

Social Security

2010 Vision



A MESSAGE FROM KENNETH APFEL COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY

August 25, 2000



The Social Security Administration (SSA) has a reputation as one of the federal government's leading agencies. In partnership with the State Disability Determination Services (DDS), we have a long history of providing exemplary service to our customers, and high customer-satisfaction ratings attest to our excellence. We have been vigilant stewards of the programs we administer. Our planning and management capabilities are top-notch. Our successes in using technology to improve the services we offer have been a model for others. We have a corps of dedicated, professional employees.

But while our history of excellence in service is unchallenged, our ability to continue such excellence is not. Today we face significant stresses and strains on our ability to continue to deliver the quality of service the public has come to expect. And we know that this will continue to intensify as SSA enters the 21st century. We must act now to prepare to handle the significant workload growth we will experience over the next decade.

During this decade, workloads will increase dramatically as members of the baby boom generation reach their peak years of disability risk and then begin to retire. And our customers' service expectations will change, driven in part by rapid advances in technology. At the same time, SSA and DDSs face a tremendous loss of expertise and institutional knowledge, as large numbers of our workforce are expected to retire over the next ten years.

Responding to the challenges we face requires us to rethink the way we do business and develop innovative ways to manage our growing workloads. Moreover, only with a very highly skilled workforce and maximum use of rapidly developing technology, properly aligned to achieve optimum value, can we hope to build an Agency for the future in which we maintain, and exceed, the levels of service we provide today. And only with a vision of that Agency of the future—a vision clear to all of us—can we hope to align ourselves and our efforts so that we will succeed.

SSA's *2010 Vision* was developed after a great deal of study and much talking and listening to those who have a stake in the Agency's future. The *Vision* illustrates the SSA of 2010 from three important perspectives: our customers, our employees, and our work processes. In the *Vision*, we declare our principles for service delivery in the future. We describe how we will change to deal with future workloads while honoring those principles, and we identify what we consider the key enablers of change.

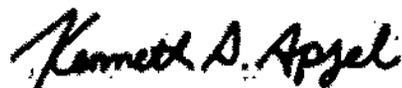
Our principles are the foundation of the *Vision* and they shape the changes we must undertake to meet our workload challenges. Two of these principles relate directly to how the customer will interact with SSA: customers will have a choice of options for service delivery and they increasingly will be able to complete their business at the first point of contact. Two principles relate to both efficiency and convenience: they commit SSA to working proactively for service improvement and to moving toward "one-stop shopping" for government services. Our stewardship principle states that we continue to safeguard the Social Security trust funds and the monies the Agency receives from the general fund of the Treasury. Finally, we affirm that, by whatever method we deliver service in the future, SSA will uphold the privacy and security of the information we possess.

The *Vision's* underpinnings include significant investments in human resources and technology. Our workforce in 2010 will be more highly skilled and must, in turn, be more highly graded. Employees will have broad rather than narrow expertise and authority, with the ability to deliver services in a variety of areas. The workforce will be more diverse to better serve an increasingly diverse public. Our employees will have the authority they need to make decisions and the knowledge and tools they need to do their work. The unions, employee associations, and Agency management will work together to support them.

We will need to make substantial investments in automated systems development and the supporting technology infrastructure. Enhanced technologies will allow large volumes of transactions to be handled electronically without the need for employee intervention. Technology will not replace SSA and DDS employees. Instead, it will provide them with the tools and support they need to handle higher volumes of increasingly varied and complex work and will contribute to our ability to streamline the work processes they use.

With the publication of the *2010 Vision*, SSA is taking a major step in addressing the workload challenges that lie ahead. But creating the *Vision* is only the first step; *realizing* the *Vision* is the work we must begin now. That work must begin today. We will shortly announce initiatives relating to the *Vision* in the areas of technology, training, upgrading of skills and positions, and activities moving us toward greater operational flexibility. These early initiatives will help to make the *Vision* clear and real to those who are critical to its realization. We must develop—and implement—the strategic and service plans that will give it shape. And we must make the investments in human resources and capital that will give it life.

For 65 years, SSA has served the nation in providing economic security to the American public. I am confident that this *2010 Vision*, once realized, will permit us to continue to serve our nation well.



Kenneth S. Apfel
Commissioner of Social Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of SSA—to promote the economic security of the nation’s people—can be accomplished only through fulfillment of our fundamental responsibilities to administer effective programs, provide quality service, ensure program integrity, educate the public, and value and invest in our workforce. Each critical responsibility poses challenges to the Agency, but it is the service challenge, resulting primarily from the factors noted below, that is the focus of the *2010 Vision*.

- By 2010, workloads will swell to unprecedented volumes. The most significant factor contributing to this change will be the aging of the baby boom generation (those born in 1946 through 1964).
- Along with the workload increase, the incredible pace of technological change will have a profound impact on both customer expectations and SSA’s ability to meet those expectations.
- More than one-half of the current Federal workforce may be gone by 2010, over 28,000 SSA employees will be eligible to retire, and another 10,000 are expected to leave the Agency for other reasons. This retirement wave will result in a significant loss of institutional knowledge. The DDSs will also experience a retirement wave.

SSA’s *2010 Vision* presents a picture of a changed Agency: an Agency that, along with its DDS partners, has an integrated service delivery network using redesigned and streamlined processes supported by state-of-the-art technology; an Agency that provides service comparable to or better than the private sector; an Agency that is considered an “employer of choice”—retaining, attracting, and developing a highly skilled and highly graded workforce providing world-class service.

The essence of the *Vision* is defined by the principles of service that it embodies and the enablers of service key to its realization.

SERVICE PRINCIPLES

CUSTOMER CHOICE...Customers have expanded options for service that are broad in terms of the time, place, mode of access, and language.

FIRST POINT OF CONTACT...Customers complete their transactions at the first point of contact.

PRIVACY... Customers have the confidence that SSA collects personal information only as needed for the Government’s business and discloses personal information only as allowed by law.

ONE-STOP GOVERNMENT SERVICE... SSA works with other government agencies to move toward providing a wide variety of government services in a single contact.

PROACTIVE SERVICE ... SSA ensures contact with hard-to-reach segments of the population, provides an automated application process, and is proactive in researching issues and trends that impact its programs.

STEWARDSHIP... SSA safeguards trust fund contributions and tax dollars through effective management and aggressive preventative, investigative, and prosecutorial efforts.

SERVICE ENABLERS

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS... SSA maximizes use of technology to automate workload and administrative processes to enhance service and to support the fully electronic, paperless processing of its work.

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RECORDS... Customers and employees have access to electronic records, with the necessary security, privacy, and authentication.

OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY... SSA's resources are integrated and restructured to provide maximum flexibility in meeting increasing workload and service demands.

EXTERNAL ALLIANCES... SSA develops strong alliances with government agencies, community-based organizations, tribal governments, and the private sector in areas that benefit SSA and its customers.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS... SSA's communications activities include using innovative means to ensure that the public has up-to-date knowledge about SSA programs and services.

INTERNAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS... SSA has strong working relationships across component lines, with its unions and employee associations.

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE... SSA develops, attracts, and retains a highly qualified and motivated workforce through enhanced benefits, improved facilities, flexible work arrangements, and increased career opportunities.

LEADERSHIP... SSA's executives and managers provide proactive, entrepreneurial, and customer-centered leadership.

THE VISION

SSA's *Vision* comprises three components and is written from the perspective of having arrived at 2010.

I. HOW SSA WILL SERVE ITS CUSTOMERS

Service continues to be a central priority of the Agency in 2010. Customers enjoy a broader range of options for service than at any time in the history of the program.

Many customers who want the convenience of technology choose to deal with SSA routinely through the Internet or the automated portion of the toll free telephone system. These secure methods of service delivery enable customers to conduct much of their business, without assistance, at any time from virtually any place. For customers who need or want more help, SSA's Internet service and toll free number are integrated. Customers needing assistance while on-line can request help from an available employee to complete the transaction.

But technology has not replaced employees or the in-person service that only they can provide. Technology provides the tools for employees in local community offices to serve those customers who require or prefer more personal service. Most importantly, it allows SSA to provide the same high level of service to all customers no matter whether they choose to conduct business with SSA in person, over the telephone, or through other electronic means.

2. HOW THE AGENCY PERFORMS ITS WORK

In 2010, SSA has an integrated service delivery network of traditional local and centralized offices, "virtual offices," Internet access, and community contact points, all interconnected into "one Agency." Work is accomplished through virtually paperless processes. Both policies and processes have been adapted to make the most effective use of technology and the most efficient use of Agency human resources. Records are moved and transactions are completed electronically. Electronic verification of most evidence eliminates the need for employees to handle documents and greatly reduces processing time.

SSA's basic facility infrastructure remains intact in terms of approximate numbers, but the nature and mix of work performed in each facility are changed significantly. All SSA direct service facilities offer a full range of services to the public. Customers can complete their business at the first point of contact, regardless of the mode of access.

Within the integrated service delivery network, field offices remain an enduring presence in communities across the country. They continue to offer face-to-face service for all customers who prefer that option, but they are less involved in taking retirement and survivor applications and more involved in other, more complex workloads.

The program service centers, teleservice centers, and the Office of Central Operations have transitioned to full-service operations, responding to the public's growing preference for doing business by telephone or the Internet. Employees who work abroad in international operations are also an integral part of SSA's electronic operating environment.

The Agency's automated and streamlined processes have benefited the DDSs and SSA's hearings and appeals offices through the use of the electronic folder and electronic medical evidence, videoconferencing, and other technology enhancements. Previously complex, labor-intensive processes are greatly improved and shortened.

Headquarters and regional office staffs work in direct support of the entire service delivery network, functioning as expert resources in a variety of programmatic and administrative areas.

3. HOW THE AGENCY SUPPORTS ITS EMPLOYEES

SSA's aggressive human resource planning, leading-edge personnel practices, and state-of-the-art technology have fully prepared employees to meet the demands of service in 2010. The Agency's workforce is well qualified and fully trained to deliver services in all programs and exercise judgment in meeting and satisfying customers' needs.

The electronic nature of the work allows employees equipped with portable connective devices to work from any location, including traditional offices, home, or at community locations as driven by customer service needs.

SSA's employee-growth-oriented and flexible working environment positions the Agency to effectively compete for and retain skilled employees. The diversity of the workforce strengthens the Agency's service delivery capabilities.

In 2010, SSA's labor-management partnership is substantially strengthened. These working relationships have been instrumental in developing and implementing the innovations in human resource management and information technology that have taken place over the last decade.

HOW WE WILL MANAGE RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE THE *VISION*

The requirements of tomorrow as well as the realities of today have shaped SSA's *2010 Vision*. Resources are not unlimited and service enhancements must incorporate efficiencies that will enable SSA to meet the coming challenges with this in mind. Continuation of business in the same way it is done today will result in SSA and DDS experiencing a 15,000 to 20,000 workyear gap by 2010.

Enhancements to on-line services, electronic access to records, electronic notices and reports, enhanced toll free telephone service, and improved quality will move us toward eliminating the resource gap while improving customer service. It is clear that the Agency must begin now to make the changes needed to achieve the *Vision*.

We believe that we can approach eliminating the resource gap and improve customer service **only if**:

- We receive the dollars needed to fund SSA's baseline, which will require an annual increase of \$300 to \$400 million;
- We have the additional resources needed to support our workforce;
- We receive the resources needed to make the critical initial investments in a technological infrastructure that will provide direct, secure customer access to SSA's

services over the Internet. The Agency estimates it will need \$200 to \$300 million annually for these investments; and

- We are successful in achieving levels of change in our business processes that achieve adequate workyear savings.

NEXT STEPS

The process of creating the *Vision* has been completed. The far more difficult process of pursuing the *Vision* is just beginning. In addition to obtaining the human resources and capital investments needed to achieve the *Vision*, SSA will link and sequence the Agency's strategic planning and budget processes to the *Vision* to ensure that resources and priorities are properly aligned. Early initiatives will be announced in the areas of technology, training, upgrading of skills and positions, and activities that will move us toward greater operational flexibility.

SSA will engage in more detailed service delivery planning. We will map out more specifically our business requirements—how our core business processes must change and organizational functions must adapt to realize the *Vision*. From the business requirements, we will outline how the Agency's human and information technology resources must evolve to support new ways of delivering service. Our five-year human resource plan will build upon the new business requirements and specify the target positions and skills that will be needed, and the action plans and timelines for delivering these resources. Likewise, our information technology plans will build upon these same requirements to specify the target systems infrastructure and the action plans and timelines for achieving it.

I. INTRODUCTION—THE COMPELLING NEED FOR A VISION

“To promote the economic security of the nation’s people through compassionate and vigilant leadership in shaping and managing America’s social security programs.”

-The Mission of SSA

OUR MISSION AND THE SERVICE CHALLENGE

The Mission of SSA can only be accomplished through fulfillment of our fundamental responsibilities around effective service delivery, policy analysis and development, public communications, program management, and a strong focus on our employees. And, while each critical element involves challenges to the Agency, it is the service challenge that is the focus of the *2010 Vision*.

SSA’s responsibilities are vast. Annually, the Agency:

- pays over \$425 billion to more than 50 million beneficiaries,
- answers over 60 million telephone inquires via its toll free 800 number,
- serves over 26 million visitors in 1,300 field offices nationwide,
- processes over 50 million changes to beneficiary records,
- issues over 16 million new and replacement Social Security cards,
- posts over 250 million wage reports,
- processes over 6 million claims for benefits, and
- sends over 132 million Social Security Statements.

These tasks, and others too numerous to detail, are all accomplished with a workforce of about 65,000 Federal employees and 14,000 DDS employees, located across the country.

The responsibilities with which we have been entrusted are significant. SSA has a long history of exemplary customer service marked by high customer satisfaction. This consistently high level of customer satisfaction is delivered by a corps of dedicated, professional employees, and is the result of one of the best planning capabilities in government. It is also the result of our successes in using technology to improve the services we offer to the American public. While we have a strong history in these areas, there are significant stresses and strains on our ability to deliver the quality of service the public has come to expect. These will be heightened by the workload challenges we will be facing between now and 2010.

As a result, the Agency must continuously adjust and modify its business procedures and processes and has several current major initiatives underway to improve service and program management. These initiatives focus on the SSI program, improvements to the disability, hearings, and appeals processes, and service via our toll free telephone service. Simultaneously, plans are underway to improve program management in the representative payee area and to strengthen accountability in our overall debt collection and integrity processes. But, as we look forward, these efforts will not be enough to address the dramatic workload increases expected in 2010.

Perhaps the most significant factor contributing to this change is the aging of the baby boom generation (those born in 1946 through 1964). During the next ten years, an increasing number of people will be in their most disability-prone years (beginning in their 50's) and the older baby boomers will begin to retire.

We project that this demographic shift will contribute to the following increases between 1999 and 2010 as noted in the *2000 Annual Trustees Report*:

- Disability beneficiaries, including auxiliaries, will increase from 6.5 million to 9.5 million.
- Retirement and survivor beneficiaries are projected to grow from 38 million to 44.5 million.
- Supplemental Security Income recipients of federally administered funds will increase from 6.6 million to 7.3 million

In addition, new workloads such as those associated with the *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999* will require a greater portion of SSA resources to assist beneficiaries with disabilities to enter or reenter the workforce.

The implications of these changes on SSA's resources will be significant. If we were to attempt to process the 2010 workloads using our current methods, we project that the SSA and DDS workforce, which currently expends about 80,000 workyears (regular time plus overtime) would need 95,000 to 100,000 workyears—an additional 15,000 to 20,000 workyears. We recognize that an infusion of this level of resources is neither likely, nor the best means to achieve our *Vision*. (see *Section III*)

THE WORKFORCE CHALLENGE

As baby boomers in the general workforce enter their disability-prone years and retirement, SSA and DDS workforces will begin to retire in greater numbers. SSA estimates that by 2010, over 28,000 of its Federal employees will retire and another 10,000 will leave the Agency for other reasons. This is more than half of the current workforce. This retirement wave could result in a significant drain in SSA's institutional knowledge.

SSA and DDSs will be faced with the challenge of hiring and retaining a highly skilled and diverse workforce in what is expected to be a very competitive job market. Employers that are successful in attracting employees by offering choice in benefits and working arrangements, as well as training and professional development opportunities will become the future employers of choice. Recognizing these changes in future employment trends, SSA will need to explore innovative approaches and increase its investments to attract and retain the workforce that will be needed to carry out the Agency's mission.

