

# Getting to Green

## SSA's Scorecard

### & Action Plan

*President's Management Agenda  
Human Capital  
Initiative*

#### Background

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has provided each Federal agency with a scorecard rating their performance in each of five elements in the President's Management Agenda (PMA). The Social Security Administration (SSA) received an overall rating of yellow, the mid level rating, for its human capital management, even though SSA was deemed to be "green" in most of the component goals of the human capital element. Separately, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a generic Human Capital Scorecard, as part of its mandate to lead the human capital element of the PMA government-wide. This *SSA Scorecard & Action Plan* provides a crosswalk between the OMB Scorecard goals and the OPM Scorecard goals, and a synthesis of data from multiple SSA sources that document SSA's performance toward each of the goals.

Using the crosswalk and data synthesis, this document also pinpoints those areas where SSA is "green" and those areas where we may still be a shade of "yellow." It then uses that analysis as a basis to offer an action plan that will get SSA to a full green in the area of human capital. For ease of reference we have colored segments of the "Dimensions of Human Capital," "SSA Accomplishments" and "Action Item" columns with the appropriate color. Those areas that we have marked green—the vast majority—require nothing more than continuing to do what we have been doing successfully. Those marked yellow require deliberate action. Happily, no areas are colored red.

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#### **In rating SSA's human capital element "yellow," OMB said:**

*"SSA has reduced its supervisory ratio from 1:8 in 1990 to its current level of 1:14, which is one of the lowest percentages of the 23 largest federal agencies. In addition, SSA increased the number of front-line workers by over 5,000 while its workforce shrank two percent. However, given the expected future workloads and the state of customer service, there is a compelling argument for additional redeployment of staff to front-line positions."*

DIMENSION OF HUMAN CAPITAL	OMB SCORECARD GOALS	OPM SCORECARD GOALS	OPM MEASURE	SSA MEASURE	SSA ACCOMPLISHMENTS
<p><b><u>STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT</u></b></p> <p>Align human capital (HC) policies to support the accomplishment of the agency's mission, vision, goals and strategies (which define its direction and its expectations for itself and its people).</p>	<p>Agency human capital strategy is aligned with mission, goals and organizational objectives</p>			<p>SSA has a documented human capital strategy that is fully aligned with its mission, strategic goals and organizational objectives.</p>	<p>SSA has a Future Workforce Transition Plan that reflects SSA's strategic goals and provides input to our strategic planning process. The plan is updated regularly, and accomplishments are measured and communicated to components quarterly.</p>
	<p>Agency HC strategy is integrated into Strategic Plans and Budget</p>			<p>SSA's budget reflects its human capital planning which is derived from, and provides critical input to, the Agency strategic planning process.</p>	<p>SSA's Future Workforce Transition Plan both reflects and provides critical input to SSA's strategic planning in a dynamic, iterative and ongoing process that results in the development of SSA's annual budget.</p>
	<p>Agency human capital strategy is consistent with OPM's human capital scorecard</p>	<p>An explicit and well-communicated link between HR strategies and plans and agency's strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Agency has documented links between HR strategy and plans with mission/program objectives.</p>	<p>Annual performance plan and budget identifies specific human capital activities as strategies to achieve measurable program performance targets.</p>	<p>SSA's Performance Plan identifies specific human capital activities intended to achieve measurable program performance targets. Budget formulation is informed by the performance plan.</p>
			<p>Agency has effective processes for communicating the link between HR strategies and plans with mission/program objectives.</p>	<p>Continuous information flow to employees through multiple channels.</p>	<p>SSA has multiple internal communication vehicles (Commissioner's Bulletin, Newsbytes, Channel 55, Oasis Magazine) for communicating with employees. These channels are effectively used to improve employees' understanding of how SSA's human capital strategies are intended to work to achieve missions/objectives.</p>
	<p>Agency human capital strategy complies with standards for internal accountability systems to ensure effective merit-based HRM.</p>	<p>Employees understand their organization's plans and are involved in the strategic planning and reporting process.</p>	<p>Employees understand how their job fits in and contributes to fulfilling the agency mission.</p>	<p>Employee performance plans are clearly aligned with SSA's mission.</p> <p>Agency has an effective, independent review system to ensure that all personnel actions are founded on merit principles applied to employees' contribution to attaining agency mission. System is based on OPM-promulgated HR standards of accountability.</p>	<p>May 2000 organizational culture survey: 82% of SSA employees understand how their work relates to SSA's mission; 81% said their work is important to that mission.</p> <p>Performance plans have specific elements related to SSA's mission. SSA is enhancing SES performance plans to 5 levels on 10/02. New system for other employees will be part of contract negotiations with unions in 2 years.</p> <p>SSA conducts an in-depth, independent, on-site review of all its human resources (HR) functions in each of the 10 regions and headquarters components during a 5-year cycle. SSA was the first agency to be delegated this authority by OPM, and only 1 of 3 to have it today.</p>

