



Social Security Advisory Board Recommends Improvements to Rep Payee Programs at SSA and Across Government

Summary of recommendations from the board's report, [*Improving Social Security's Representative Payee Program*](#):

Recommendations to SSA:

- ◆ Standardize the capability determination process by using empirically-based assessment and decision-making methods.
- ◆ Establish a centralized process to certify new FFS organizational rep payees instead of having each FO do its own certification.
- ◆ Research and evaluate the order of preference for rep payee selection.
- ◆ Implement a plan to achieve full compliance with SSA's criminal bar policy within five years.
- ◆ Examine the effectiveness of the criminal bar policy and continue to strengthen it as an appropriate monitoring device.
- ◆ Create specialized rep payee expertise at the FO and/or regional level to administer the rep payee program more uniformly, to answer questions and train new rep payees and to manage organizational rep payee workloads.
- ◆ Develop strategies to inform the public of resources related to the SSA rep payee program and how to report suspected abuse.

Recommendation to Congress:

- ◆ No longer require all custodial parents and legal guardians of minor children and spouses residing with adult beneficiaries/recipients to submit an accounting report annually. Instead, these rep payees would be required to submit accounting reports upon SSA's request. SSA will request accounting reports from at least five percent of the total exempted group each year, with selection done on a partly randomized and partly targeted basis. SSA would develop data and procedures for targeted selection of cases for accounting-report

submissions and reviews. SSA will also develop a process to notify regularly all rep payees in the exempted group of their reporting responsibilities, their being subject to audit, if selected, and their need to maintain an ongoing account of how Social Security benefits are spent.

- ◆ Increase oversight of contracted monitoring through the inclusion of measurable performance standards to assess the monitoring process, including the development of quality, timeliness and quantity standards and a method of assessing compliance with those standards.

Recommendation to Congress and SSA:

- ◆ The performance of analytical models that are used in the monitoring processes should be periodically examined and judged by experts outside of SSA. Experts conducting this work should provide findings to Congress.
- ◆ Improve the design of the annual accounting form and monitoring of all rep payee and organizational rep payees with annual reporting requirements.

Recommendations to OMB:

- ◆ Study how best to coordinate the management of federal benefits for people who have been determined to be financially incapable with the recognition that alternative approaches such as supportive decision making have been embraced by key stakeholders.
- ◆ Consider the creation of a shared database for federal benefit-paying agencies and state and local courts that make guardianship decisions. The database will assist in improving financial capability determinations, rep payee selection and oversight of the program.