THE TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE

In addition to workload increases and a maturing workforce, SSA is faced with an incredible pace of technological change that will have a profound impact on both our customers' expectations and our ability to meet those expectations. Technologies that will be commonplace in 2010 include:

- a wide array of wireless, portable, connective devices;
- a rapidly evolving Internet technology;
- technological advances involving speech and video; and
- strengthened computer privacy and security through various applications of biometric and other techniques.

The technological infrastructure will continue to evolve at a brisk pace; it will become faster, better, and cheaper. While advancing technology offers SSA a tremendous opportunity to increase access to and improve the accuracy, timeliness, and convenience of our service to the public, it also presents challenges. SSA must begin now to restructure business processes to make effective use of new technologies in order to meet the future needs of customers and to give our employees the tools they need to meet these customer needs. To support employees and enable them to meet customer needs, the Agency must also evaluate and keep pace with emerging technologies.

THE 2010 CHALLENGE

We recognize that the road ahead will be difficult as we face budget constraints, increasing workloads, record levels of staff turnovers, and rapid development of new technologies. In response to these impending challenges and opportunities, the *2010 Vision*, which has been developed with input from a wide variety of stakeholders, offers specific ways in which SSA must change to meet the demands of our growing customer base.

In the next section, we present the *Vision* of SSA in 2010: the level of service delivery that we will offer and the changes that will have occurred. The *Vision* outlines what we need to do to meet increasing workload demands and it explains how SSA can be an employer of choice. In doing so, it provides a frame of reference for planning and decision making now and as we move forward. The *Vision* makes it clear that without

adequate human resource and technology investments, SSA will be unable to sustain current levels of service, let alone begin to address future workload increases.

II. THE VISION

The *Vision* of SSA in 2010 has been shaped by the needs and expectations of our customers. The focus on customers is seen in the principles of service that characterize and drive the *Vision*.

Equally important in shaping the *Vision* are the service enablers. Through process and technology changes, these key activities provide the efficiencies that enable SSA to meet the resource and workload challenges ahead, and thus to deliver on the promise of service built on the principles. Section IV presents more detailed explanations of each of these features.

PRINCIPLES AND ENABLERS

SERVICE PRINCIPLES

CUSTOMER CHOICE	Customers have expanded options for service that are broad in terms of the time, place, mode of access, and language.
FIRST POINT OF CONTACT	Customers complete their transactions at the first point of contact.
PRIVACY	Customers have the confidence that SSA collects personal information only as needed for the Government's business and discloses personal information only as allowed by law.
ONE-STOP GOVERNMENT SERVICE	SSA works with other government agencies to move toward providing a wide variety of government services in a single contact.
PROACTIVE SERVICE	SSA ensures contact with hard-to-reach segments of the population, provides an automated application process, and is proactive in researching issues and trends that impact its programs.
STEWARDSHIP	SSA safeguards trust fund contributions and tax dollars through effective management and aggressive preventative, investigative, and prosecutorial efforts.

SERVICE ENABLERS

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS	SSA maximizes use of technology to automate workload and administrative processes to enhance service and to support the fully electronic, paperless processing of its work.
ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RECORDS	Customers and employees have access to electronic records, with the necessary security, privacy, and authentication.
OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY	SSA's resources are integrated and restructured to provide maximum flexibility in meeting workload and service demands.
EXTERNAL ALLIANCES	SSA develops strong alliances with government agencies, community-based organizations, tribal governments, and the private sector in areas that benefit SSA and its customers.
PUBLIC COMMUNICATION	SSA's communications activities include using innovative means to ensure that the public has up-to-date knowledge about SSA's programs and services.
INTERNAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS	SSA has strong working relationships across component lines, with its unions and employee associations.
EMPLOYER OF CHOICE	SSA develops, attracts, and retains a highly qualified and motivated workforce through enhanced benefits, improved facilities, flexible work arrangements, and increased career opportunities.
LEADERSHIP	SSA's executives and managers provide proactive, entrepreneurial, and customer-centered leadership.

A VIEW FROM 2010

The following view from 2010 illustrates the principles and enablers of the *Vision* from three important perspectives: our customers, the Agency's internal work processes, and our employees.

HOW SSA SERVES ITS CUSTOMERS

Service continues to be a central priority of the Agency in 2010. Customers enjoy a broader range of options for service than at any time in the history of the program. While customers still have the option to have an employee complete their transaction, many who want the convenience of technology choose to deal with SSA routinely through the Internet or the automated portion of the toll free telephone system. These largely self-

service and secure methods of service delivery enable customers to conduct much of their business from virtually any place, and at any time.

For customers who need or want more help, SSA's Internet service and toll free number are integrated. Thus, a customer who needs assistance while on-line can reach an employee for help in completing the transaction. Customers can complete their business at the first point of contact, regardless of the mode of access. SSA and DDS employees have access to electronic customer records with a comprehensive history of the customer's previous contacts and pending actions. These employees also have the qualifications and authority to take the completing action.

Technology has not replaced employees or the in-person service for those customers who, for a variety of reasons, require or prefer more personalized service. Substantial numbers of SSA's customers still need or prefer to be served by our local community offices. These customers usually have complex business or difficulty in accessing SSA by other means. Technology is the tool that allows the Agency to focus its field office employees on serving these customers and ensuring the integrity of our programs. Most importantly, it allows the Agency to provide the same high level of service to all customers no matter whether they choose to conduct business with SSA in person, over the telephone, or through other electronic means.

The Agency's customers find a diverse workforce representing a broad spectrum of cultures and languages. To help overcome barriers that prevent some customers from accessing our services, SSA depends heavily on the combined efforts of its diverse workforce and innovative alliances with a wide range of Federal, State, and local agencies, tribal governments, community service organizations, and advocacy groups.

As a result of the Agency's efforts to "reach out" to customers through a wide variety of means—traditional in-office service, community networking, direct communications, Internet, automated telephone services, and one-stop shopping—customers in 2010 have an unprecedented degree of connection to SSA in terms of information and services.

HOW THE AGENCY PERFORMS ITS WORK

In 2010, SSA functions as a service delivery network of traditional local and centralized offices, "virtual offices," Internet access and community contact points, all interconnected into "one Agency." Work is completely portable. Customer telephone calls and Internet (including video) contacts are channeled to facilities anywhere in the SSA network that have the capacity to handle them. The technology infrastructure is robust and provides full connectivity among SSA and DDS facilities.

Work is accomplished through virtually paperless processes and procedures that have been adapted to make the most effective use of technology and the most efficient use of our human resources. Records are moved and transactions are completed in a secure electronic environment, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the data. Electronic verification of most evidence needed to substantiate claims and make record changes

eliminates the need for employees to handle documents and greatly reduces processing time. Expanded, real-time electronic access to data held by others also enables the Agency to greatly reduce and in many cases prevent overpayments. Expert and decision support systems and continuous training opportunities provide tools that help employees ensure work gets done right the first time.

Employees in all locations have appropriate, secure electronic access to comprehensive customer records and use the same intuitive, Web-based applications with built-in decision support that are available to SSA's on-line customers. SSA has expanded the functionality and authority of direct service positions, and employees in 2010 are able to routinely complete business at the customer's first point of contact. Hand-offs and lengthy delays are a distant memory.

The Internet and an integrated toll free telephone system (with sophisticated voice recognition and language translation features) enable millions of customers to complete their business at any time without having to talk to an SSA representative. Identity and authentication are increasingly carried out in a manner transparent to the customer making more services immediately accessible by phone and on-line. In 2010, most RSI claims and a substantial percentage of other transactions are completed electronically via the Internet and toll free telephone system.

The Agency's basic facilities remain intact in terms of approximate numbers but the nature and mix of work performed in each facility are changed significantly. All SSA direct service facilities offer a full range of services to the public.

Field offices remain an enduring presence in communities across the country. They continue to offer face-to-face service for all customers who prefer that option, but are less involved in RSI intake due to increased use of the Internet and automated application processes and more involved in the more complex disability, SSI, postentitlement, and appeals workloads. In addition, employees today are increasingly involved in fulfilling the Agency's fiduciary, program integrity, and public information responsibilities. Traditional in-person services are strengthened through partnerships with Federal, State and local agencies, tribal governments, community service organizations, and advocacy groups. Field offices also have an expanded role in enhancing one-stop shopping in local communities by helping customers gain access to a variety of government services.

Meanwhile, the program service centers, teleservice centers, and the Office of Central Operations (i.e., ODO, OEO, OIO, and the DOC) have transitioned to full-service operations, responding to the public's growing preference for doing business by telephone or the Internet. Employees who work abroad in international operations are also an integral part of SSA's electronic operating environment.

The Agency's streamlined and automated processes have benefited the DDSs and SSA's hearing and appeals offices as well. Through the use of the electronic folder and electronic medical evidence, videoconferencing, and other technology enhancements, previously complex, labor-intensive processes such as scheduling consultative and

vocational experts, reviewing medical evidence, and retrieving case files are greatly improved and shortened.

Headquarters and regional office staffs work in direct support of the entire service delivery network, functioning as expert resources in a variety of areas. Working primarily in cross-functional, cross-component teams, staff provide critical services, including evaluating and streamlining policies and procedures to enhance effective service delivery; developing and enhancing electronic integrated processes; maintaining up-to-date, integrated on-line reference materials; designing training programs; developing effective communications products and strategies; and providing other significant administrative support.

SSA continues to be an effective steward for the American public by keeping the cost of managing Social Security's programs comparable to that of other efficient organizations.

HOW THE AGENCY SUPPORTS ITS EMPLOYEES

Ten years after the turn of the century, employees remain the nucleus of the service delivery structure and continue to be recognized as the most capable in government. The Agency's aggressive human resource planning, leading-edge personnel practices and state-of-the-art technology have fully prepared employees to meet the demands of service in 2010. These features, along with innovative recruiting and professional development strategies, make SSA an "employer of choice" in both the public and private sectors.

While SSA's traditional, customer-centered values have remained constant, in keeping with the changing nature of work, the Agency's workforce is different in 2010. In a setting where most customer business is handled to completion at the first point of contact and work flows automatically to available employees anywhere in the network, employees have very broad rather than narrow expertise. The electronic nature of the work allows employees equipped with portable connective devices to work from any location, including the traditional offices, home, or at community locations as driven by customer service needs. They are well qualified and fully trained to deliver services in all programs and exercise judgment in meeting and satisfying the customer's needs.

Consistent with these more sophisticated skills and complicated work, SSA's workforce is more highly graded than it was in 2000. As employees develop multiple skills and competencies, they take on job responsibilities that entail more complex decision making and independent judgment. Career advancement opportunities are also available in a variety of specialties such as integrity, security, quality, process evaluation, information technology, communications, and management. Through comprehensive training supported by state-of-the-art technology and position restructuring, the procedure-driven workforce of the year 2000 has largely transitioned to the entrepreneurial workforce of 2010.

Particularly for in-person service, employees are increasingly involved in disability program work, including providing employment assistance to individuals with

disabilities. The Agency's focus on the front-end of the disability processes (that flowed from SSA's disability redesign and prototype initiatives) required a corresponding investment in the SSA and DDS employees involved in those processes; both workforces needed to be higher skilled and compensated.

SSA develops, retains, and attracts a highly qualified and motivated workforce by wisely investing in its employees. Enhanced benefits, improved facilities, flexible work arrangements, and increased career and training experiences create an environment where employees have unprecedented opportunities to contribute, learn, and grow.

SSA's personal growth-oriented and flexible working environment positions the Agency to effectively compete for and retain skilled employees. An expanded recruiting focus enables us to attract not only top college graduates, but also talent from non-traditional recruitment sources, including applicants interested either in long- or short-term careers. This expanded recruiting focus gives SSA a more diverse workforce than ever.

SSA's diverse workforce strengthens the Agency's service delivery platform as a result of a broadened language capability, cultural insights, and a deeper understanding of customers. This is particularly true in the case of the Agency's employees with disabilities. Leading its return-to-work initiatives by example, SSA's employees with disabilities give the Agency a unique perspective on improving service to disabled customers.

In 2010, SSA's labor-management partnership is substantially strengthened. Leadership from SSA's management, the unions, and employee and management associations have been instrumental in developing and implementing the human resources and technological innovations that have taken place over the last decade. Partnership is working in SSA at levels of trust, collegiality, and effectiveness that would have been difficult to imagine ten years earlier, and is acknowledged as a key contributor to the Agency's success.

III. HOW WE WILL MANAGE RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

ESTIMATING RESOURCES FOR 2010

SSA's *Vision* of the future, presented in the previous section, is shaped by the requirements of tomorrow, as well as the realities of today. Part of that reality is that resources are limited—and recognizing these limits, the *Vision's* service enhancements must incorporate efficiencies that will enable us to meet the coming challenges.

Estimating resource needs is precarious when focusing on short-term changes. It is even more difficult when we attempt to make projections ten years out, given the host of variables and interdependencies that will surely occur. Therefore, the projections presented in this section are gross estimates based on relevant environmental assumptions and the Agency's best judgments about workloads and resource needs. The assumptions used for these projections will continue to evolve as SSA's planning and budgeting activities take place. We will regularly reevaluate, and adjust as necessary, these assumptions and projections as SSA moves toward 2010.

THE RESOURCE GAP

The following gross estimates reflect the magnitude of process and technological change needed to reduce the projected 2010 resource shortfall (15,000-20,000 workyears, as noted in Section III). For each process that requires change, we have included the assumptions required to achieve the *2010 Vision*. We believe that we can approach eliminating the resource gap and improve customer service **only if**:

- We receive the dollars needed to fund SSA's baseline which will require an annual increase of \$300 to \$400 million;
- We have the additional resources needed to support our workforce and our technology, as discussed later in this section; and
- We are successful in achieving projected levels of change noted below or through combinations of changes that achieve similar workyear savings.

BUSINESS CHANGES REQUIRED TO REALIZE THE VISION

On-line service provides customers the convenience of doing a full range of business at any time and from anywhere.

- 40 – 60 percent of customers with transactions that lend themselves to automation, such as retirement and survivor's claims, hearings requests, SSN applications, and

address changes, initiate their business electronically without the need for an employee interview.

- 10 – 20 percent of SSI customers and 30 – 50 percent of DI customers initiate their business on-line without the need for an employee interview.
- Up to 25 percent of complex transactions and 95 percent of routine transactions are initiated and processed to completion without the need for employee assistance.

Electronic access to records held by others eliminates the time employees spend in obtaining, copying, and handling documents. To help reduce the resource shortfall, SSA and DDS employees must be able to electronically access medical and non-medical records and data for:

- 45 – 55 percent of DI claims, CDRs, and hearings,
- 15 – 25 percent of SSI claims and redeterminations, and
- 55 – 65 percent of RSI and Health Insurance claims and SSN applications.

Electronic access to records held by SSA, and supported by expert systems, reduces the time that SSA and DDS employees spend in locating or reconstructing files. SSA must establish electronic folders and customer service records, supported by expert systems. This provides the Agency the ability to move work to sites that have the capacity to process it.

Electronic notices (e.g., notices issued via e-mail) provide a faster and more convenient way of communicating information to our customers who prefer this option.

- 45 – 55 percent of RSI, DI, and Health Insurance notices and 5 – 15 percent of SSI notices are transmitted electronically.

Electronic verification of benefits and SSNs provides customers and other agencies with immediate access to information, eliminating the need for employee assistance.

- 25 – 35 percent of requests for benefit information and 45 – 55 percent of requests for SSN verification are handled electronically.

Electronic reporting of wages by most employers is more cost-efficient for them, will eliminate most of our scanning operations, and reduce the number of earnings discrepancies we investigate and correct.

- 85 – 95 percent of the wage items we currently scan are received electronically.
- 65 – 75 percent of incorrect earnings postings are prevented as a result of more timely postings and more thorough screening.

Improved toll free number service through improved automated prompts and call routing will significantly improve access for customers and substantially increase the number of calls handled to completion in the automated system.

- An enhanced automated prompt and call routing system reduces abandoned calls by 5 million each year.

Improved quality to reduce overpayments will result from more effective training, expert systems, increased focus on quality, and electronic access to evidence.

- The volume of DI and SSI overpayments is reduced by 25 to 35 percent.

