

j. Identifies DCPPEC training needs with respect to systems activities, and coordinates with responsible SSA components to ensure that these needs are met.

D. The Office of Program Coordination and Planning (TAB) provides Agency leadership in identifying policies that can be changed and emerging technologies that can be used to improve service to the public; manages all planning activities for the Deputy Commissioner, including liaison with other Agency, governmental and private sector committees and groups; manages the Agency's on-line (Internet) policies and services; manages the flow of information and assignments within DCPPEC, and in coordination with the Office of the Commissioner and other major SSA Offices; prepares a wide range of information and materials for the Deputy Commissioner; and monitors progress in achieving Commissioner and DCPPEC initiatives and objectives.

E. The Office of the Actuary (TAC) develops actuarial estimates and analyses and cost estimates pertaining to SSA-administered retirement, survivors and disability programs and the supplemental security income program and to projected changes in those programs. Conducts studies of program financing. Performs actuarial and demographic research on social insurance and related program issues and projects future workloads.

F. The Office of Disability Policy (TAE) develops, coordinates and evaluates the disability program and issues related operational policies, standards and procedures. Develops and issues policies and guidelines for use by State, Federal or private contractor providers which implement the disability provisions of the Social Security Act as amended. The Office plans and directs a continuing evaluation of program performance and an economic and social survey program to evaluate the current impact and future needs of the disability program. Ensures that interrelated program policy and procedural areas are coordinated.

G. The Office of Disclosure Policy (TAG) develops and interprets SSA policy governing requests for disclosure of information from Agency records made under the provisions of the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

H. The Office of Hearing and Appeals (TAH) holds hearings and issues decisions as part of the SSA appeals process. Directs a nationwide field organization which conducts impartial hearings and makes decisions on appealed determinations involving retirement, survivors, disability, health

insurance, black lung and supplemental security income benefits. Performs central office reviews of decisions.

I. The Office of International Policy (TAJ) serves as SSA's focal point for international program policy matters and for its participation in the international Social Security community. Serves as liaison to international agencies and associations which deal with Social Security matters. Negotiates international Social Security (totalization) agreements with foreign governments and develops policies and procedures to implement the agreements. Develops and implements policies and procedures relating to the operation of the Social Security program outside the United States. Provides training programs and technical consultation on Social Security and related fields to Social Security officials and other experts outside the United States. Serves as liaison with other Federal agencies, such as the Department of State and the Department of the Treasury, on Social Security program matters outside the United States.

J. The Office of Policy (TAK) serves as the focal point for the Agency to ensure that strategic policy decisions are properly translated into operational policies and procedures and are implemented in an effective manner. Coordinates the development of policies across program lines to ensure consistency in implementation. Develops, promulgates and reviews all program regulations for consistency. Reviews regulations for directly-administered programs for consistency with statutory and congressional intent and with SSA policy decisions and requirements. Directs the clearance of regulations within the Agency and with other departments and agencies and the Office of Management and Budget. Develops the Agency's Regulatory Plan and its portion of the United Agenda of Federal Regulations. Is responsible for development, review and distribution of the Agency's instructional system. Develops and publishes general and special compilations of Social Security laws, various technical issuances and program handbooks. Ensures that policies are coordinated internally and that all instructional materials developed are compatible with overall operating policies and practices. Establishes policies relating to the Agency's notices to the public and serves as the focal point for the Agency's effort to improve service to the public through the issuance of clear notices. Evaluates the effectiveness of national policies in meeting program

goals and recommends necessary program modifications.

K. The Office of Communications (TAL) directs a program to develop and preserve working relationships with a wide variety of national organizations, special interest and advocacy groups, the media, other Federal agencies and State and local governments, for purposes of securing understanding, cooperation and acceptance of SSA programs, policies and procedures and for providing avenues of public participation in the decisionmaking process of SSA. Plans, directs, coordinates, effects and evaluates SSA's nationwide communications program, which involves interaction with other Federal and State agencies, local governments and other organizations concerned with public communications programs and activities. Develops public information programs and materials to ensure public knowledge and understanding of protections, rights and responsibilities under the programs administered by SSA. Directs SSA's Satellite Communications Network activities. Coordinates the non-English communications activities within SSA. Provides a central receipt, control, acknowledgement, response and referral program for all high-priority and other inquiries addressed to, or telephone calls directed to SSA headquarters, the Commissioner or other SSA executives. Develops correspondence policy and procedures and guide language on recurring topics and issues for use throughout the Agency.

L. The Office of Research and Statistics (TAN) is responsible for providing information on the effects on individuals and the economy of programs operated by SSA and the interactions among these programs, other tax and income-transfer programs and economic, social and demographic forces.

M. The Office of Program Benefits Policy (TAP) develops, coordinates and evaluates the retirement and survivors income programs and issues related operational policies, standards and instructions. Develops and issues policies and guidelines for use by State and Federal organizations which implement supplemental security income provisions. Develops agreements with the States that govern State supplementation programs, Medicaid eligibility, data exchange programs, food stamps and fiscal reporting processes. Plans and directs continuing performance evaluation and economic and social survey programs to evaluate the current impact and future needs of the RSI and SSI programs.