



IMPROVING INTEGRITY

Improve integrity to preserve welfare benefits for those most in need



The Honorable Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr. Inspector General, Social Security Administration

"It is critical that the Social Security Administration ensure that all Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments are correct and timely, because the individuals who qualify for SSI depend on those payments every day for basic necessities. It is equally important to **protect the integrity of taxpayer dollars and ensure that only those who are eligible for SSI receive payments.**"

OVERVIEW

Ensuring our welfare programs serve those individuals most in need is an important priority. Unfortunately, recent reports from independent government watchdogs reveal welfare benefits are often paid to individuals who are not eligible for the program—reducing resources for those who truly need assistance and frustrating taxpayers who are expected to foot the bill.

Many welfare programs no longer review whether recipients have significant savings or other assets before providing benefits. A number of welfare programs automatically pay benefits for a full year before reviewing whether the recipient's needs have changed. Reports detail how prisoners, fugitives, illegal aliens, and even dead people collect millions of dollars in welfare benefits.

Thankfully, advances in technology have made it possible to more easily protect against fraud and abuse, and states are beginning to use these tools more frequently. Our welfare system should encourage states and other providers to adopt these technological and administrative processes across means-tested programs to better ensure taxpayer dollars are well-spent and eligible welfare recipients are well-served. By reducing abuse, these welfare programs will be better focused on those who truly need help to move their families forward.

WAYS AND MEANS POLICY PROPOSAL

- Align data across programs to more easily detect patterns of fraud and abuse.
- Expand the use of information technology to verify eligible recipients and prevent improper payments.