INVESTMENTS IN THE WORKFORCE AND TECHNOLOGY

It is clear that SSA must begin *now* to make the changes necessary to achieve the *Vision* and close the projected 2010 resources gap. The changes described in the *Vision* cannot be accomplished without significant and *early* investments in our workforce and technology. The following describes some of those investments SSA must make.

SSA'S WORKFORCE

The Agency must begin now to prepare its workforce to meet the workload and service demands that will steadily increase between now and 2010. An early and significant investment of resources devoted primarily to training, will be essential to the successful restructuring of the workforce. While we cannot predict with precision the scope of this up-front resource investment, we estimate it will be in the range of 1,000-2,000 workyears annually for 3-5 years. The sooner this infusion of workyears is made, the sooner the Agency will begin to derive benefits by a restructured workforce. This critical first step in workforce restructuring will focus on training to develop the skills and knowledge required by employees to perform different or expanded jobs.

In addition to the early infusion of resources needed to accomplish an integrated service network through restructuring initiatives, by 2010 SSA will need to commit additional resources to accomplish the following activities:

- Increase training for SSA and DDS employees in key areas (e.g., program and process changes, technology, and analytical skills).
- Increase mentoring and coaching efforts to facilitate and ensure the success of workforce restructuring, and to support expanded IVT training. Effective mentoring and coaching will significantly affect the quality of training, development of the necessary technological skills, and transition to new or expanded jobs.

- Expand SSA's efforts to help disabled individuals to work in support of the *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999*.
- Take the time to make sure an action is correct when first processed to improve the quality of work in SSA and DDSs; identify training needs and conduct in-line quality reviews to provide timely feedback.
- Hire replacement employees in advance of losses to facilitate the mentoring of new hires by experienced employees.
- Increase staff who work with advocacy and community groups to improve the delivery of service to segments of the population who have difficulty accessing SSA services.
- Expand hours of service to cover some evenings and weekends.
- Provide increased support for services in many languages.

We estimate that by 2010 these initiatives will require the commitment of an additional 7,000 workyears on an ongoing basis.

TECHNOLOGY

Realization of the *2010 Vision* depends heavily on our ability to effectively apply advanced technologies. The Agency estimates that it will need to add approximately \$200 to \$300 million annually to its Information Technology Systems (ITS) budget to make the critical initial investments in a technological infrastructure that will provide direct, secure customer access to Social Security services over the Internet. This additional amount will include periodic refreshment of the infrastructure and the workyears needed for software development and support. This critical investment in technology will be vital to our success in realizing the *2010 Vision*.

INVESTING EARLY IN OUR WORKFORCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Much must be accomplished if we are to institutionalize and stabilize this new environment. If we make these investments, plan adequately, implement and refine the changes described, we can expect a boost in organizational productivity. We must see these gains taking hold early if we are to be successful in 2010 and beyond. The workforce, technology, and process changes described are essential if we are to realize the gains we envision for our customers and for our employees.

The time to begin investing in the future is *now*.

**Summary of Workyear Resource Projections
In the 2010 Vision**

Category/Initiative	Higher WY Offset Estimates	Lower WY Offset Estimates
Projected 2010 Base Need	95,000	100,000
WY Offsets from Current Initiatives	- 6,000	- 4,000
Net WY Need	89,000	96,000
WY Offsets from 2010 Vision	- 14,000	- 8,000
Net WY Needs with Offsets	75,000	88,000
WY Requirements of the 2010 Vision	+ 7,000	+ 7,000
Net WY Needs	82,000	95,000
FY 2000 Staffing Level	- 80,000	- 80,000
2010 Shortfall	2,000	15,000

"Current Initiatives" include initiatives such as IWS/LAN, Paperless Processing, Title II Redesign, and SSI Modernization.

"WY Offsets from the 2010 Vision" reflect the efficiencies resulting from 2010 initiatives such as on-line services, electronic access to records, electronic reporting of wages, improved toll free number services.

" WY Requirements of the 2010 Vision" reflect the ongoing level of increased resources needed to sustain specific 2010 initiatives. This figure is reflected as a constant rather than a range because we believe this level of resource investment will be required under either set of estimates.

Notes: To reduce the resource shortfall as reflected in this chart will require major investments in Information Technology (IT) and the workforce to support key elements of the Vision. Significant IT investments, estimated to be \$200-300 million per year, must begin early in the process if SSA is to build the critical technological infrastructure required to support the 2010 Vision; in addition, an early investment in the range of 1,000 to 2,000 workyears annually for 3-5 years (primarily devoted to training) will be needed to accomplish workforce restructuring. Section III, pages 16-18, contains additional details concerning workyear offsets and requirements.

IV. THE VISION IN FOCUS

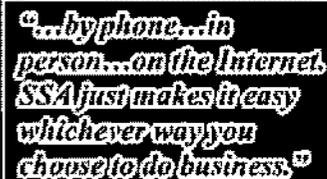
This section provides a detailed explanation of the features of the Vision. The Vision is based on specific principles and enablers that drive the way SSA delivers service. The quotations represent what our customers will say once we have realized this Vision.

PRINCIPLES OF ENHANCED SERVICE

CUSTOMER CHOICE...Customers have expanded options for service that are broad in terms of the time, place, mode of access, and language.

In 2010, SSA's customers have a wide range of options for conducting their business with SSA. Along with traditional face-to-face services in community-based offices, customers have the choice of dealing with SSA via the Internet (including voice and video) either from their homes or any public location with Internet access to our services (e.g., library); through an enhanced toll free telephone system; through e-mail; fax; or traditional surface mail.

Customer choice and options for service characterize SSA in 2010. Regardless of the mode of access—Internet, telephone, face-to-face, e-mail, fax, or surface mail—choice will not change the level of service customers receive. To provide customers with access to our services, SSA employees regularly use wireless, portable equipment to conduct business outside of the office setting (e.g., community centers, libraries, etc.).



"...by phone...in person...on the Internet, SSA just makes it easy whichever way you choose to do business."

Customers conduct business, via automated systems (e.g., toll free telephone system, Internet), twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week (24/7). Normal business hours for direct contact have expanded for face-to-face, telephone, and voice and video over the Internet service to include some evening and weekend hours. SSA serves non-English-speaking customers through the use of electronic language translation and multilingual employees. SSA and DDS routinely use speech synthesis and audio notices for customers needing those services.

FIRST POINT OF CONTACT...Customers complete their transactions at the first point of contact.

Most customer transactions are completed at the first point of contact. Electronic customer records provide SSA and DDS employees with a comprehensive history of each customer's previous contacts and pending actions with SSA. With a full understanding of the customer's history, employees serve customers better and more efficiently.

The combination of job restructuring, improved training, employee development, expert and decision support systems, the electronic folder, improved call-routing, and a more flexible operational infrastructure that facilitates "portability of work" ensures that most business is done at the first point of contact.

"It was great that I didn't have to deal with several different people at SSA. I didn't have to keep repeating myself over and over."¹³

In those instances when business cannot be completed at the first point of contact, we will offer customers the option of working with one representative. That representative will be the customer's point of contact until the transaction is complete.

Customers and their authorized representatives have secure access to their own records via the toll free number service and the Internet. They are able to make necessary changes to certain parts of their record (e.g., address, direct deposit, etc.).

PRIVACY... Customers have the confidence that SSA collects personal information only as needed for the Government's business and discloses personal information only as allowed by law.

SSA continues its commitment to the public to act responsibly in the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information. SSA is sensitive to the public's concern about the loss of personal privacy in an increasingly technological environment. The Agency continues to abide by the widely accepted "fair information practices" that have governed worldwide privacy law and practices since the earliest days of the Information Age. SSA has an unwavering commitment to the principles of privacy and confidentiality.

This commitment includes:

- **Openness**—SSA gives public notice regarding the personal information it collects and how it is used.
- **Individual Participation**—SSA allows individuals to both access their own records and request corrections when the information is inaccurate.
- **Collection and Use Limitations**—SSA collects and uses personal data only by lawful means and only when necessary to carry out legitimate Government functions.
- **Data Quality**—SSA maintains personal data with appropriate accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness.

"When the Internet first started to expand, I worried about security breaches and my privacy being compromised, but when I was dealing with SSA they discussed their privacy policies from the beginning and helped alleviate some of that apprehension."¹⁴

- **Disclosure Limitation**—Personal information in SSA's possession is protected by appropriate safeguards to ensure its security and confidentiality.
- **Accountability**—The Agency and employees are subject to criminal and civil penalties for breaches of privacy. Internal processes constantly look for inappropriate uses of personal information.

SSA's commitment to privacy, confidentiality, security, and integrity continues to be the litmus test for all Agency policies, procedures, and processes. It is no coincidence that the first regulation published by the Social Security Board in 1937 established the guarantee of privacy and confidentiality. In an era of rapid change, the integrity of personal information and data remains paramount and a critical constant.

ONE-STOP GOVERNMENT SERVICE... SSA works with other government agencies to move toward providing a wide variety of government services in a single contact.

"I had no idea whom to talk to. I just knew I couldn't work and needed income. SSA took my application for disability and sent my information to Housing Assistance and Food Stamps to start my applications. I didn't have to run all over town going from office to office."

SSA is a leader in working with other government agencies in developing data sharing, joint application processes, and alignment of program requirements to facilitate "one-stop shopping" for the public. SSA's toll free telephone service and Internet site are integrated and have the capability to provide quick and easy access to information and services from any government agency (Federal, State, or local). Customers can expect to be directed to the proper agency regardless of whether they are dealing with SSA face-to-face or electronically. To ensure that the customer is served quickly and efficiently, SSA communicates regularly with other agencies with which it shares common customers.

SSA takes a leadership role in initiating interagency communications and collaboration focused on providing customers with a variety of government services in a single contact. SSA considers collocation with other agencies to facilitate one-stop government service and to be cost-effective.

PROACTIVE SERVICE ... SSA ensures contact with hard-to-reach segments of the population, provides an automated application process, and is proactive in researching issues and trends that impact its programs.

SSA's presence within the community provides for increased trust and widespread visibility. Through established community networks and the power of technology, SSA is better positioned to reach those who, in the past, had difficulty accessing our services.

The Social Security Statement is a valuable tool in educating the public and helping them plan for their financial future. In addition, it provides customers an opportunity to elect an automated application process. Electronic access to records (e.g., birth, wages, marriage, military service, and death) facilitates the automated application process for those customers approaching retirement age. After reviewing their earnings records and other personal information, these customers may elect to have monthly benefits begin automatically. Customers make decisions based on the information provided, including available options. Those electing to begin retirement benefits provide the necessary direct deposit information and other information to determine potential entitlement of family members. In addition, upon notification of death, SSA contacts potentially eligible survivors and gives them an opportunity to begin receiving their benefits automatically.

"It was completely automated...they had everything I needed to start my benefits. I was amazed."

SSA's leadership is proactive in ensuring the continuing responsiveness of its programs to the American public's need for economic security. A key element of this is the focused research activity that looks at and assesses the impact of evolving medical, demographic, economic, and social conditions on SSA's programs.

STEWARDSHIP... SSA safeguards trust fund contributions and tax dollars through quality, effective management and aggressive preventative, investigative, and prosecutorial efforts.

"I have been very impressed with the safeguards that have been put in place to ensure the integrity of SSA data. Social Security has not only decreased the amount of fraud and abuse cases that pass over my desk, they have also made the cases that I do investigate easier to track."

SSA has met new challenges in its stewardship responsibility. SSA has put in place the appropriate safeguards to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the data collected and stored—especially as more of that data comes to the Agency in electronic form. This has bolstered the public's confidence in SSA's electronic systems and increased the level of business conducted over the Internet.

Enhanced and real-time data sharing with other agencies (e.g. State Bureaus of Vital Statistics, Internal Revenue Service, Veterans Affairs, etc.) and employers and an enhanced focus on quality through training and electronic tools has reduced overpayment-causing events. Automated processes identify and initiate appropriate due process procedures. SSA encourages responsible and timely reporting through vigorous public education campaigns and collaboration with community service organizations and advocacy groups. Customers routinely self-report by way of the Internet and the automated portion of the toll free number. SSA uses all tools (wage garnishment, tax refund offset, etc.) available to aggressively pursue debt collection.

Programmatic and administrative systems provide the needed information for managers to make the best use of the financial and human resources they are allocated and to evaluate the effectiveness of the outcomes they achieve.

ENABLERS OF ENHANCED SERVICE

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS... SSA maximizes use of technology to automate workload and administrative processes to enhance service and to support the fully electronic, paperless processing of its work.

Advancements in portable, wireless technology; broader use of videoconferencing; enhanced toll free telephone service; and expanded data access allow employees to handle workloads more efficiently, more effectively, and without reliance on paper. SSA has achieved a virtually paperless processing environment. Employees regularly conduct interviews, hearings, and conferences through desktop videoconferencing. The Internet, expert and decision support systems, electronic voice recognition, electronic language translation, and electronic folders with customer service records have helped SSA and DDSs provide enhanced customer service.



"Videoconferencing has been great. Considering the hectic nature of my practice, it's really convenient to be able to sit here in my office with my client, and conduct the hearing long distance with the Administrative Law Judge. My clients like it, as well."

Automation provides customers with an opportunity to conduct business without employee assistance. Redesigned and streamlined processes, along with additional automation, have simplified complex, labor intensive workloads, particularly in the SSI program. Ninety percent of all wage reports are received electronically with the provision for on-line correction capability.

SSA's major administrative processes are fully integrated and automated with a single portal or gateway for all activities. Increased videoconferencing, data storage, and smart card usage, along with other technological enhancements, have streamlined the Agency's administrative processes making them more responsive and efficient.

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RECORDS... Customers and employees have access to electronic records, with the necessary security, privacy, and authentication.

"When my spouse died Social Security contacted me about filing and with my authorization they were able to get all the information they needed, including my marriage certificate, the children's birth certificates, and my birth certificate, right over their computer..."

SSA and DDS employees have real-time, secure electronic access to necessary information to provide complete customer service. Data exchanges are routine with entities such as the State BVS, VA, IRS, INS, RRB, and others. In 2010, the heavy reliance on paper that was typical within many government processes has migrated into near total reliance on electronic data and electronic folders. SSA and DDSs obtain most necessary medical and financial evidence electronically. Medical records are available electronically to assist in the disability process and other processes where medical evidence is needed (e.g., appeals, capability determinations in representative payee actions, etc.).

SSA ensures the privacy, security, and authenticity of information electronically transmitted and held in its electronic records. This is accomplished through the use of encryption, biometrics, Public/Private Key Infrastructure (PKI), and other technological solutions.

Secure access to electronic data maintained by SSA is available to authorized individuals other than employees. Customers, individuals, or their authorized agents have secure, electronic access to certain information maintained by SSA. This includes benefit payment information, claims status, earnings record data, pending transactions, and evidence on file.

OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY... SSA's resources are integrated and restructured to provide maximum flexibility in meeting increasing workload and service demands.

Through job restructuring, retraining, and advance hiring, SSA has a larger segment of its total workforce engaged in providing direct customer service than ever before. The expanded, highly integrated functionality of the Agency's operating facilities (i.e., field offices, program service centers, hearings offices, teleservice centers, the Office of Central Operations, etc.) has created a service delivery network that enables SSA to

respond quickly to fluctuating workloads by directing work electronically to any site in the network. These operating facilities handle a full range of services, including toll free telephone calls and Internet services. The responsibility for managing workload capacity falls to the entire operational network, not to individual offices or components.

Central and regional office staffs work together in a cross-functional, team-oriented manner to provide support to the entire service network in a variety of areas, e.g., process evaluation, streamlining, integration, automation, maintaining up-to-date on-line training and reference materials, and administrative support.

“Working together to restructure several of the old positions and create new flexible staffing mixes along with spreading work out among our various components really put us in a stronger position to handle the ever increasing workloads...driving hiring authority down to the lowest levels, we removed several barriers to effective planning for the retirement wave and loss of institutional knowledge.”

A knowledgeable, highly versatile workforce (supported by electronic folders, expert and decision support systems, and on-line reference materials) allows the Agency, from anywhere within the service network, to complete the full range of customer actions at the first point of contact. This widespread customer responsiveness greatly reduces hand-offs and referrals, leading to significant improvements in customer service.