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<p><b><u>STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT</u></b> <b>(Continued)</b></p> <p>Align human capital (HC) policies to support the accomplishment of the agency's mission, vision, goals and strategies (which define its direction and its expectations for itself and its people).</p>	<p>Agency has a citizen-centered organizational structure that is de-layered and oriented toward performing the mission assigned to it.</p>	<p>The organization is well structured to support its mission.</p>	<p>Agency has effective restructuring and organizational deployment plans, and is taking actions based on them. The standard for "effective" is deploying the appropriate workforce mix to get the job done.</p>	<p>Continue to focus on supervisory ratios.</p> <p>Percent of employees providing direct service.</p> <p>Percent of employees providing support to front-line service.</p> <p>Percent of employees providing administrative support or policy development.</p> <p>SSA's plans will focus on specific steps to continue our efforts to improve citizen services.</p>	<p>SSA has improved its ratio of supervisors to employees from 1:8 to 1:14, the best of the 23 largest agencies.</p> <p>During the last decade SSA reduced managerial ranks by 3,200 positions (44%).</p> <p>83.7% of employees are involved in providing direct service to the public.</p> <p>9.4% of employees provide direct support that enhances the ability of front-line employees to serve the public.</p> <p>Only 6.9% of employees are engaged in administrative support or policy development. One in eight of these works for the Inspector General.</p> <p>SSA has 3 national workgroups presently examining Regional Office staff structures and field office management support positions.</p> <p>As a result of its ongoing human capital reviews, SSA is immediately transferring another 200 positions reserved for staff component to front line service delivery. These positions will be filled in July.</p> <p>We are also studying the feasibility of redeploying an additional 160 positions to the front lines by 9/02.</p> <p>Also as a result of our human capital reviews, SSA will competitively source 2,079 positions by close of FY03. The identified positions are 12.3% of administrative support positions, 18.3% of direct support positions &amp; 0.8% of direct service positions. Detailed plans for this competitive sourcing have been submitted to OMB</p>

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<p><b>STRATEGIC COMPETENCIES (TALENT)</b></p> <p>Recruit, hire, develop and retain employees with the strategic competencies for mission critical occupations.</p>	<p>Agency sustains high performing workforce that is continually improving in productivity.</p>	<p>Desired quality level of new hires is achieved.</p>	<p>Agency meets quality level targets for new hires.</p>	<p>Annual productivity increases.</p> <p>SSA successful in hiring all needed new employees.</p> <p>Percent of new hires who are outstanding scholars.</p> <p>Attrition rate does not exceed 6%.</p>	<p>Productivity increased 3% annually over the last 5 years.</p> <p>SSA hired 100% of replacements needed due to retirement &amp; other losses over the past 5 years (13,959 new employees).</p> <p>10.2% of SSA's hires over the last 5 years were outstanding scholars.</p> <p>Attrition rate averages 4.8% annually &amp; has decreased the last 3 years.</p>
	<p>No skill gaps/ deficiencies exist in mission critical occupations.</p>	<p>Desired competency levels in mission critical occupations is achieved.</p>	<p>Agency meets gap reduction targets developed from restructuring plans.</p>	<p>Skill assessments in mission-critical occupations.</p> <p>Performance plan has strategies to address skill gaps.</p> <p>Employees participating in developmental programs.</p> <p>Successful staffing of restructured components.</p>	<p>SSA's performance plan has specific activities designed to assess strategic skill needs and address gaps.</p> <p>1935 employees participated in leadership developmental programs since 1997.</p> <p>SSA's budget process dynamically balances available FTEs across components by workload demands.</p>
	<p>Strategically uses existing personnel flexibilities, tools and technology.</p>	<p>Desired recruitment/ retention rate for employees with strategic competencies is achieved.</p>	<p>Agency meets staffing/retention rate targets for employees with strategic competencies.</p>	<p>Degree to which recruitment goals are met.</p> <p>Degree to which flexibilities are used to recruit and retain employees with strategic competencies.</p> <p>Automation of HR processes and services.</p> <p>Identify ways to improve new hire retention.</p>	<p>SSA met all recruitment goals each of the last 5 years.</p> <p>SSA uses flexibilities extensively in strategic areas (above minimum pay for systems analysts, re-employed annuitant waivers for hearings and appeals, Bilingual/Bicultural authority for bilingual staff).</p> <p>SSA is successfully automating the internal delivery of HR services to employees &amp; managers. Present projects include an employee portal, automated recruitment &amp; staffing, and an On-line University.</p> <p>SSA is conducting a study of employees hired in 1998 through 2000 to determine more effective ways of recruiting &amp; retaining these employees.</p>
	<p>Changes in agency skill mix and organizational structure reflect emphasis on e-government &amp; competitive sourcing.</p>			<p>SSA organizational structure is modified to enhance ability to deliver e-service and to reflect successful competitive sourcing efforts.</p> <p>Skill composition, reflected in position descriptions &amp; staffing patterns is adjusted to reflect competitive sourcing efforts and emphasis on e-government.</p>	<p>SSA established new organizational units within its CIO, Systems and Operations components specifically tasked with improving and expanding e-services.</p> <p>SSA will compete specific functions in the FY02-FY03 time period. A detailed plan has been submitted to OMB. Position descriptions and organizational structures are being adjusted accordingly.</p>

