

National Academy of Public Administration
Long-Term Strategic Vision and Vision Elements
for the Social Security Administration
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Focal Question: How might a changing environment (e.g., societal, demographic, technological changes/advances) impact SSA's ability to deliver services effectively and efficiently ten to fifteen years from now?

Long-term Strategic Vision: We anticipate and respond to customers' changing needs, delivering high quality services anywhere, anytime.

To fulfill SSA's mission in 2025 as part of a comprehensive approach to delivering government services, we:

- Are nimble and embrace change.
- Use online, self-service delivery as our primary service channel.
- Use integrated service delivery to enable customers to conduct their transactions seamlessly from start to finish.
- Automate processes to maximize operational efficiency, meet customer demand and diverse workforce expectations, resulting in a smaller workforce and in reduced physical infrastructure.
- Are flatter, integrated, and empower decision-making.
- Share consolidated support functions.
- Stress program integrity in everything we do.

Vision Elements: The vision consists of 29 elements that are divided into five categories.

Direct Service Delivery to Customers. The first category—Direct Service Delivery to Customers—includes elements related primarily to improving customer service.

1. Online self-service delivery is our primary service channel.
2. We provide direct service options (e.g., in-person, phone, online chat, video conference) in very limited circumstances, such as for complex transactions and to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.
3. Our service channels (e.g., in-person, on-line, telephone) are integrated, enabling seamless customer service and processing of most transactions from start to finish.

4. Our service delivery is integrated across SSA programs and with external partners to improve access to a broad suite of high quality government services (including “non-programmatic” or “non-core” activities).
5. We simplify programmatic, administrative, and operational policies in order to facilitate customers’ applications for benefits and our processing of them.

Indirect Support of Service Delivery. The second category—Indirect Support of Service Delivery—includes those elements primarily related to improving the cost-effectiveness of supporting work processes.

6. Our employees access integrated customer data, enabling efficient delivery of services across our programs and with other related government programs.
7. Our work processes are fully automated, except for those decisions that require some human judgment. We use expert systems to guide employees.
8. Our work is “portable” (e.g., electronic case files enable matching workload with available workforce capacity, advancing telework).
9. All our support functions (e.g., Human Resources, Finance) are provided through a shared services model (e.g., within SSA, across government, and by contract).
10. We systematically employ data analytics to inform the development of more efficient business processes and ensure program integrity.

The following three categories—Information Resources Planning and Management, Workforce, and Organization Structure and Dynamics—include vision elements related to supporting the envisioned service delivery model and work processes.

Planning and Management of Information Resources. The Planning and Management of Information Resources category includes elements related to the foundational enterprise capabilities needed to support such things as information sharing, cybersecurity, and rapid innovation of IT applications to meet business requirements. It encompasses not just the work of Systems, but the coordinated efforts of agency leaders, business customers and IT staff to plan and implement new systems to support mission performance.

11. We manage data at the enterprise level and our business systems are interoperable.
12. We maximize data sharing with external partners through improved exchange standards.

13. We employ a robust regime for providing information security and protecting customers' personal information over the entire data life cycle, including authentication protocols.
14. Our IT workforce is focused less on in-house application development and more on the analysis, architecture, systems integration, testing, and project management needed to effectively leverage private sector services to meet business needs.
15. We use a disciplined and responsive IT investment planning and applications portfolio management process to enable planning and implementation of new IT solutions in smaller, usable, and affordable increments to meet business requirements rapidly.

Workforce

16. Our integrated and diverse service delivery workforce is able to identify customer needs and manage transactions to completion efficiently and effectively.
17. Technology advances allow us to have a significantly smaller and more virtual workforce.
18. We make greater use of generalists with an emphasis on problem-solving, communication, and data analytics skills.
19. We use data analytics systematically to drive workforce decisions (e.g., training needs).
20. Our "blended" workforce delivers services with greater use of project-based employee and contractor teams.
21. We employ a more flexible grade and compensation structure to facilitate career paths that encourage employee retention by embracing employee development and providing opportunities across the organization or with partner organizations.
22. Our labor-management relations have a strategic focus on improving agency outcomes.

Organizational Structure and Dynamics

23. We embrace change and reward managed risk (e.g., training and performance management opportunities).
24. Our adaptive and open culture promotes new collaborative arrangements including those with external partners (e.g., other agencies and advocacy groups).
25. We institutionalize long-term, strategic thinking throughout the organization (e.g., planning, position descriptions, business processes).

26. Our communication and business processes enable a dispersed workforce that is no longer working in centralized, traditional offices.
27. Our physical infrastructure is significantly reduced and re-aligned based on service delivery changes, IT and automation investments, and workforce shifts.
28. Our consolidated and re-aligned organization integrates activities, eliminates duplicative work, and strengthens program integrity.
29. Our flatter organization, along with clear policies and guidelines, allows for fewer decision points and empowers employees, resulting in improved organizational performance.

Note: Program integrity and agility are important objectives of this vision. However, they are not the focus of one category. We instead call out elements within the five categories that make particularly important contributions to program integrity and agility.

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