Streamlined and redesigned work processes and systems further enhance the Agency’s operational flexibility by eliminating “stove-pipe” processing, unnecessary steps, and other non-value-added activities. Effective work measurement and performance measurement systems strengthen process evaluation for decision making, especially in the areas of resource allocation, work distribution, and service enhancements.

EXTERNAL ALLIANCES... SSA develops strong alliances with government agencies, community-based organizations, tribal governments, and the private sector in areas that benefit SSA and its customers.

To effectively support one-stop government service, SSA’s executives and managers have developed collaborative relationships with other government agencies that serve SSA’s customer base. SSA and other agencies work together to streamline and integrate business processes and data sharing to provide the most convenient service to the customer. In a spirit of intergovernmental cooperation, the lines between government agencies at all levels blur as leaders work together to present one face to the public.

"We could not have survived the last ten years without the strategic alliances we have established with the public and private sectors. It has worked to our mutual advantage to support each other where we share a common customer base."

SSA maintains strategic partnerships with the private sector in areas that support expanded business processing (e.g., wireless networking, security, medical research, knowledge management, etc.). In these and many other areas, the private sector and SSA leverage technology and knowledge to strengthen the Agency's business processes.

SSA manages robust community relations and education programs and a comprehensive collaborative network with community service organizations and advocacy groups. These networks strengthen SSA's ability to deliver services to hard-to-reach segments of the population. Service organizations and advocacy groups help SSA continually expand its education and service efforts on behalf of their mutual customers.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS... SSA's communications activities include using innovative means to ensure that the public has up-to-date knowledge about SSA's programs and services.

SSA applies the latest research and technology to create communications channels that are most effective for the diverse populations it serves. Using opinion leaders, community organizations, the media, and other resources, SSA is able to tailor its communications content and delivery to meet the particular or unique needs of individuals and groups.

Employees have access to a greater body of information needed to be ambassadors for SSA. They provide customers with SSA-specific information as well as links to information sources and services needed from other Federal, State, tribal governments, and local providers.

Recognizing the critical, strategic role of communications in its customer service, SSA has enhanced its ability to use customer feedback constructively to shape its service delivery systems.

"Since my husband became disabled one of the few bright spots has been getting information from Social Security. Whether it's on the Web, from the materials at the library, or directly from SSA, the information is just what we need. We can understand it all, and we're even directed to sources of information and services we didn't realize existed."

INTERNAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS... SSA has strong working relationships across component lines, with its unions and employee associations.

Working relationships within SSA reflect a spirit of inclusion, cooperation, and collegiality. SSA components focus on Agency goals, communicate, and share

information across component lines, as "One Agency." Collaborative planning and decision making throughout the process facilitate change.

"We deal with all that we face by staying focused...by working together...by taking prompt action. We do the right things at the right times. We succeed by working together."

Full labor-management partnership has strengthened substantially. Both union and management leaders demonstrate considerable foresight in working together crafting proposals and solutions beneficial to the employees, the Agency, and ultimately, to the taxpayer. Partnership is working at new levels of trust and effectiveness and is crucial to the Agency's current success.

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE... SSA develops, attracts, and retains a highly qualified and motivated workforce through enhanced benefits, improved facilities, flexible work arrangements, and increased career opportunities.

Employees have a flexible menu-style benefit package that allows them to select their own benefit plan including health benefits, lifestyle benefits, subsidies, and on-site amenities. Flexiplace and flexible work schedules provide employees with greater options to accommodate personal needs and offer expanded service based on customer expectations.

SSA has a workforce that is higher skilled and higher paid than a decade ago. Job security has been enhanced through comprehensive retraining and job restructuring. Individual learning accounts and training plans are tailored to meet employees' current job and future career goals. SSA supports its employees by balancing workload demands with employee growth and development.

"I found out about the job opportunity with SSA from my on-line financial aid officer. SSA is helping me pay for my last year in college. I'm able to finish school on time while working fulltime for SSA. I really like the variety of work and the opportunities for advancement."

SSA is able to attract college graduates who are drawn to the Agency by the prospect of first-rate professional development and a period of challenging public service. In

addition, SSA recruits new employees from a variety of backgrounds and educational levels who possess certain basic competencies.

SSA's facilities are modern, accessible, safe, and secure. Offices are equipped with modern ergonomic furniture that allows for flexibility in reconfiguring workspace. Security enhancements have created an environment where employees can work with assurances for their personal safety and the safety of the public they serve.

LEADERSHIP... SSA's executives and managers provide proactive, entrepreneurial, and customer-centered leadership.

SSA's executives continually focus on customer service, integrity, quality, partnering, and employee well-being. Balance among all of these is built into every aspect of leadership.

"With the increased automation of administrative functions and enhanced MI, I'm able to focus now on aspects of my job that I could not get around to before...employee development, working relationships within the Agency, and customer relations. It's been a long time, but I am finding my job to be really rewarding again."

SSA's executives and managers skillfully apply technology to better achieve the Agency's mission and goals. They are free from the paper-based administrative processes of the past and can better focus on SSA's core business and the needs of the employees and customers. SSA's leadership has timely, accurate management information and uses modernized tools to manage both the distributed workload and the level of service provided to customers.

Executives and managers are accountable for results and effectively make the business case for resources based on the level of service expected from the public. Organizational components freely share resources to meet workload demands and to better serve the customer.

SSA's executives have developed a philosophy of leading by example. They mentor the next generation of leaders by entrusting them with assignments that challenge both their knowledge and abilities. Executives and managers are compensated based on their leadership initiatives and outcomes and the accomplishments for which they are accountable. Peers', employees' and business partners' views help evaluate these leadership skills and achievements.

A primary leadership focus is on motivating, developing, retaining, and recruiting a highly skilled workforce. Executives and managers encourage employee growth and development through increased training opportunities and rotational assignments. They

create a work environment that supports innovation, risk taking, and cooperation with compensation levels, performance bonuses, and awards tied directly to accomplishments. Horizontal communications and teams provide innovative quality solutions. Teamwork, collegiality, and integrity are essential keys to problem solving in 2010.

V. NEXT STEPS

The process of creating the *Vision* has been completed. The process of pursuing the *Vision* is just beginning. SSA must begin addressing the far more difficult challenge of realizing the *Vision*. As an early first step, initiatives are being announced in the areas of technology, training, upgrading of skills and positions, and activities related to operational flexibility.

In addition to obtaining the capital investment and human resources needed to achieve the *Vision*, SSA must link and sequence the Agency's strategic planning and budget processes to the *Vision* to ensure that resources and priorities are properly aligned.

A critical first step in this alignment will be to reshape the guidance in the next Agency Strategic Plan (ASP). We will develop new strategic objectives to sharpen our focus and mark our five-year progress in the areas that are key to positioning the Agency to realize the *Vision*. We will redirect some existing strategic initiatives and create new ones where appropriate to effect necessary business process changes. And we will rethink our accountability mechanisms to support a more fluid, integrated approach to managing for the results.

In addition, we will engage in more detailed service delivery planning. We will map out more specifically our business requirements- how our core business processes must change and organizational functions must adapt to realize the *Vision*. From the business requirements, we will outline how the Agency's human and information technology resources must evolve to support new ways of delivering service. Our five-year human resource plan will build upon the new business requirements and specify the target positions and skills that will be needed, and the action plans and timelines for delivering these resources. Likewise, our information technology plans will build upon these same requirements to specify the target systems infrastructure and the action plans and timelines for achieving it.

The *Vision* is not static. While the Agency's initial focus is on 2010, the *Vision* will be an evolving one that carries SSA beyond 2010. It also will evolve in the intervening years as changing environmental factors, both internal and external, signal the need to make adjustments or develop alternative scenarios. SSA will refresh the *Vision* at least a year before each new ASP to reinforce its role as the driving force for the ASP and subsequent decisions and plans. The vision refreshment process will also serve as an impetus for the Agency to incorporate the latest technological advances into its business processes.

While the 2010 *Vision* document is complete, it is important to understand that the process of visioning and strategic planning never ends. SSA will continue to look ahead, anticipate, and plan for the changes in our world that will impact the service we deliver.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFGE	American Federation of Government Employees
ASP	Agency Strategic Plan
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
BVS	Bureau of Vital Statistics
CDR	Continuing Disability Review
Co-op	Cooperative Education Programs
DDS	Disability Determination Services
DOC	Data Operations Center
DI	Disability Insurance
DOL	Department of Labor
FO	Field Office
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
HALLEX	Hearings, Appeals, Litigation and Law Manual
HCFA	Health Care Financing Administration
HI	Health Insurance
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
IVT	Interactive Video Teletraining
NES	Non-English Speaking
OACT	Office of the Actuary
OB	Office of Budget
OCO	Office of Central Operations
OCREO	Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity
ODO	Office of Disability Operations
OEO	Office of Earnings Operations
OHA	Office of Hearings and Appeals
OIO	Office of International Operations
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OWA	Office of Workforce Analysis
PC	Personal Computer
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
PKI	Public Key Infrastructure
POMS	Program Operations Manual System
PSC	Program Service Center
RRB	Railroad Retirement Board
RSI	Retirement and Survivors Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SSN	Social Security Number
STEP	Senior Training Employment Program
TSC	Teleservice Center
Title II	Title II of the Social Security Act
Title XVI	Title XVI of the Social Security Act

VA

Veterans Affairs

APPENDIX A-STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

CROSSWALK OF 2010 VISION STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND THE AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

	PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING			
	VALUED EMPLOYEES			
	PROGRAM MANAGEMENT			
	WORLD-CLASS SERVICE			
	RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS			
TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS				
Accelerate the redesign and ... further automate its processes		V	V	
Technological infrastructure is sufficiently current		V	V	V
Full range of services over the Internet and telephone		V		
Flexible, service delivery... Wireless, portable Internet access devices		V		
Expert decision support and on-line reference systems		V	V	V
Automated application process for potential retirement and survivor claimants		V		
Enhance toll free telephone service... voice recognition and real-time translation capability		V		
Option of receiving electronic notices in a wide variety of languages		V		
Multiple modes of video conferencing		V		V
Privacy and security... authentication		V	V	
ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RECORDS				
Electronic verification of specific information		V	V	V
Medical and financial evidence electronically		V	V	V
Electronic folders... paperless processing		V	V	V
Electronic verification of the SSN		V	V	V
OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY				
Expand functionality of FO, TSC, PSC, OCO		V	V	V
Restructure existing direct service positions		V	V	V
Hire in advance of losses			V	V
Quality improvement strategy to review and restructure all work processes		V	V	
Integrated management information systems		V	V	V
Expand normal business hours		V		
EXTERNAL ALLIANCES				
Public access to services via the Internet		V		V

	PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING				
	VALUED EMPLOYEES				
	PROGRAM MANAGEMENT				
	WORLD-CLASS SERVICE				
	RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS				
Strategic partnerships... technological alliances	V	V	V		V
"Hassle-free" one-stop shopping		V			
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS					
Tailor the Social Security Statement	V	V	V		V
Robust program of community relations		V			V
Use evolving technology		V			V
Speak with one clear voice		V			V
Strategies to enhance information exchange		V			V
INTERNAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS					
SSA will work in full partnership with its labor unions, management associations, and advisory committees				V	
EMPLOYER OF CHOICE					
A wide variety of methods to recruit new employees				V	
Expanded benefits and increased growth opportunities to retain employees				V	
Timely, responsive training and mentoring				V	
Flexiplace options and flexible work schedules				V	
Results-oriented, competency-based and better paid workforce				V	
Facilities will be modern, accessible, safe, and secure				V	
LEADERSHIP					
Prepare executives and managers to lead a more highly skilled, diverse... physically dispersed workforce				V	
Expand its leadership development programs				V	
Improve and institutionalize knowledge management (KM)	V	V	V	V	V
SSA will be a leader in policy development and research	V				

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The section entitled Focusing the Vision describes specific features of the Vision; features that include principles of enhanced service and key enablers. This section describes these key enablers, more fully by delineating related strategic initiatives that will make the Vision a reality.

TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

- SSA will **accelerate the redesign of its processes**. SSA will evaluate and aggressively streamline its programmatic and administrative processes, eliminate processing steps that add no value, and **further automate its processes** to gain optimum customer service improvements and benefits.
- SSA will implement a process that ensures that its **technological infrastructure is sufficiently current** to effectively support managing the Agency's workloads (e.g., through the establishment of a three-year refreshment rate).
- SSA will aggressively develop and improve on-line services for customers. The Agency will provide and successfully market 24/7 access to a **full range of services over the Internet and through its enhanced automated toll free telephone services**. Direct customer support will be provided during expanded business hours.
- SSA will build and maintain a technological infrastructure that fully supports **flexible service delivery** and workload processing. **Wireless, portable Internet access devices** usable at any location, equipped with voice recognition technology, and language translation capability will accelerate and improve the Agency's delivery of service to its customers.
- SSA will develop integrated, user-friendly **expert, decision support and on-line reference systems** with the latest processing instructions, policies, and procedures to assist employees with their work. *(For more explanation see page A-5)*
- SSA will initiate an **automated application process for potential retirement and survivor claimants**. SSA will use electronic access to information to identify customers who may qualify for benefits, such as those nearing retirement age, or those for whom other factors of entitlement may occur. *(For more explanation see page A-6)*
- SSA will **enhance its toll free telephone service** by improving call distribution and routing, and providing **voice recognition and real-time language translation capability**. User-friendly automated software will replicate normal conversation and

will afford callers access to their customer service records to update or change certain information without the need for employee assistance. Customer service and customer satisfaction will be improved by allowing customers to transact business at times convenient to them. *(For more explanation see page A-7)*

- SSA will offer customers the **option of receiving notices electronically in a wide variety of languages**. SSA will develop additional electronic notice options for customers with disabilities through such means as **audio notices via voice synthesis** for the visually impaired.
- SSA will create an infrastructure that supports **multiple modes of video-conferencing** for a wide range of applications, e.g., customer interviews and hearings, claimant conferences, interoffice meetings and consultations, and training.
- SSA will develop systems and implement processes that ensure the **privacy and security** of information maintained in our electronic records or provided to outside entities. To minimize occurrences of unauthorized access leading to fraud, **authentication** of the individual or entity accessing SSA data will be ensured through such means as Public/Private Key Infrastructure (PKI), encryption, biometrics, smart cards, or other technological solutions. A comprehensive system of cross-references and data mining will help detect program abuses.

EXPERT, DECISION SUPPORT AND ON-LINE REFERENCE SYSTEMS

SSA will develop sophisticated expert and decision support systems that build on existing systems. Tapping into in-house expertise, information will be made available electronically to those who need it. This process will involve gathering, organizing, analyzing, and finally sharing the Agency's expert knowledge. In addition, SSA will develop and maintain an up-to-date, on-line reference system that includes POMS, HALLEX, and other reference material as a single presentation of policy.

The systems will be user-friendly with the ability to be voice activated. Since the information will be available to SSA and DDS employees and external customers, it will be integrated and presented according to employee and customer needs, e.g., regarding subject matter.

The expert and decision support systems will help employees do their work by:

- Providing information necessary to understand the complexities of policies and programs and to process a broader range of actions without hand-offs to other employees or units;
- Evaluating medical information and allowing initial disability intake components to adjudicate cases with certain characteristics, without handing off to another unit; and
- Providing the tools to access SSA's institutional knowledge base. (*See page A-30.*)

The use of expert and decision support systems will save time, increase efficiency and quality, boost performance, save costs, and improve customer service.

These systems will free DDS resources to evaluate more complex medical evidence and to review cases to provide ongoing feedback and training.

Similar systems will help external customers transact more business with SSA via the Internet. Customers who would otherwise require employee assistance will be able to use the expert system to complete their transactions.

AUTOMATED APPLICATION PROCESS FOR POTENTIAL RETIREMENT AND SURVIVOR CLAIMANTS

SSA will aggressively pursue systems and policy changes that will lead to an expedited retirement and survivor initial claims process. The Agency will begin development of expedited entitlement processes by focusing first on two key events—attainment of retirement age and electronic notification of death.

The expedited retirement initial claims process will be an integrated part of the Social Security Statement. As Statements are produced, the system will identify those customers approaching retirement age. A few months prior to attainment of retirement age, an “expanded” Statement will be sent to insured individuals. The statement will explain available options and ask those lead questions necessary to determine other factors affecting eligibility (e.g., dates of military service, marital information, prior benefit history, etc.).