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<p><b>LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Ensure leadership in the agency inspires, motivates, guides others towards goals; coaches, mentors, challenges staff; adapts leadership styles to various situations; models high standards of honesty, integrity, trust, openness and respect for individuals by applying these values.</p>	<p>Agency implements effective succession plans.</p>	<p>Agency recruits, develops and retains high performing leaders.</p>	<p>Agency has effective plans for leadership recruitment (including identifying potential leaders from within the organizations), development and succession, which include specific objectives, actions and timetables and an analysis of candidate pools.</p> <hr/> <p>Agency meets staffing/retention targets for high-performing executives and managers</p>	<p>SSA has effective retention plans.</p> <p>SSA leadership development programs identify &amp; develop high potential employees in sufficient numbers to fill managerial/leadership positions at all levels.</p> <p>In critical positions, replacement on duty before incumbent departs.</p> <hr/> <p>The attrition rate for senior managers and executives is less than 10% a year.</p> <p>Managerial and executive positions filled within 30 days of incumbent's departure.</p>	<p>The retirement wave analysis enables SSA to accurately forecast vacancies and recruit accordingly.</p> <p>SSA has several national, component &amp; regional-level leadership development programs that, based on careful succession planning, have identified and prepared 1,935 high potential employees to assume positions of greater responsibility at all levels. SSA's Leadership Development Programs (advancement to GS 11-13), Advanced Leadership Programs (to GS 14-15) and SES candidate Program (to Senior Executive) provide participants with 18-24 months of developmental assignments in other SSA components and agencies, classroom experiences, and intense interactions with a senior mentor. These programs provide high performers an incentive to stay in SSA and accelerate their advancement. They also ensure we have sufficient qualified candidates to fill managerial &amp; executive vacancies promptly.</p> <p>The developmental programs give SSA the ability to fill a critical leadership vacancy before an incumbent departs.</p> <hr/> <p>The attrition rate for GS14-15 and SES over the last 5 years fluctuated between 4.5% and 7.2%.</p> <p>SSA has the ability to recruit and select managerial replacements within 30 days of incumbent's departure.</p>

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<p><b>LEADERSHIP (Continued)</b></p> <p>Ensure leadership in the agency inspires, motivates, guides others towards goals; coaches, mentors, challenges staff; adapts leadership styles to various situations; models high standards of honesty, integrity, trust, openness and respect for individuals by applying these values</p>			<p>Agency creates a culture in which employees believe that they are encouraged to assume more responsibilities and to accept assignments that provide leadership opportunities.</p>	<p>Organizational culture survey data.</p> <p>25% of employees receive training annually.</p> <p>2% of employees participate in leadership development programs over a 5-year period.</p> <p>Percent of employees promoted annually.</p> <p>Attrition level does not exceed 5%.</p>	<p>Organizational Culture survey reports 85% of Senior Staff say it is normal practice to encourage employee development; 70% believe advancement opportunities are available to employees.</p> <p>An average of 31.5% of employees receive training each year; 12.6% receive training more than once each year.</p> <p>3.1% of employees participated in development programs.</p> <p>On average, 15.9% of employees are promoted each year.</p> <p>Average attrition rate for the last 5 years was 4.8%.</p>	
			<p>Agency leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce.</p>	<p>Employees are focused on results and show interest in improving the services of their organization.</p>	<p>Employees demonstrate high a degree of motivation and commitment to improving service delivery and to SSA's mission.</p>	<p>Organizational Culture Survey shows that 81% of employees believe their work is important to SSA's mission; 98% say it is important to work in the most efficient way possible; 95% say we must imbue value in all we do and deliver quality services; employees, managers &amp; executives agree (89%-98%) that they are proud of their contribution to SSA's mission.</p>
			<p>Leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity that serve as a model to the whole workforce.</p>	<p>Employees hold their leaders in high regard.</p>	<p>Data from organizational culture surveys regarding the importance employees, managers and executives place on honesty and integrity.</p>	<p>Organizational culture survey shows 98% of employees believe acting with integrity is important; employees, managers &amp; executives agree that it is important for managers and employees to have mutually helpful relationships (4.4 to 4.5 rating of a scale of 5).</p>

