Management Consulting and Training, National Governors Association; Senior Vice President for Strategic Marketing, MAXIMUS Inc.; Executive Director, The Finance Project; Senior Manager, Deloitte & Touche Consulting; Special Administrator for Gasoline Rationing, U.S. Department of Energy. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Welfare Legislation and Associate Commissioner of Social Security, U.S. Department of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Former Commissioner, Erie County Department of Social Services and Director, Division of Community Services, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. Positions with State of New York: Executive Secretary, Health Planning Commission; Director, New York State Senate Task Force on Critical Problems; Executive Deputy and Acting Commissioner, Department of Social Services; Assistant Secretary to the Governor for Human Resources and Deputy Commissioner, Division of Human Rights.

PROJECT STAFF

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