The Disability Insider

News from the Genex Social Security Disability Division

Summer 2017

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SSA Board of Trustees Releases Annual Report

On July 13, 2017, The Social Security Board of Trustees released its annual report on the long-term financial status of the Social Security Trust Funds.

- The combined asset reserves of the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) Trust Funds are projected to become depleted in 2034, the same as projected last year, with 77 percent of benefits payable at that time.
- The DI Trust Fund will become depleted in 2028, extended from last year's estimate of 2023, with 93 percent of benefits still payable.

In the 2017 Annual Report to Congress, the Trustees announced:

- The asset reserves of the combined OASDI Trust Funds increased by $35 billion in 2016 to a total of $2.85 trillion.
- The combined trust fund reserves are still growing and will continue to do so through 2021.
- Beginning in 2022, the total annual cost of the program is projected to exceed income.

View the 2017 Trustees Report here.

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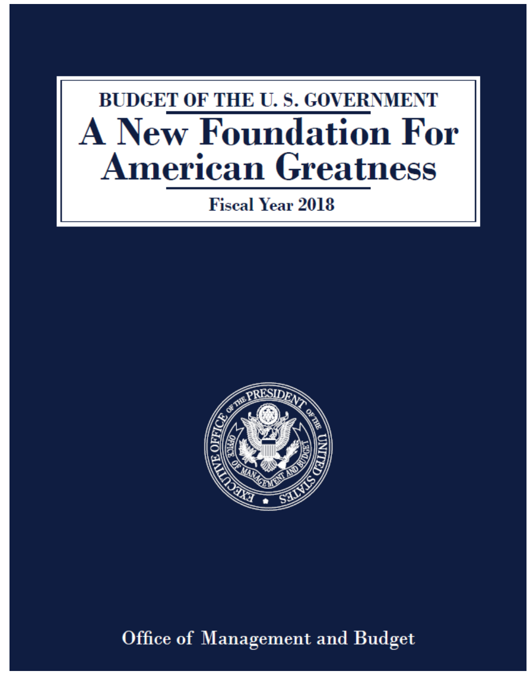
FY 2018 Presidential Budget Proposal



President Trump released his FY 2018 budget proposal, entitled "A New Foundation for American Greatness" on May 23, 2017. The president's blueprint proposes to cut federal spending by $3.6 trillion over 10 years and includes large cuts to discretionary and mandatory spending. The budget proposes to cut spending on the Social Security disability programs by $72.5 billion over 10 years.

The proposal also includes testing new approaches to improve the labor force participation of people receiving disability benefits, reducing the period of retroactive SSDI benefits from 12 months down to 6 months, imposing a sliding scale of maximum SSI family benefits, reinstating reconsideration in the 10 "prototype" states, creating an "expert panel" to recommend program changes to SSI and SSDI, with the goal of a 5% reduction in benefits by 2027, and changes to how SSDI is affected by the receipt of workers' compensation and unemployment benefits.

Further information can be found here.

Treasury Department Halts Collection of Old SSA Debts from Relatives

SSA issued an Emergency Message on May 12, 2017 stating that "Effective immediately, we will not refer to TOP [the Treasury Offset Program] Title II, Title VIII, or Title XVI debts that have a delinquency date of May 19, 2002 or earlier." This change means that individuals will no longer have their tax refunds withheld for Social Security overpayments that they or their relatives incurred decades ago. Debts incurred more recently are still eligible for offset.

Genex provides this quarterly newsletter to keep you up-to-date on trends within the Social Security Administration. The Disability Insider *is a publication of Genex Services, Inc. and is provided as general information and not to be taken as legal advice.*

Genex Staff Spotlight

Susan Hargraves

Client Service Coordinator

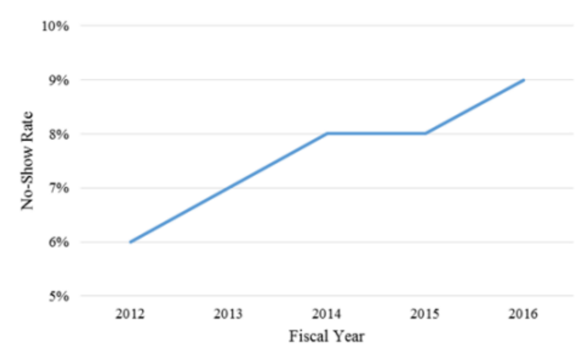
Susan has been working with Genex since September 2009 and currently serves as our Client Service Coordinator. As Client Service Coordinator Susan partners with our long-term disability clients in the triage and referral of claims through our Offsite Program. Prior to transitioning into her current role in October 2014, Susan worked as a claims assistant, claims developer and OTR writer.

Susan came to Genex with many years of experience in the medical field. She also has a degree in graphic design. In 2012 Susan passed the Social Security test to be certified as an EDPNA (Eligible for Direct Payment Non-Attorney) representative for Social Security. When not working, Susan spends time with her daughter, friends and pets.

OIG Report on High No-Show and Postponement Rates

SSA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released an audit report on June 2 discussing reasons for the hearings-level backlog. The report was issued in response to a request by Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee Social Security Subcommittee. The report goes on to state, "We contacted the offices that had the highest and lowest FY 2016 no-show and postponement rates to learn about the drivers for these outliers. The offices with the highest no-show rates stated that a large number of unrepresented claimants in their service area, a transient clientele, geographic location, and limited staffing for follow-up hearing reminders drove the high no-show rate. Conversely, offices that had the lowest no-show rates stated they had a low number of unrepresented claimants in their service area."

Figure 1: National Hearing No-Show Rates for FYs 2012 Through 2016



The OIG Report can be [found here.]()