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<p><b>PERFORMANCE CULTURE (Strategic Awareness)</b></p> <p>Create a culture that motivates employees for high performance, based on their contributions to the work of the organization and common values while ensuring fairness in the workplace.</p>	<p>Agency differentiates between high and low performers through appropriate incentives and rewards.</p>	<p>Agency develops, rewards and retains high performers and deals effectively with poor performers.</p>	<p>Agency has effective performance management system that adequately distinguishes between levels of performance.</p>	<p>Assessment of SSA's performance management system in terms of its success in evaluating and rewarding employees based on their contribution to organizational performance.</p> <p>Percent of employees who receive performance awards.</p> <p>Percent of employees who receive Honor awards.</p>	<p>SSA uses a performance management system based on a pass/fail appraisal system and a separate performance award decision-making process involving employee panels. The system as a whole provides differentiated rewards based on performance. All performance plans have specific elements related to SSA's mission. Annual reminders are issued to supervisors on the importance of frequent performance discussions. Spot checks with supervisors are made to ensure compliance.</p> <p>SSA is upgrading SES performance plans to 5 levels on 10/02. We are also starting an effort to similarly enhance the performance appraisal systems for all other employees.</p> <p>30.1% of employees received performance awards over the last 5 years.</p> <p>6.2% of employees received honor awards over the last 5 years.</p>
			<p>Employees believe their performance is valued by the organization for its contributions to fulfilling the agency's missions.</p>	<p>Organizational Culture Survey data.</p>	<p>The Organizational Culture survey shows that, while 85% of employees believe a good performance appraisal system is important, only 50% believe that SSA's performance appraisal system supports clear and challenging performance standards. In contrast, the survey also shows that 81% of employees believe their work is important to SSA's mission.</p>
			<p>Agency effectively manages employees who are performing below expectations.</p>	<p>Number of employees counseled.</p> <p>Number of employees terminated or who left voluntarily for unsatisfactory performance.</p>	<p>Over the last 5 years SSA provided counseling to 2,300 employees (3.5%) annually.</p> <p>Over the last 5 years 586 employees (0.2% annually) were terminated for poor performance or resigned voluntarily in lieu of termination.</p>

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<p><b>PERFORMANCE CULTURE (Strategic Awareness) Continued</b></p> <p>Create a culture that motivates employees for high performance, based on their contributions to the work of the organization and common values while ensuring fairness in the workplace.</p>		<p>Employees are engaged and focused on achieving the results expected of them.</p>	<p>Employees believe that their organization has set high but realistic results-oriented work expectations for them.</p>	<p>Organizational Culture survey data.</p>	<p>The survey found that employees believe the 6 most important practices in SSA are: zero tolerance for fraud and abuse; knowing what is expected at work; providing accurate information about SSA programs; understanding how one's work relates to the work of others; one's work is important to attaining SSA's mission; customer satisfaction is a top priority. The highest rated value is "To discharge faithfully our role as guardians of the public trust."</p>
		<p>Agency fosters a climate that values diversity.</p>	<p>Employees believe differences are welcomed and contribute to work of the organization</p>	<p>Organizational Culture survey data.</p>	<p>The Organizational Culture survey shows that 78% of employees agreed that valuing diversity is important.</p>
			<p>Agency sets realistic diversity goals and is meeting them.</p>	<p>Degree of diversity in SSA workforce.</p> <p>Degree of diversity in SES</p>	<p>SSA has one of the most diverse workforces in the Federal government: 72% are women, 27% African Americans, 11% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 1% American Indian and 2.4% have severe disabilities.</p> <p>The composition of the Senior Executive Service at SSA closely reflects the diversity of the American Public.</p>