The Social Security Statement (provided electronically, if that is the customer’s preference) will afford the number holder an opportunity to review the information on file and the projected eligibility information. If correct, the individual can direct SSA to start monthly benefits either through the Internet, by surface mail, by telephone, or in person at the local community-based office. (Note: In all instances, the individual will have to provide direct deposit data.)

SSA will work with State agencies and funeral homes to expand and improve electronic notification of death. Electronic death notices will be screened against SSA records (SSN, customer account histories, status of survivors, etc.) and State records (marriage and divorce records). If survivor benefits appear to be payable, the system will send a notice advising the survivor(s) of their potential eligibility. The individual will be asked to verify the information on file and provide any necessary additional information or evidence. If the information is complete and verified, the individual can direct SSA, either through the Internet, surface mail, telephone, fax, or in person at the local community-based office, to begin monthly survivor benefits.

**ENHANCE TOLL FREE TELEPHONE SERVICE... VOICE
RECOGNITION AND REAL-TIME TRANSLATION CAPABILITY**

By adding voice recognition and realistic speech synthesis capabilities to the toll free telephone service's automated prompt, customers will be able to interact with the automated system in a conversational style. This user-friendly feature will improve the effectiveness of the automated system and the quality of the customer's experience. The improved automated prompt will reduce the volume of calls routed for employee contact and the number of abandoned calls and callbacks.

SSA will build on the currently planned Intelligent Network Routing capability. More sophisticated call distribution and routing will allow much of the toll free telephone traffic to be handled regionally without jeopardizing access or response times. The system would first look to available call-answering resources within the geographical area related to the call's origin. If an agent is not readily available, the call would then be routed without delay to an available agent anywhere in the nation.

The application of electronic language translation capability will expand services to non-English speaking (NES) callers. The increasing numbers of NES callers and the number of different languages will continue to be a challenge. Offering realistic automated service in languages other than English is critical to the future toll free service provided by SSA to the public.

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC RECORDS

- SSA will aggressively pursue real-time **electronic verification of specific information** needed to serve its customers, e.g., SSA will have access to appropriate information from State BVS, VA, INS, RRB, INS, etc. (*For further explanation see page A-9*)
- SSA will develop systems and processes that facilitate obtaining **medical and financial evidence electronically**. (*For further explanation see page A-10*)
- SSA will establish **electronic folders** that include complete customer service records. The electronic folder will be accessible by authorized SSA or DDS employees from any location. Establishment of the electronic folder will facilitate the transition to a **paperless processing environment**. (*For further explanation see page A-11*)
- SSA will develop agreements and processes so that customers can authorize SSA to provide secure **electronic verification** of their SSN or other specific information to States and other entities, much like the current employers' verification system.

ELECTRONIC VERIFICATION OF SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SSA will have electronic access to vital statistics information to verify certain entitlement factors.

An integral part of the entitlement process will allow automatic verification of certain information. For instance, in a benefit claim when the system encounters an unverified date of birth, the system will automatically transmit a finder (an electronic request for information) to the State or local database that houses the records for the reported place of birth. If the finder locates a matching record, verification that certifies that the reported record exists is returned electronically to SSA. The SSA record is annotated to indicate the verification. If verification cannot be obtained, the return message will indicate the absence of a corroborating record and the alert will prompt the user to submit a secondary source for verification. The identical process will be used to verify dates of marriage, divorce, adoption and other factors of entitlement that can be verified through State Bureaus of Vital Statistics or other official sources, including the INS, VA, RRB, and others.

The ability to electronically verify entitlement factors will streamline the claims intake process, save employee and customer time, provide enhanced customer service, reduce the use of paper, and save the expenses related to paper handling and postage.

MEDICAL AND FINANCIAL EVIDENCE ELECTRONICALLY

SSA will develop options consistent with medical data standards and security/privacy regulations with medical providers and custodians of medical records to have evidence related to disability, such as capability and living arrangements, available to the Agency electronically. SSA and DDS will continue to accept paper records, but will provide advice and guidance to those sources to facilitate conversion of medical evidence to electronic records. SSA will establish processes that allow for centralized scanning of medical evidence as well as providing for incidental scanning at the local level. By capturing and storing this evidence electronically, offices will no longer need to handle and ship large paper files. This will allow SSA and DDS employees immediate access to medical evidence regardless of its physical location. Proper security measures will be in place to protect the privacy and integrity of the data received.

In addition, SSA will develop options with financial institutions that will allow SSA to obtain financial evidence electronically, given the proper authorizations by the customer. Financial evidence is necessary in determining eligibility requirements for SSI customers. This will provide SSA with real-time access to records reducing the time for input and analysis. By 2010, virtually all bank records will be electronic, and access will be a matter of securing necessary authorizations and ensuring the privacy and security of the data transmitted.

Secure, electronic access to both medical and financial information will support the Agency's move to a totally paperless process, and will relieve both the Agency and the customer from the burden of locating and handling large amounts of paper.

ELECTRONIC FOLDERS... PAPERLESS PROCESSING

To support a paperless process, SSA will develop an electronic folder. The electronic folder will be a virtual repository of a particular customer's information. The information may have originally been electronically established by SSA, received electronically from another source, scanned from paper and converted to an image, or it may be held by another authority, such as a State BVS and linked to through the electronic folder. The actual physical location of the information will be transparent to the user.

The information available through the electronic folder would include data such as a customer's SSN record, earnings history, evidence related to a claim (including pertinent medical evidence), payment information and history, as well as a complete record of the customer's dealings with SSA. Authorized SSA and DDS employees will be able to access the electronic folder from any location.

Customers will also be able to access, with appropriate privacy and security safeguards, specific information from their electronic folder over the Internet or other electronic means for purposes such as determining the status of a claim or inquiry, reviewing the accuracy of the record or evidence on file, or planning for future events such as retirement.

A single transaction path will easily move users—employees and customers—to the application needed to complete a transaction or to access specific information. For example, for simple functions such as a name change, one transaction will change the information for all affected records—the SSN record, the earnings record, the Retirement, Survivors, and Disability record and the Supplemental Security Income record.

Secure access to information will also be available over the Internet to certain authorized third parties. For example, an attorney will be able to help a client assess the value of appealing a decision, a vocational expert will be able to help a disability beneficiary with returning to work, and a doctor will be able to review evidence electronically prior to performing a consultative examination.

The electronic folder will remove geographic barriers to processing virtually any type of transaction or query as well as provide the means for the single transaction path type of processing. Electronic folders will also be developed for administrative files (e.g., personnel, contractor files, etc.). It remains one of the largest single contributors to paperless processes for SSA.

OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

- SSA will **expand the functionality of field offices, program service centers, teleservice centers, and the Office of Central Operations.** These operating facilities will handle a full range of workloads, including toll free telephone calls, claims, Internet workloads, exception work, and other more complex workloads. These enhanced and integrated facilities will form a dynamic, integrated, highly flexible customer-driven service delivery network. Enhanced technology (e.g., electronic access to information and evidence, electronic folders, expert and decision support systems) and job restructuring will enable SSA to move work in a real-time, seamless, and efficient manner, taking full advantage of all its resources. *(For further explanation see page A-13)*
- SSA will **restructure existing direct service positions** in field offices, teleservice centers, program service centers, and the Office of Central Operations. *(For further explanation see page A-14)*
- SSA will develop a process that enables managers to consistently **hire in advance of losses** to minimize the gap that often occurs between the hiring and training of replacement employees and the departure of experienced employees. SSA will also implement procedures that will eliminate existing **barriers to employee movement across component lines** within the Agency. *(For further explanation see page A-15)*
- SSA will develop a **comprehensive quality improvement strategy to review and restructure all business processes.** Business processes will be redesigned, streamlined, and automated to support the effective integration of process evaluation across component lines. The quality improvement strategies will focus on increased in-line review; new and accurate measures of customer service; a balanced emphasis on quality and quantity; and support for adequate training and tools.
- SSA will develop an integrated **management information** system, which accurately captures the work that we do, and the services we provide. The system will provide tools for analyzing trends and anomalies to improve the work processes and to enhance management of the work at all levels of the Agency.
- SSA will **expand normal business hours** for direct customer contact for all services e.g., face-to-face, toll free, and voice and video over the Internet, to include some evening and weekend hours. As driven by customer demand and with consideration of employee availability, SSA will evaluate the need to further expand hours of direct customer contact.

EXPAND FUNCTIONALITY OF FIELD OFFICES, PROGRAM SERVICES CENTERS, AND TELESERVICE CENTERS

SSA will create a flexible integrated service delivery network that supports customer choice and operational flexibility. The knowledgeable and highly skilled workforce within this network supports the expanded functionality by providing a full range of customer service. The integration of the network will dramatically reduce hand-offs, referrals, recontacts, and repeat calls and will improve timeliness, accuracy, and overall service to our customers.

Field offices will continue to be SSA's backbone in providing services in the community. These offices ensure that we will continue to serve those customers who need to talk to a representative in person. Field office employees will have very broad rather than narrow expertise and will be qualified to deliver services in all programs. Since most retirement and survivors claims and routine postentitlement actions will be submitted and processed electronically, these employees are involved in the more complex disability, SSI, postentitlement, and appeals workloads. Their work will also include assisting the disabled in returning to work. Field office expanded roles will involve increased program integrity activities and providing other government services to enhance one-stop shopping. Field offices will ensure that we maintain and develop new community relationships and that we will have a robust public information program.

Streamlining and automation will allow SSA to transition program service centers, the Office of Central Operations and teleservice centers into an integrated full service network for customers who prefer to transact their business via the telephone and the Internet. Employees in these facilities will provide a full range of customer service just as employees in the field offices do. In addition to providing customer services and responding to e-mail inquiries, employees in these facilities will process certain exception and diary workloads, agency initiated workloads, and specialized workloads best suited to do in a few locations.

RESTRUCTURE EXISTING DIRECT SERVICE POSITIONS

SSA will improve customer service by restructuring its existing direct service positions in the Agency. Employees in the new direct service position(s) will be more highly skilled and higher graded and qualified to deliver a full range of services at the first point of contact whether face-to-face, over the telephone, or Internet. The redesign and automation of work processes, expert and decision support systems, and on-line up-to-date reference materials will enable employees in this new position(s) to provide a full range of services in all programs.

SSA will establish core job functions and competencies for the new restructured direct service position(s). As employees develop skills and competencies they will have the opportunity to additionally take on higher-graded responsibilities that will involve more complex decision-making and independent judgement. Career advancement opportunities will also be available in areas such as integrity, security, quality, process evaluation, information technology, communications, and management. SSA may take full advantage of personnel flexibilities available for accelerated advancement based on individual employee's skill attainment, application, and supervisory certification of skills and competencies, rather than time requirements.

HIRE IN ADVANCE OF LOSSES

The challenge of SSA's retirement wave offers a unique opportunity for the Agency to reassess hiring and staffing practices and to direct replacement hiring to those areas where staffs are most needed. SSA will strike a better balance between the budget-driven hiring practices of today and the customer-driven practices that are needed to enhance service to the American public.

To support effective staff planning, managers at all levels will have the automated administrative tools needed to project and evaluate the impact of replacement hiring.

To eliminate the delay between the departure of an employee and the recruitment and training of the replacement, SSA will consider changing the process in the following ways:

- Give managers multi-year authorized staffing allocations to provide the operational flexibility needed to effectively plan, manage workloads, and provide consistent levels of customer service. As staffing levels go below authorized ceilings, managers would have the necessary tools to evaluate hiring needs and the authority to hire replacements.
- Budget for and allocate full-time equivalents to permit replacement hiring in advance of losses (e.g., hiring six months before a projected loss occurs) allowing new employees to receive the necessary training and mentoring from the more experienced employees. This, along with appropriate succession planning, will allow for the all-important transfer of institutional knowledge to the next generation of SSA employees.

In addition, the Agency will do benchmarking with other agencies to determine how to most effectively remove barriers to career advancement and employee movement across SSA component lines. In today's world, internal FTE ceilings often create artificial barriers to the selection of employees to fill vacancies in other components.

EXTERNAL ALLIANCES

- SSA will **work with other agencies and organizations to provide public access** to services via the Internet. For example, secure access devices in supermarkets, libraries, and rural locations will allow the public to have access to a wide variety of services from any number of government entities. These services will have electronic customer support (e.g. on-line “virtual assistants”) to help customers conduct their business.
- SSA will identify strategic partnerships in the private sector to provide **technological alliances** for expanding SSA’s business processes. Leveraging the knowledge and experience of the private sector in areas including biometrics, security, wireless networking and knowledge management will increase SSA’s ability to rapidly implement these technologies with minimized risk.
- To support “hassle-free” **one-stop shopping**, SSA will work with Federal, State and local agencies to effectively integrate governmental services, share information, and support similar outcomes through collocation of offices, standardization of data and documentation requirements, improved interagency communications and integrated toll free telephone and Internet services (e.g., Access America).

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

- SSA will **tailor the Social Security Statement** to meet more specifically the information needs of our customers and to function as a trigger for the automated application process.
- SSA will create a **robust program of community relations** to enhance our ability to communicate with hard-to-reach segments of the population. SSA will build alliances with public, private, and non-profit organizations to optimize resources and maximize the value of the public's interactions with us. *(For further explanation see page A-18)*
- SSA will use **evolving technology** and enhancements to current technology to improve the speed and clarity with which we communicate. Use to its full capacity the Internet for information exchange and service delivery as public access to records increases and target other communications media that has proven effective for the intended audiences.
- SSA will create the organizational capability to **speak with one clear voice**, using employees and every opportunity to strengthen the public's understanding of the value of the Social Security programs, to themselves and society.
- SSA will develop and implement tools and **strategies to enhance information exchange** among employees, recognizing the critical role that good communications plays in ensuring quality work and quality work life.

ROBUST PROGRAM OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

SSA will ensure that its programs are well known within the community by using all modes of communication and outreach. SSA employees will work with community groups to ensure widespread access to SSA's Website. Working with community based advocacy groups will enable SSA to provide Internet access to all segments of the population. This strategy will improve operational flexibility and expand customer access to SSA services.

SSA will strengthen its efforts to seek out hard-to-reach segments of the populations. SSA will ensure, to the extent possible, that employees share (or are knowledgeable of) the culture and background of the group(s) they are trying to serve. This cultural focus supports the Agency's efforts to more effectively serve traditionally hard-to-reach segments of the population. A key to developing more effective community networks will be our ability to build and maintain trust, and a prerequisite for that trust is cultural knowledge and understanding.

SSA will encourage and support partnerships with non-profit public interest and advocacy groups to help their customers in filing for Social Security benefits over the Internet. Training will be provided to partnering organizations so that the basic tenets of the program are understood and proper development of a claim is done at first point of contact. Such partnerships will be an asset to the customer, partnering organizations, and SSA in determining eligibility in a more timely manner.

SSA will encourage the use of on-line services by public interest and advocacy groups on behalf of those they represent. On-line services will allow them the flexibility of filing from wherever they are and at whatever time they choose. The ability to receive on-line services will be an asset to these organizations who often times do not know the exact whereabouts of their clients from one day to the next and need to be able to respond quickly when a client comes to them for help. SSA on-line services will provide them with that quick response.

INTERNAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

- **SSA will work in full partnership with its labor unions, management associations, and advisory committees.** This partnership will develop and grow into a vital process in which mutual partners come together in a collaborative environment to identify problems as they arise and craft solutions together before decisions are made removing barriers to improve customer service.

SSA WILL WORK IN FULL PARTNERSHIP WITH ITS LABOR UNIONS, MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

SSA will include all partners in collaborative efforts, crossing component lines, by sharing information, jointly developing options and solutions, and focusing on common interests and shared responsibilities. Partners will have mutual respect for each other's individual responsibilities and roles.

Partnership with labor unions as the exclusive legal representatives of SSA's employees will continue to improve and expand. In an interest based, consensual process union and management will work together to share information on all proposed changes to identify, analyze, and solve problems before decisions are made. When issues cannot be resolved, clear and consistent alternate dispute resolution options will be available making it possible for union and management to continue to work in partnership to reach an agreement.

Leadership from SSA's management ranks, from AFGE, the Agency's largest labor organization, and from its other unions and employee associations working together in partnership is a crucial factor in the human resource and technology innovations that will take place over the next ten years.