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<p><b><u>LEARNING (KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT)</u></b></p> <p>Promote knowledge-sharing culture and a climate of openness; promote continuous learning and improvement.</p>		<p>Knowledge management strategies and/or systems are in place</p>	<p>Agency has effective strategy for knowledge management with targeted objectives and defined results.</p>	<p>Assessment of agency strategy and steps taken to implement it.</p>	<p>SSA's strategy for knowledge management is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--succession analysis</li> <li>--collection of baseline data on training costs, delivery &amp; priorities</li> <li>--data-driven strategic HR planning</li> <li>--use of hiring/retention flexibilities</li> <li>--filling vacancies before incumbent leaves</li> <li>--aggressive use of developmental programs</li> <li>--managing the retirement wave through early out and other flexibilities.</li> <li>--targeting critical positions and using understudies.</li> </ul>
		<p>Agency invests strategically in training and development opportunities for employees.</p>	<p>Agency strategies include investment assumptions and comparative analysis of results for training and development opportunities</p>	<p>Annual training investment per employees.</p> <p>Total investment in training delivery systems over the last 5 years.</p> <p>Training delivery systems in use.</p> <p>Fit between training delivered, strategic competencies and leadership development.</p>	<p>Over the last 5 years SSA has invested over \$881,000,000 in training delivery, or about \$2,800 annually per employee.</p> <p>Over the last 5 years SSA has invested over \$42,000,000 in new training delivery technology.</p> <p>SSA makes extensive use of Interactive Distance Video Training (IVT), CD-ROM training, computer-based and internet training, an On-line University and classroom training. SSA's IVT system has downlinks to 1,053 of SSA's 1,640 sites across the country, with another 185 to be added by 9/02. Our On-line University offers employees internet access to over 250 courses, from their desktop and from home. Some 1,155 employees have registered for courses in the program's first 10 weeks.</p> <p>SSA training content, format and delivery systems are continuously adjusted and upgraded to reflect agency skill needs, restructuring and strategic direction.</p>
		<p>A culture of learning and growth exists throughout the agency</p>	<p>Employees believe that their organization supports their development and expects them to improve their skills and learn new skills to do their job better.</p>	<p>Percent of employees that receive training each year.</p> <p>Percent of employees that receive training more than once each year.</p> <p>Perceived value of training by employees and managers.</p>	<p>On average, 31.5% of employees receive training each year.</p> <p>12.6% receive more than one type of training.</p> <p>The Organizational Culture survey indicates that employees rate the importance of timely and effective training very highly (4.55 on a scale of 5)</p>

**SSA's response to OMB's "shift to the frontlines" mandate**

OMB commented that "... *there is a compelling argument for additional redeployment of staff to front-line position.*" However, the OMB only counted as "front-line workers" SSA's 31,000 claims representatives, service representatives, teleservice representatives, benefit authorizers and claims authorizers.

SSA strongly believes that the number of front line workers is approximately 54,000, or all our employees engaged in delivering direct service to the public. For SSA, front line staff includes all of our field operations staff, our Office of Hearings and Appeals field staff, our Program Service Center staff, our quality assurance field staff and part of our General Counsel field staff that represents SSA on individual disability claims in court. All of these positions are on the "front line" and are directly involved in providing services to the citizens of this country. This represents approximately 84% of SSA's total staff. SSA also pays for 16,000 front line employees that provide services through the States' Disability Determination Services.

Additionally, SSA has some 6,000 employees in positions that support front line workers either in headquarters or in our regional offices. The remaining staff provides either administrative support or is involved in developing policy and procedures.

Despite this high proportion of front line workers, we have instituted an ongoing review process to shift additional resources to the front lines.

SSA is getting to green by performing an ongoing review of its human capital that has already produced the following results:

- SSA is transferring 200 FTEs that had been reserved for staff activity to front line positions. The new hires will be on board in the field by September 30, 2002.
- SSA is examining the feasibility of redeploying an additional 160 positions to direct service.
- SSA will continue its review of FTE utilization throughout the organization, as part of the budget process, and shift additional positions to the front lines whenever possible.
- SSA is subjecting 2,079 positions to competitive sourcing in FY 02 and FY 03. Savings that result from this process will be used to improve services that are provided by front line employees.