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

- SSA will employ a wide variety of methods to recruit new employees. *(For further explanation see pages A-21 and A-22)*
- SSA will offer **expanded benefits and increased growth opportunities** to retain employees. *(For further explanation see page A-23)*
- SSA will be a Learning Organization offering **timely, responsive training and mentoring** to employees through a variety of methods. SSA will offer employee opportunities for growth, development, and advancement through training and developmental assignments. *(For further explanation see pages A-24 and A-25)*
- SSA will expand **flexiplace options and flexible work schedules** for employees. SSA will balance flexible work arrangements with customers' needs and workload demands. *(For further explanation see page A-26)*
- SSA's facilities will be **modern, accessible, safe, and secure**. Facilities will be furnished to allow for flexible working arrangements, e.g. working in teams, onsite meetings and conferences, individual and shared workstations, etc. Security standards will be expanded and monitored to include non-SSA contact locations where employees will be working (e.g., telecommuting centers, community centers, service agencies, etc.).
- SSA will have a **results-oriented, competency-based, highly skilled and better paid workforce**. *(For further explanation see page A-27)*

A WIDE VARIETY OF METHODS TO RECRUIT NEW EMPLOYEES

SSA faces a major challenge in replacing losses due to the “retirement wave.” For the Agency to be positioned to meet this challenge there must be a variety of new methods employed to recruit employees.

Labor experts indicate that the most skilled, innovative and industrious workers will have the most options in a competitive job market. SSA’s need to replace large numbers of employees requires a rethinking of the Agency’s recruitment strategies. The Agency will intensify its recruitment efforts to include not only college, junior college, technical school, and high school graduates, but also experienced workers looking for new challenges and retirees (including former SSA employees). There will be a shift away from hiring based on narrow job standards to hiring based on broad competencies enabling the Agency to select employees who can grow and adapt as work requirements shift and jobs are redesigned.

The Agency will fully utilize available recruitment and retention incentives, e.g., recruitment bonuses, relocation bonuses, travel and transportation to first duty station, above-minimum salary level appointments, salary advances, retention allowances and educational benefits. SSA will work closely with Office of Personnel Management to move aggressively toward implementing additional incentives, such as hiring Federal retirees part-time without reduction in annuity or salary.

SSA will establish hiring competencies and an assessment interview process for applicants applying for Agency positions. SSA may use videoconferencing to conduct job interviews as appropriate. Employees conducting assessment interviews will be trained in the use of effective interviewing assessment tools. An SSA recruitment bank will contain information about applicants who complete the job screening process. Managers across the country will have access to an easy-to-use, well maintained central database of qualified and screened job applicants.

In addition to the recruitment bank, SSA will have a recruitment cadre to focus recruitment efforts on maintaining a diverse workforce. Professionally trained cadre members will have the authority to make job offers and to use an array of incentives.

The key to an effective recruitment program is “marketing.” SSA will use innovative marketing approaches. SSA will have an Internet presence that highlights why SSA is a great place to work. In addition to SSA’s own Website, agency jobs will be advertised on major job market sites on the Internet.

SSA will provide current and former employees with information and facts about why SSA should be considered an “employer of choice” that can be shared with family and friends (network of recruiters).

SSA will aggressively market the Intern, Co-op, and STEP programs in high schools, technical schools, business schools, colleges, and graduate schools. Educational benefits in return for signing a service agreement will be an incentive used to attract individuals attending these institutions.

**EXPANDED BENEFITS AND INCREASED GROWTH
OPPORTUNITIES TO RETAIN EMPLOYEES**

To retain and attract employees, SSA will continue to pursue increasing benefits and incentives in order to compete with the private sector. The Agency will aggressively encourage OPM and Congress to expand family friendly policies and increase the benefits available to Federal employees.

To retain experienced employees, attract new employees, and provide for appropriate succession planning, SSA will offer expanded growth and developmental opportunities. SSA will create a supportive work environment that gives employees an opportunity to contribute, learn, develop, and grow.

Job enrichment opportunities will be made available for employees on at least a triennial basis, allowing them to participate in job sharing, rotational assignments, career development programs, details, and working on cross component teams. Developmental assignments will not only focus on individual growth but will also enhance the knowledge base and efficiency of the organization.

Employee career advancement will not be constrained by FTE ceilings and limiting areas of consideration. All qualified agency employees will be able to apply and be considered for any posted position. The new electronic internal job application and screening process will facilitate the identification of the best-qualified applicants to be referred to the selecting official.

TIMELY, RESPONSIVE TRAINING AND MENTORING

The retirement wave, restructuring of jobs, and expanded use of the Intranet and Internet create unique opportunities for SSA to reassess the strategies and approaches to delivering training. SSA will need to develop new models and approaches to providing entry-level training for new hires, retooling the current workforce, and offering opportunities for career-long learning.

By 2010, programmatic and administrative training will be developed in training modules and delivered electronically at the desktop. SSA will develop a comprehensive national training curricula that will include program policies and procedures, workload management and processing, administrative practices, leadership development, technology and how to use it, as well as skills in analysis, writing, diversity, cultural sensitivity, etc. These training modules will be user friendly, interactive and include self-assessment tools to evaluate the knowledge and skills acquired. Training modules will be made available via the Intranet from the on-line SSA training library.

As an approach to increasing access and use of internal knowledge, subject matter experts across the agency, using technology, will work together to maintain current and accurate training modules. To further ensure the accuracy of the information in these modules, lessons will be integrated with on-line, up-to-date reference materials.

The lessons in these training modules will be progressive and related to the knowledge level being developed, e.g. from basic to expert levels of knowledge. Employees will be able to receive entry level, refresher, and just-in-time training at their desktop supplemented by other training methods as appropriate, e.g., one-on-one, classroom, etc.

SSA will develop a comprehensive retraining and retooling program for the current workforce. Continual learning and development will add value to the workforce that is already on board and promote their potential by making them more knowledgeable, more adaptable, and better able to meet changing workload demands. These training programs will focus on adding new skills and competencies to ensure job security.

Training necessary to either teach new skills or introduce new policies and procedures will be delivered just-in-time utilizing training modules with knowledge-assessment tools. These modules will provide the flexibility for scheduling to meet individual training needs and workload demands. Training modules will be supplemented by other traditional training methods as appropriate.

All new Agency employees will receive orientation training, via desktop video, that will include a welcome message from the Commissioner and messages from the executive leadership on Agency values, missions, and goals. Orientation will also include a description of organizational roles, responsibilities and alignments; a description of

growth and learning opportunities available; as well as the history and philosophy of the Agency.

Training will begin immediately after entering on duty (no longer waiting for regional, national, or vendor training classes to start) and will be focused on training modules that address both the employee and office needs. All new employees will have a training plan and be assigned a mentor. Actual work/tasks will be assigned progressively, following successful completion of lessons in a particular module. The mentor or supervisor will review and certify that the employee has demonstrated the ability to perform the work/task before moving on to another training module.

Managers will support employees in developing individual growth and learning plans. Employees will have the benefit of an individual learning account that will allow them to pursue training in areas most important to their job performance, individual success, and well being. SSA will develop and communicate well-defined competencies and qualifications for all Agency positions. Employees will be able to determine what additional training and/or experiences they need to qualify for targeted positions and build these into their plans.

FLEXIPLACE OPTIONS AND FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

To meet the increasing needs of the diverse population we serve and the changing needs of the future workforce we want to retain and attract, SSA will create a more flexible work environment. With advanced technology, we have the opportunity to provide service beyond the normal business hours in our offices and at locations outside the office setting.

SSA will continually evaluate and assess the customers' need for direct employee support beyond normal business hours at a national and local level. SSA will show a level of commitment to customer service by expanding the hours of employee contact to include some evening and weekend hours. Flexible work schedules will help employees strike a balance between work and family/personal needs.

Expanded flexiplace options will involve employees working in telecommuting centers, at home, in libraries, senior citizen centers, etc. SSA will select work sites outside of the office that are safe and accessible to our employees and customers. Employees will use secure wireless, portable equipment to conduct business outside of the office setting.

Providing additional hours for customer contact and creating a more flexible work environment will be a key factor in SSA improving service, retaining experienced employees, and attracting new employees. Technology will be a critical enabler to manage both the distributed work and the level of service provided to customers in this new flexible work environment.

**RESULTS-ORIENTED, COMPETENCY-BASED, HIGHLY SKILLED
AND BETTER PAID WORKFORCE**

Managers and employees will view work differently in the future, shifting the focus away from procedure-driven processes to focus on results and customer service. Employees will have very broad rather than narrow expertise and exercise judgement in performing their jobs.

In 2010, the SSA workforce is more highly skilled and higher graded than it was ten years earlier. SSA may take full advantage of personnel flexibilities available for accelerated advancement based on individual employee's skill attainment, application and supervisory certification of skills and competencies, rather than time requirements. As employees develop multiple skills and competencies they take on job responsibilities that entail more complex decision-making and judgement.

Working with OPM, SSA will identify competencies and levels of performance for all positions. Continual learning and development will be the keys to enhancing employee skills and competencies, which will be critical to both the Agency's performance and individual employee success.

SSA will develop an effective performance management system that will focus on setting well-defined objectives and communicating what needs to be done to reach those objectives:

- Performance objectives will clarify expectations. Employees will know what is expected from them.
- Performance objectives will be challenging but attainable and provide employees a sense of purpose.
- Setting and achieving individual performance objectives will create self-confidence in employees, pride in their achievement, and a willingness to accept future challenges.

SSA will link awards to employee performance, evaluating the level of expertise, quality, scope, and breadth of work. Monetary and non-monetary awards will also be used to recognize significant contributions made by employees. Managers will have award allocations at the beginning of the year, so that awards will be distributed in a timely manner throughout the fiscal year.

LEADERSHIP

- **SSA will develop a training strategy to prepare executives and managers to lead a more highly skilled, diverse, analytical, and physically dispersed workforce, and to manage reinvented and automated business processes in an electronic environment. (For further explanation see page A-29)**
- **SSA will expand its leadership development programs to continually develop and foster candidates for future leadership responsibilities.**
- **SSA will develop and implement a strategy to improve and institutionalize knowledge management (KM). (For further explanation see page A-30)**
- **SSA will be a leader in policy development and research in the following areas: (For further explanation see page A-31)**
 - Changes in medical care and medical technology to assess the programmatic affect and impact on service delivery.
 - Effects of changing demographic and socioeconomic conditions on SSA services and programs. This will include research on changing family units, patterns of work, and retirement decision making to assess potential programmatic and administrative impacts.
 - SSA's leadership will pursue legislative and regulatory remedies for program simplification in all programs. This includes the elimination of the paper reconsideration process.

**PREPARE EXECUTIVES AND MANAGERS TO LEAD A MORE
HIGHLY SKILLED, DIVERSE, ANALYTICAL, AND PHYSICALLY
DISPERSED WORKFORCE**

SSA's executives and managers face new and continued challenges as we advance toward 2010. The highly diverse, geographically dispersed and technologically advanced nature of customers and employees requires a different leadership and management skill set. In particular, SSA executives and managers will encourage personal growth and development, support open and honest communication, and develop integrated and strategic thinking skills.

Driven by greater flexibility in employee work schedules and locations, management staffs will develop a stronger trust relationship with their employees. Management's focus will be more on accomplishing the core mission in an effective and efficient manner and less on detailed monitoring of employee work. SSA will technologically evolve more in the next 10 years than it has during any other period in its history. SSA's executives and managers will develop new skills in the application of technology to better achieve SSA's core mission and goals. The manager of the future will participate in ongoing rotational assignments and career-long development opportunities across components. Managers will be free from the paper-based administrative burdens of the past and can better focus on SSA's core business processes. Timely and accurate management information, as well as the modernized tools to access and analyze that information, will be available for all managers to assess the quality of service provided to the public.

The leaders and managers in 2010 will focus on customers' individual needs and preferences and how the organization can meet them today and tomorrow. Other primary focuses will be on developing, obtaining and retaining a highly skilled workforce, developing strong alliances with other Federal, State and local governments and partnering with the private sector in areas that would benefit SSA. In a renewed spirit of intergovernmental cooperation, the lines between government agencies at all levels are blurred as agencies work together to present one face to the public.

The entrepreneurial philosophy demonstrated by SSA's leaders and managers will result in enhanced collaborative relationships among management, employees, labor organizations, advocacy groups and the customers. The SSA of the future will be positioned and aligned to provide world class customer service.

IMPROVE AND INSTITUTIONALIZE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

“Knowledge is power.” Most people are familiar with this saying; however, not so many are familiar with the term knowledge management (KM). The concept of knowledge management and the implementation of KM strategies and projects have become increasingly popular and widespread in the private and public sectors. An effective knowledge management strategy will help SSA counteract the potential loss of institutional knowledge that will result from SSA’s own employee retirement wave.

SSA’s KM strategy will successfully integrate information technology and the capture of institutional knowledge from the organization’s workforce. SSA’s strategy will be multi-faceted and will include, but will not be limited to:

- Development of improved mechanisms to capture employees’ undocumented knowledge. Expansion of “best practices” sharing initiatives should be institutionalized at all organizational levels and used on a cross-component and cross-regional basis,
- Development of comprehensive user-friendly “knowledge portals.” SSA’s Policynet, PRIDE (Project Resource Guide), and Intranet provide a good foundation for these comprehensive portals. These portals will include legal, procedural, policy, and administrative references and links. These portals will be user-friendly, save time, and leverage expertise (i.e. best practices, technology development, policy clarification, etc.),
- Creation of an “organizational culture” that encourages knowledge sharing through mentoring, collaboration, cross-component project teams, and benchmarking (both private and public sector),
- Continued development and improvement of expert and decision support systems to deliver SSA’s institutional knowledge when and where it is needed (*See A-5*),
- The capture and codification of customer experience through customer stories and interviews and their incorporation into employee training and Agency performance assessment, and
- Continued involvement in interagency and private sector knowledge management organizations (e.g., Federal Knowledge Management Council).

As stated earlier, knowledge is power. Some employees and organizational components may fear that sharing knowledge with their colleagues and counterparts may diminish their usefulness or effectiveness. A successful KM strategy is dependent upon the Agency’s leadership’s ability to counteract that fear and encourage the sharing of knowledge among all of its organizational components and employees.

SSA’s employee retirement wave will strain the Agency; however, the failure to capture institutional knowledge will seriously compromise the Agency’s ability to reach its goals, and ultimately, achieve its mission.

SSA WILL BE A LEADER IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

Changes in Medical Care and Technology

Medical and technological advances that permit disabled individuals to remain in or rejoin the workforce are altering the concept of disability. Changes such as these require the Agency to re-examine the policies that guide our programs.

New medicines and therapies being generated by mapping of the human genome and other advances in knowledge are more effective in preventing or controlling illness, lessening the length of time patients are unable to work. Therefore, conditions that were disabling in the past may now be short-term or episodic in nature. Technology in many fields, such as industry, communication, and medicine is providing increased opportunities for the disabled to work.

SSA will need to be a leader in research that examines the effect of changes in medical, technological, job market and other trends, and will also need to encourage research outside the Agency in these areas. The Agency is already conducting groundbreaking research through an extensive survey of the disabled population. The Agency is also encouraging external research through a Disability Research Institute and is developing a research design that will help the Agency monitor and evaluate the medical listings used to determine eligibility for benefits.

Effects of changing demographic and socioeconomic conditions

SSA will continue to research and analyze the programmatic and administrative impact of demographic and socioeconomic conditions and trends that may weaken the ability of SSA's programs to provide an adequate base of economic security. The characteristics of the average worker and family covered by Social Security programs is influenced by trends in earnings patterns among men and women, marriage and divorce, child-bearing, life-expectancy, and other demographic and socioeconomic trends. This requires the Agency to examine the extent to which the programs may need to evolve to meet the needs of future workers and their families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. The Agency needs to ensure that policy makers and the public have the information needed to assess the implications of these trends and proposals to strengthen the Social Security programs.

Legislative and regulatory remedies for program simplification

The Agency will continue seeking options for program simplification and will develop specific proposals for policy change based on research and analysis including studying

the impact of the elimination the paper reconsideration step in all processes. Additionally, as the Agency assesses any proposal for policy change, it needs to consider the impact on program complexity.

In developing proposals for program simplification, the Agency will strive to balance the need for clear, comprehensible programs with the need to maintain program integrity and ensure program rules treat beneficiaries equitably and provide adequate benefits.

APPENDIX B-2010: THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

What is an “environmental scan” and why is it needed?

In the context of SSA’s development of its *2010 Vision*, the environmental scan is an attempt to identify the key trends and changes that will affect the way that SSA does business in 2010 and beyond.

The scan helps us understand the world in which SSA may exist in ten years and how we may have to adapt to be successful in this new world.

Any attempt to specify what the future will bring is fraught with uncertainty. No one knows for sure what will happen tomorrow, much less in ten years. The scan pulls together a number of key trends and predictions from authoritative sources to give us a sense of the range of possible futures we may see.

How was the scan done?

The scan is the result of an intensive, but time-limited, review of current literature, search of the Internet, and a series of discussions with SSA experts. Since the amount of speculation about the future is extensive, especially at the turn of the century, the scan does not cover all of the available sources. However, it will be an ongoing part of our planning process with new information factored in, as it becomes available.

How is the scan organized?

As we got into our research, the information primarily fell into eight categories:

<i>Demographics:</i>	including trends in population composition and literacy
<i>SSA Workloads:</i>	including projections of the amount of traditional work SSA will receive
<i>SSA Employment:</i>	including projections of attrition in the SSA employee population

<i>Infrastructure/Technology:</i>	including projections on where computers and telecommunications are headed
<i>Human Resources:</i>	including information about the workforce and work environment in the U.S.
<i>Healthcare:</i>	including trends in medicine, healthcare, and medical records
<i>Legislation:</i>	including the impacts of recently passed or pending laws
<i>Socioeconomic:</i>	including income projections and public attitudes

THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Demographic Trends

- Shifts in the age distributions will be fairly stable between 1995 and 2010; however, after 2010 there will be a rapid increase in the percent of elderly as the share of the adult population declines in all regions. The elderly percentage will increase most rapidly in the South and Midwest.¹
- The population will become more culturally and ethnically diverse. By 2010, the population will be 67.3 percent white non-Hispanic, 14.6 percent Hispanic, 12.5 percent African-American, 4.8 percent Asian and Pacific Islander and 0.8 percent American Indian.²
- The U.S. workforce will become more diverse by 2008. White, non-Hispanic persons will make up a decreasing share of the labor force, from 73.9 to 70.7 percent. Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and Asians and other racial groups are projected to comprise an increasing share of the labor force by 2008 – 10.4 to 12.7 percent, and 4.6 to 5.7 percent, respectively.³

¹ Bureau of the Census, On-line posting, July 1995 "Population Profile of the United States: 1995," <http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/p23-189.pdf>. (June 27, 2000).

² Bureau of the Census, On-line posting, January 13, 2000 "Projections of the Resident Population by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Nativity: Middle Series, 2006 to 2010," <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/nation/summary/np-t5-c.pdf>. (June 27, 2000).

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, On-line posting, June 22, 2000 "Tomorrow's Jobs," <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/oco2003.htm>. (June 28, 2000)

- The Asian population is the fastest-growing group in all regions, with the greatest gains in the West.⁴
- The Hispanic-origin population is projected to increase rapidly, accounting for 44 percent of the growth in the nation. The Hispanic-origin population is the second fastest-growing population, after Asians, in every region.⁵
- In the period 1998- 2008, more women than men will be entering the workforce.⁶
- With the economy apparently running out of skilled workers, since nearly all were already employed earlier in the business cycle, employers must turn to less-qualified workers to fill new jobs.⁷
- Employers will engage in a number of strategies in response to a shortage of workers. Among the most common are reducing requirements for new hires, improving working conditions, and participating in school-to-work partnerships.⁸
- We have entered an era where participation in modern society and in the labor market will be linked to the capacity to accumulate knowledge and to develop and maintain a broad range of skills. Many adults are already in a position to excel in the knowledge society. But others will find it difficult to adapt to the conditions and will face increased risks of reduced employment opportunities, unemployment, redundancy, exclusion, and reduction in their overall quality of life.⁹

SSA Workload Trends

- The number of retirement and survivors insurance (RSI) beneficiaries will grow from 37,918,000 in 1998 to 44,332,000 in 2010, a 16.9 percent increase.¹⁰
- While the number of SSI blind/disabled recipients will increase from 5,234,000 to 5,851,000, or 11.8 percent, from 1998 to 2010, the number of SSI aged recipients will decrease by 16.7 percent, down from 1,332,000 to 1,110,000.¹¹

⁴ Bureau of the Census "Population Profile of the United States: 1995."

⁵ Bureau of the Census "Population Profile of the United States: 1995."

⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics, On-line posting, 1998 "Table 6. Civilian Labor Force 16 and Older, 1988 and 1998, and Projected 2008, and Entrants and Leavers, Actual 1988-1998 and projected, 1998-2008," <http://stats.bls.gov/empit986.htm>. (June 27, 2000).

⁷ Robert I. Lerman & Stephanie R. Schmidt. "An Overview of Economic, Social, and Demographic Trends Affecting the U.S. Labor Market," Urban Institute, On-line posting, August 1999. http://www.urbaninstitute.org/employment/dol_fr/dol_finalreport.pdf. (June 27, 2000) 37.

⁸ Lerman 46.

⁹ International Life Skills Survey, On-line posting, June 27, 2000. <http://nces.ed.gov/ilss>. (June 27, 2000).

¹⁰ Social Security Administration (SSA), Office of the Actuary (OACT).

¹¹ SSA, OACT.

- The number of RSI and SSI aged claims will grow from a 1998 figure of 3,155,710 to 3,856,800 in 2010. Concurrent disability claims will increase from 2,966,147 to 3,941,100 in the same period, a 32.9 percent increase.¹²
- The number of Social Security disability insurance beneficiaries will grow from 4,691,000 in 1998 to 7,673,000 in 2010, a 63.6 percent increase. Disability auxiliary beneficiary numbers will grow by 18 percent. However, the recent Return to Work legislation could affect these numbers.¹³
- SSA received 71.8 million calls to its toll free number service (FY99 data). Two-thirds of those calls (47.6 million) were directed to live agents, and one-third (22.9 million) to the automated attendant service. The trend in toll free number call volume reflects an increase of from one-to-two percent each year through the year 2005. The Agency estimates toll free number call volume to reach 76 million by FY 2005.¹⁴

Trends in SSA Employment

- SSA currently employs 1,536 employees with severe disabilities: 722 blind or low vision, 560 mobility impaired, and 204 deaf.¹⁵
- SSA's retiree losses begin to ramp up in 2001 and will peak between the years 2007 and 2009.¹⁶
- SSA estimates about 28,450 employees will retire from 1999 through 2010 and 48,650 through 2020. The claims representative position will experience the most retiree losses between 2006 and 2010. Supervisors, social insurance specialists, and service representatives will experience increasingly large retirement losses in comparison to other major occupations over the period.¹⁷
- SSA estimates the Office of Systems will lose about 1340 people from 1999 through 2010. Peak retirement periods in the Office of Systems will be between 2005 and 2008. The computer specialist and programmer positions are predicted to lose the most staff to retirement.¹⁸

¹² SSA, Office of Budget (OB).

¹³ SSA, OACT.

¹⁴ SSA, Office of Operations.

¹⁵ SSA, Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity (OCREO).

¹⁶ SSA, Office of Workforce Analysis (OWA), "Predicting Retirement Attrition for a Maturing Workforce," October 1998.

¹⁷ SSA, OWA.

¹⁸ SSA, OWA.

- Total attrition from all causes from 1999 through 2010 is estimated to be over 38,000 employees.¹⁹

Trends in Infrastructure and Technology

- During the period from 2000 through 2007, the following devices will become available:

“**Instant-on**” home devices, by mid-2004, will provide interactivity activity such as on-demand access to local weather and traffic to family calendars and to-do lists. This will be accomplished through devices without the start-up delay and bulk of a PC.

Multi-function mobile devices will be commonplace by 2005. Such a device will be used as a high-quality mobile telephone. In today’s market place, these devices (like the one made by Nokia) open up to reveal a screen that runs the length of the telephone. Functions in the latest version include data transmission for fax, e-mail, Internet access, and image capture from a separate digital camera.

Interactive TV services will be launched around 2002. Microsoft’s Web TV represents the beginning of non-PC-based interactivity in the home.

A wearable computer—a light, compact belt-mounted PC with speech input and a head-mounted display over one eye (so that the user’s vision is not obscured)—will emerge from the niche market by 2007. Such a device provides a self-contained mobile system complete with input/output (I/O), processing, storage, and power supply.

By 2004 head-mounted displays (HMD) will begin to offer viable alternatives to mobile handheld or laptop displays. Their main appeal will be in industrial hands-busy applications and in space-constrained consumer environments such as on a plane, where HMDs could give users the illusion of viewing a large screen several feet away.²⁰

- By 2010 at least 75 percent of all Americans will own a Personal Digit Appliance (PDA) which will be continuously connected to the Internet.²¹
- The successor to the Internet will be the Very-High-Performance Backbone Network Service (V-BNS) now being tested in government and university research centers. It will have ten times the capacity of the current Internet’s maximum capacity. It will integrate streams of data from multiple sites simultaneously and will allow for real-

¹⁹ SSA, OWA.

²⁰ J. Fenn, A. Apfel, J. Pultz, R. Schulte, T. Austin, L. Latham. “Technology Trends: 1998-2008,” Gartner Group Interactive, On-line posting, March 10, 1999 <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 5-8.

²¹ David Pearce Snyder of the Snyder Family Enterprise

time, three-dimensional audio and video transmission. It will be available for general public access shortly after 2000.²²

- There will be more special-purpose devices that have the ability to share information through common protocols²³
- In the future, each appliance will be able to access multiple networks for different services.²⁴
- By 2003, bandwidth on a single optical fiber will reach 20 terabits per second (tps), compared to a capacity of one tps in 2000.²⁵
- Converged network services (CNS) will enable a single network service provider to meet an enterprise's full voice, data, and video local and long-distance needs. By 2003, all major network service providers will offer CNS based on Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) and Internet Protocol (IP) technologies. IP will be the dominant end-user protocol.²⁶
- It is possible to increase the transmission rates commonly available for an optical fiber today from 2.5 gigabits per second to 20, 40, or 80 gigabits per second.²⁷
- The next five years will be dominated by intense intra-industry competition to provide several orders of magnitude more bandwidth to residential consumers.²⁸
- The Internet will continue its meteoric rise in popularity.²⁹
- New applications of Web technology will appear continually³⁰
- By 2006, wireless wide area network (WAN) data communications technology will be broadly available and cost-effective, with only a slight price premium over wireline WANs, in a majority of the U.S. and European markets.³¹
- Speech dialogues have graduated from being a high-end, leading-edge technique to become a standard technique in telephony automation. Following the success of speech dialogues in telephony, dialogue capabilities will be added to desktop and other interactive systems. Natural-language dialogues will be embedded in operating systems beginning around 2005.³²

²² David Pearce Snyder and Gregg Edwards, "The Light @ the End of the 20th Century," 1999

²³ Dr. David C. Nagel, President, AT&T Labs. PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999". 37.

²⁴ Dr. Arno A. Penzias, former Chief Scientist, Lucent Technologies, Bell Labs Innovations. PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999." 39.

²⁵ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 7.

²⁶ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 7.

²⁷ Dr. Hagen Hultzsch, Deutsche Telekom. PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999." 30.

²⁸ PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999". 78.

²⁹ PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999." 186.

³⁰ PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999." 187.

³¹ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 7.

³² Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 10.

- Speech synthesis, also referred to as text-to-speech, will play an increasingly important role as speech dialogues evolve. Speech synthesis enables the system to produce audio output of unlimited vocabulary (unlike prerecorded speech), which is essential in applications such as telephone access to e-mail or dynamic database information. The growing importance of speech synthesis will drive quality improvements by 2001 to 2002.³³
- Translating telephone technology, which combines bi-directional continuous speech recognition, text-to-text language translation, and text-to-speech synthesis, will be commonly used for many language pairs in 2007.³⁴
- Deaf persons will commonly use portable speech-to-text listening machines at meetings or on the telephone.³⁵
- Print-to-speech reading machines for people with visual impairments or dyslexia will be the size of palm-sized cameras. You just snap a picture of the text you want to read and it reads it to you, including signs on a wall.³⁶
- Computer-controlled power orthotic devices, or walking machines, will enable paraplegic persons to walk and climb stairs.³⁷
- Biometric techniques are becoming more cost-effective and user-friendly, and will be integrated within two-factor authentication packages³⁸
- Computers will routinely include video cameras, and will be able to reliably identify their owners from their faces³⁹
- Handwriting recognition will continue to evolve more slowly than speech recognition, but will reenter the marketplace in conjunction with the growth in non-PC devices discussed above. Handwriting recognition for mobile computing is expected to enter the mainstream in early 2005.⁴⁰
- Anthropomorphic or "believable" agents provide an on-screen personality that drives a dialogue with the user. The personality may be a simple graphic or cartoon, or may attempt to render realistic facial contour, facial expressions and lip synchronization. Limited mainly to experimentation and entertainment today, anthropomorphic agents will emerge as an extension to the agent metaphor by 2007 for some applications and classes of users, for example, training and help functions. These agents will be used in niche applications before 2008.⁴¹

³³ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 11.

³⁴ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 18.

³⁵ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 18.

³⁶ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 19.

³⁷ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 19.

³⁸ PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999," 637.

³⁹ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 19.

⁴⁰ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 9-10.

⁴¹ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 11.

- Agent intermediaries. The agent intelligence and dialogue capabilities that support generic user interface functionality will be applied to supporting electronic workplace functionality (e.g., information retrieval, calendaring and messaging).⁴²
- Intelligent assistance, which combines continuous speech recognition, natural language understanding, problem solving and animated personalities, will routinely assist with finding information, answering questions and conducting transactions.⁴³
- Skill mining lets a system automatically identify users' skills and expertise based on its observation of the documents they produce (e.g., reports, e-mail or discussion database postings). This information is used to augment the system's information retrieval and knowledge management capabilities by causing it to fulfill a user's request for information with pointers to knowledgeable colleagues in addition to document references. This functionality is currently available.⁴⁴
- Embedded process knowledge. A target of many enterprises' knowledge management activities is to provide knowledge workers with task-specific workstation environments that provide all the information they need in a transparent manner (similar to the single point of access to multiple databases and rule-driven screens used in many call centers). Based on the growing availability of products that combine information retrieval with collaboration, embedded process knowledge for specific tasks will be integrated with just-in-time access to information and colleagues, and will be available before 2002.⁴⁵
- Emerging organizational trends through 2008 will include zero-latency enterprise. A zero-latency-enterprise strategy implies that all parts of the enterprise can respond to events as soon as they become known to any one part of the enterprise. A zero-latency-enterprise strategy can achieve a breakthrough similar to that of IBM's CICS (Customer Information Control System) by applying the notion of immediate communication among multiple, independent distributed systems.⁴⁶
- Untethered office. Once the price and reliability differential for wireless networking diminishes between 2005 and 2006, workers will enjoy unprecedented freedom to enter and retrieve information away from the confines of the traditional desk. The full implications of the ability to capture and access words, audio and potentially even video information at any time from any location have yet to be identified, but there is no doubt that the long-term impact on work patterns will be profound.⁴⁷
- The availability of low-cost, universally accessible wireless capability will lead to an era of spontaneous computing that will provide any-time, anyplace access to information and messaging through highly portable or wearable systems. This capability will be enhanced by the ability to access information sources through

⁴² Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 12.

⁴³ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 19.

⁴⁴ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 12.

⁴⁵ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 12.

⁴⁶ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 13.

⁴⁷ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/ospi/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 14.

speech dialogues, which will blur the distinction between automated telephony and computer-based information services.⁴⁸

- The Web generation enters the workforce. By 2005, a generation raised on the Web will enter the workforce, further speeding the transition of consumer Web capabilities into the office environment.⁴⁹
- Several countries (particularly in the Asia-Pacific region) will introduce national multipurpose smart cards for governmental, medical, and financial functions.⁵⁰
- At least half of all transactions will be conducted on-line.⁵¹
- Seven-eighths of the impact of new technology arrives two-thirds of the way through the period of adoption... and the two-thirds mark of this transition lies immediately before us. Now all the things that were promised to us for years and years regarding information technology are finally going to happen, like workless factories, paperless offices, and a cashless society. It took some time, but now technology is widespread, powerful and cheap.⁵²

Human Resource Trends

- In the future, savvy employers, recognizing the importance of growth, will use training and other growth opportunities as a recruiting tool, for leverage, and to differentiate themselves from companies less sensitive to work demands. Increasingly, workers will stay with these employers longer because of ongoing learning opportunities and educational benefits.⁵³
- The labor force age 45-64 will grow faster than the labor force of any other age group as the baby-boom generation (born 1946-1964) continues to age. The labor force 25-34 years of age is projected to decline by 2.7 million, reflecting the decrease in births in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁵⁴
- The labor force participation rates of women in nearly all age groups is projected to increase. The women's share of the labor force will increase from 46 percent in 1998 to 48 percent in 2008, while the men's labor force participation rates for 5-year age groups are projected to remain relatively constant.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 17.

⁴⁹ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 14.

⁵⁰ PriceWaterhouseCoopers' "Technology Forecast: 1999." 398.

⁵¹ Fenn <http://co.ba.ssa.gov/osp/gartner/techtrends>. (June 29, 2000) 19.

⁵² David Pearce Snyder, cited in "Roller Coaster 2000," by Leslie Ratz, *Mobility*, August 1997.

⁵³ The Herman Group, Inc., "Workers Want Growth," 6/22/99

⁵⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Releases New 1998-2008 Employment Projections 11/30/99

<http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.nws.htm>

⁵⁵ BLS, Employment Projections 11/30/99 <http://stats.bls.gov/new.release/ecopro.nws.htm>.

- Eighty percent of baby boomers believe they will continue to work during their early retirement years. Fifty-two percent with household income of \$70,000 and above plan to work for fun and self-fulfillment. Thirty-five percent with household income less than \$30,000 plan to work for the income it will provide.⁵⁶
- More jobs in the future will require verbal and mathematical skills, as well as organizational and interpersonal skills.⁵⁷
- The face of the future workforce will continue to change, reflecting the changing features of the U.S. population⁵⁸
- The educational attainment of the American workforce is rising in time to meet the serious demands of the next century's highly technical, highly changeable job market.⁵⁹
- Labor market experts believe that nontraditional workers—people who work in alternative arrangements such as on call workers, independent contractors, temporary help or leasing agency workers, as well as contingent workers—will be a larger share of the future workforce.⁶⁰
- According to one national study, 65 percent of employers believed that, in the future, firms would increase their use of flexible staffing arrangements.⁶¹
- To facilitate flexible, efficient production operations—and to accommodate employees' non-work obligations—roughly one quarter of all U.S. jobs will be part-time, temporary or intermittent positions, most of which will offer pay and benefits commensurate with equivalent fulltime employees.⁶²
- Employer-provided pension plans may, in the future, continue the trend towards defined contribution plans or others with similar features. Other future changes in public or private pension policies may stem from workers returning to the workplace after retiring from their career jobs.⁶³
- Changes in family structure, lifestyle choices, and the nature of work itself are changing workers' needs and preferences in health benefits. Workers seek benefits

⁵⁶ 1998 Survey conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide for AARP

⁵⁷ DOL Report-"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁵⁸ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁵⁹ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁶⁰ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁶¹ Department of Labor (DOL) Report on the American Workforce, Chapter 2 – The Many Facets of Skills, 9/99.

⁶² Roller Coaster 2000, "Forces Reshaping Daily Life and Work in America: 1999-2010," David Pearce Snyder and Gregg , 1999.

⁶³ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

that fit a diversity of nontraditional work models, including flexible work schedules and locations, second and third careers, and partial retirement.⁶⁴

- Technological changes coupled with rising educational attainment offer opportunities and provide the potential for increased competitive employment for people with disabilities.⁶⁵
- The workforce of the future will need to adapt to the rapid pace of technological change by continuing to upgrade their skills. Lifelong learning cannot be overestimated.⁶⁶
- The workplace of the future will see a substantial increase in the number of workers who work from their homes or some location other than the office, though the overall proportion of workers who do so will remain small in the near future.⁶⁷
- Continuous performance improvement will be the expected norm of team-based informed enterprise in the 21st century.⁶⁸

Healthcare Trends

- Genetic mapping of the human body will be complete.⁶⁹
- Individuals will know much about their genetic profile and to which diseases the individual is susceptible. The profile enables doctors to prescribe the best drugs for each patient and to set up a preventative regiment.⁷⁰
- Some diseases will be conquered through gene therapy.⁷¹
- Genomics shifts healthcare from cure to prevention.⁷²
- Customization of care will grow in importance as consumers choose their own care paths and become more knowledgeable about their health.⁷³

⁶⁴ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁶⁵ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁶⁶ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁶⁷ DOL -"Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century".

⁶⁸ Snyder and Edwards, "The Light @ the End of the 20th Century," 1999.

⁶⁹ *New England Journal of Medicine*, 7/1/99, "HealthCast 2010".

⁷⁰ "HealthCast 2010."

⁷¹ "HealthCast 2010."

⁷² "HealthCast 2010."

⁷³ "HealthCast 2010."

- Although the percentage of healthcare costs paid by consumers has dropped drastically in the last 20 years, costs will level off or rise somewhat as employers shift more of the costs to the workers.⁷⁴
- Microchips and nanotechnology may help people blind from certain kinds of illnesses to see.⁷⁵
- Genetically altered pigs may allow for an unlimited supply of organs for transplants.⁷⁶
- Regenerative tissue implants may be available. The implants may replace bypass surgery or angioplasty, and may assist paralysis victims to regain control of their bodies.⁷⁷
- Medical records will become electronic, allowing for more complete documentation and instantaneous access for the individual and for those with appropriate permission.⁷⁸
- The Internet will erase one the biggest handicaps of the healthcare industry—relay speed. It will slash the time it takes to make referrals, get test results, get paid, find patients for clinical trials, disseminate best practices, and share cost information. It will quicken the pace for the adoption of new ideas, new therapies and new measurements.⁷⁹
- The Internet will allow for greater access. Small clinics will be connected with larger hospitals and medical institutions to ensure standardizing of service.⁸⁰
- Use of technology such as the Internet will be critical for disabled young people, yet having a representative whom understands a person's individual situation will be important.⁸¹
- Wristbands will continually monitor a person's physiological and emotional state of being, and will feed medical records directly into a database and onto a "smart card" accessible to the person and authorized doctor.⁸²

⁷⁴ "HealthCast 2010"

⁷⁵ *Washington Post*, 12/9/99.

⁷⁶ "HealthCast 2010"

⁷⁷ "HealthCast 2010"

⁷⁸ "HealthCast 2010"

⁷⁹ "HealthCast 2010".

⁸⁰ "HealthCast 2010".

⁸¹ Jennifer Jones, Youth Policy Workgroup Coordinator.

⁸² HealthCare 2010, *Architectural Record*, 5/97.

- Designer antibodies may be used to immunize people against cocaine and other drugs that users crave.⁸³
- Vaccine to stop plaque formation that leads to Alzheimer's may be available.⁸⁴
- Scientists have added a single gene to rodent embryos, creating significantly smarter mice. The finding could speed development of medicines for cognitive disorders in people, including age-related memory loss and Alzheimer's disease.⁸⁵
- The Framingham Heart Study of two generations of families in Massachusetts indicates that the younger generation in the life period 55-70 is substantially less disabled than their predecessors at the same life period.⁸⁶

Legislative Trends

- *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996* (Public Law 104-191), (HIPAA) is acting as a major force in moving the medical community into electronic patient records. The medical industry will rely on electronic maintenance of records and make these available to other partners following data standards, using electronic signatures, and employing secure transmissions such as Public Key Infrastructure. Rapid progress is being made in these areas to ensure that providers are compliant with the legislation. The standards development activities are joint government and private industry efforts.⁸⁷
- The legislation of the next decade will deal with very tough issues regarding security, privacy, and the Internet. A balance will be found between protecting privacy and protecting access for the individual and for the collective good.⁸⁸

Socioeconomic Trends

- Forty-three million Americans change their place of residence each year (almost 1/6 of the total U.S. population).⁸⁹
- By 2010, the average adult is expected to be disillusioned with politics and to feel undervalued at work. Changing social structures, with fewer married couples, high

⁸³ *Washington Post*, 8/24/99.

⁸⁴ Mayo Clinic Health Oasis, 10/26/99.

⁸⁵ *Washington Post*, 9/2/99.

⁸⁶ *American Journal of Public Health*, 11/99.

⁸⁷ Booz-Allen and Hamilton.

⁸⁸ John Christiansen, Stoel-Rives.

⁸⁹ Tina Rosan, "Laws of the Landscape," a seminar, 4/12/99, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

divorce rates and growing numbers of adults living alone, will foster a “me” attitude to which politicians and businesses will have to respond.⁹⁰

- We can expect an era of prosperity lasting until 2025...prosperity can bring with it turbulent, perhaps violent, social and political change in the second decade of the 21st century. A shift from conservative to liberal social, religious and political values has already begun and will gather strength during the first two decades following the millennium.⁹¹
- The typical American family’s income reached an all-time high in 1998, even when adjusted for inflation, as the still-strong economy wiped out most vestiges of the recession of the early 1990s. The nation’s overall poverty rate—12.7 percent—was the lowest in two decades.⁹²
- The results of our analysis suggest only minimal change in the timing of older Americans’ retirement decisions into the next century. However, projections suggest that a larger fraction of Social Security beneficiaries will work in coming years.⁹³
- The overall percentage of unionized workers declined slightly from 14.1 percent of the work force in 1997 to 13.9 percent in 1998. Public sector workers continued to have the highest union density rate at 37.5 percent while the private sector declined to 9.5 percent from 9.8 percent.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ John O’Leary, *The New York Times*, 10/18/99.

⁹¹ *Applied Futures International*.

⁹² Charles Babington, *Washington Post*, 10/1/99

⁹³ Favreault and Ratcliffe, The Urban Institute, “Projecting the Earnings of Social Security Beneficiaries,” *New Developments in Retirement Research*, 5/99.

⁹⁴ Labor Research Association.

APPENDIX C-CREATING THE 2010 VISION

In November 1999, Commissioner Kenneth Apfel formally announced his intention to develop a long-range vision of the Social Security Administration (SSA) for the future—a 2010 Vision. He stressed the importance of beginning to position SSA to effectively deal with the expected growth in disability and retirement workloads that will result from the aging baby boomer generation. Rapid changes in technology, advances in medicine, changes in demographics, SSA's own retirement wave, and increasing customer expectations made the need for a 2010 Vision even more compelling.

He assembled a 2010 Vision Team that was made up of staff members from a variety of SSA components, participant's from SSA's leadership development programs, candidates for the Senior Executive Candidate Development Program, an AFGE union representative, and administrative staff. The Team brought a wealth of operational, systems, and administrative knowledge and experience to the effort. The project was overseen by an Executive Steering Committee.

The Team first conducted an *environmental scan* (See Appendix B) to identify key trends and changes that will affect the way SSA will do business in 2010 and beyond. Through independent research, meetings with other agencies, literature reviews, and a series of discussions with SSA components, the Team compiled a range of likely future trends in demographics, workloads, employment and human resources, technology, healthcare, legislation, and social, economic and environmental factors. They balanced their findings with an analysis of the implications for SSA, and the areas of greatest uncertainties, such as dramatic changes in the economy or workloads increasing at a different rate than predicted.

With the initial phase of the environmental scan completed, the Team conducted 55 structured *employee input sessions*. The sessions, which were held in every region and in Central Office, involved a broad spectrum of employees who shared their thoughts on how they saw SSA dealing with its external and internal customers in 2010.

In addition to the environmental scan and employee input sessions, SSA conducted a number of *public focus groups* in February 2000. Unlike traditional focus groups of the past which were designed to elicit current customer satisfaction, these groups included future potential customers (members of the public aged 20 to 55) and public advocacy groups. The focus groups, which included advocates for disabled and non-English-speaking, gave their unique insights into how they thought SSA should provide service to the public in the future.

Beginning in mid-March 2000, the Team spent a good deal of time categorizing, summarizing, and synthesizing the information they had gathered. As a result, a series of themes and ideas emerged, falling primarily into six categories: service, human resources, technology, communications, programs, and other resources. These themes, and how they might affect the way SSA was to do business, were presented to SSA executives and the Advisory board at an internal stakeholders' meeting in mid-April 2000. Both Commissioner Apfel and Board Chairman Stanford Ross addressed the group.

In May 2000, the team released the first draft version of the *2010 Vision* to the steering committee. In June and July 2000, both internal and external stakeholders met to review the near-completed *2010 Vision*. In August 2000, the *2010 Vision* was released as a finished product. The *2010 Vision* becomes the cornerstone for the Agency's Strategic Plan. Consequently, all planning and budgeting will continue to be driven by the strategic initiatives contained in this Vision.

POSTSCRIPT

The success of any major development effort is closely tied to the degree of cooperation among those directly and indirectly involved in the project. The project to develop SSA's *2010 Vision* was no exception. Its success hinged, in no small way, on the efforts of over a thousand SSA and DDS employees, the SSA leadership, as well as people from other agencies and the private sector.

From its inception, a spirit of cooperation epitomized the project. While some 22 managers, analysts, and support people served at one time or another on the formal 2010 project team, it was many others who exhibited the interest, enthusiasm, and most of all, cooperation that contributed so greatly to the soundness of the *Vision*.

In an early briefing to Commissioner Apfel, a picture of a quilt was used to symbolize the *Vision*. Resembling the process of making a quilt, the *Vision* is a blending of perspectives, piecing together differing views, ideas, skills, and knowledge. Like a quilt, SSA's *Vision* for 2010 is both a legacy and a promise that reflects creativity, innovation, and dedication.

The 2010 *Vision* Team members thoroughly enjoyed their experience, and are grateful for the input, participation and support of so many SSA and DDS employees. The Team was directed by Sue Davis and assisted by the following Team members during various stages of the project:

Jim Anderson, Mark Anderson, Maria Artista-Cuchna, John Bielski, Mark Blatchford, Geri Bortz, Bill Dixon, Paula Foster-Pierce, Terrie Gruber, Mary Kay Hober, Steve Kautsch, ZoAnn Lapinsky, Chuck Lewis, Carolyn Puckett, Nick St.Amant, Jim Seagnelli, Don Schoening, Debbie Somers, Nancy Veillon, Kathleen White. And providing invaluable additional support were Debbie Pettigrew, Aftaan White, Yvette Lewis, Peggy Nicholson, Sandi Sweeney, Allie Bonebrake, Odessa Dooty, Mark O'Donnell, and Maria Perez.

Some thoughts from the members of the project team are worth sharing....

"I personally found this experience to be an opportunity to learn and grow and I am sure that what I take from working on this team will benefit me in the future. I can only hope that every employee will have a similar opportunity in their career."

"I am proudest of the decision to select the quilt as our symbol. In that single image, we have captured not only the *Vision*, but also the creative process used to create the *Vision*."

"I want to thank the management in DCFAM and the 2010 Team for the opportunity to participate in this project. This has been a rewarding experience with respect to the teamwork and collegiality displayed throughout the project—a truly "fun" project working with a wonderful team of individuals."

"I want to thank AFGE for the wonderful opportunity to represent the union on the 2010 Team. The experience has been invaluable. Meeting with so many of our hard working, dedicated employees throughout the country and getting their ideas on what SSA

will look like ten years from now was exciting and energizing. It *has* been my pleasure to be part of this fine Team and my privilege to be part of such an important endeavor as planning our future.”

“I found it heartening that the thought uppermost in the minds of employees throughout the Agency is the desire to do a quality job in serving the public. The frustration that surfaced was one of wanting an organization that is capable of doing an even better job than we do today. SSA has a culture of which it can be proud, and which it needs to pass on to those who will be joining the Agency in the future.”

“I enjoyed exploring the world of 2010 and applying that vision to the way SSA will deliver service 10 years from now. I also liked seeing the positive, constructive responses from our employees as we shared with them what the future holds.”

“After 30 years in SSA, I continue to be encouraged by how deeply most employees care about our work and our customers. It is this caring and compassion of SSA employees that brings our Agency vision into focus and hopefully will guide us through the even more challenging implementation.”

“The 2010 Vision certainly has SSA pointed in the right direction. However, SSA will need to start acting on many of the strategic initiatives very soon if it hopes to realize all the promise contained in the Vision.”



Social Security Administration
Office of the Commissioner
SSA Pub. No. 01-016
September 2000