

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2024 - 2026

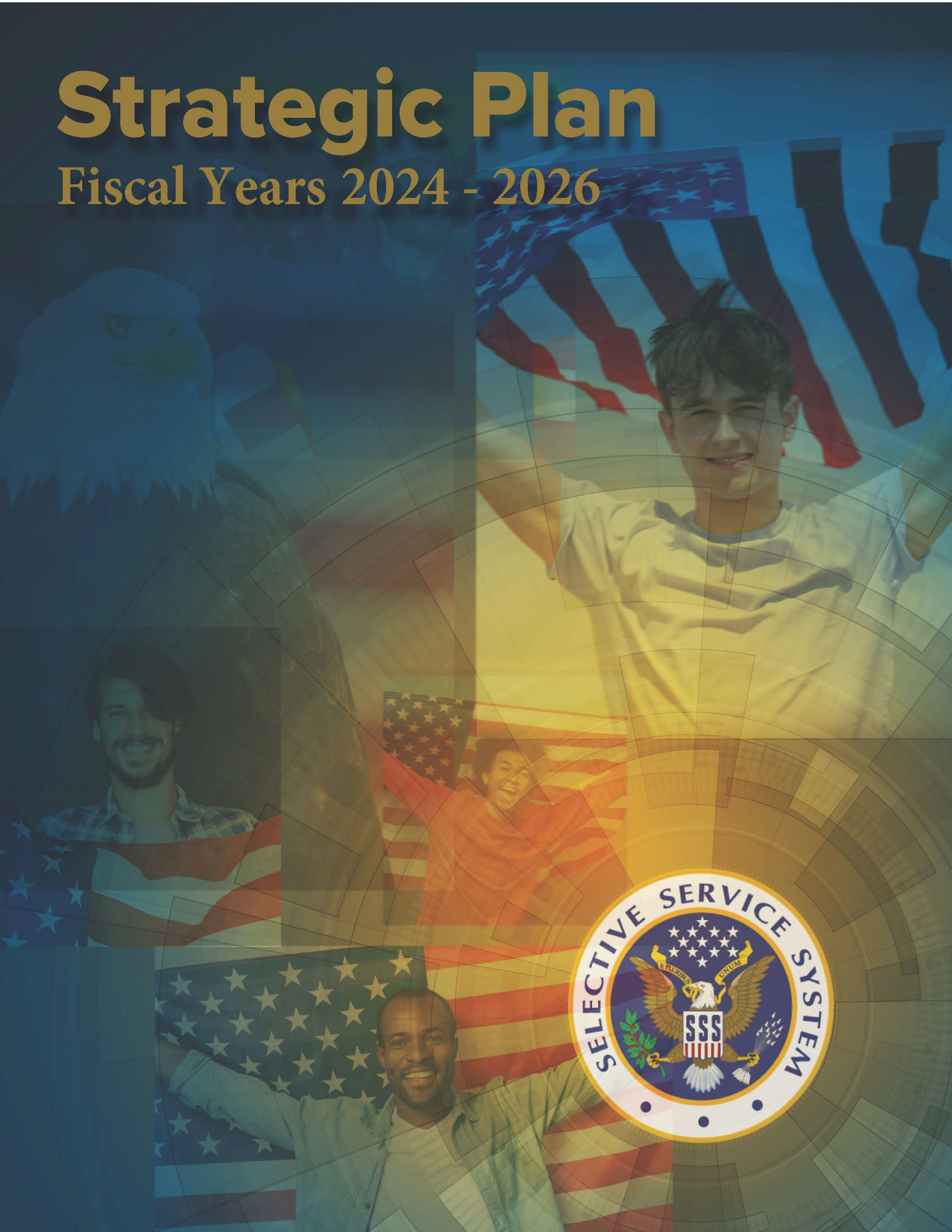


Table of Contents

3	A Message from the Director
4	Organizational Structure
5	Vision and Mission
6	Executive Summary
7	Strategic Goals and Objectives
8	Strategic Goal 1: Readiness
12	Strategic Goal 2: Registration
14	Strategic Goal 3: Management Excellence

Message From the Director

November 15, 2023

The Selective Service System (SSS) plays a vital role in supporting our nation's defense. We stand ready to support the Department of Defense's (DoD) efforts to maintain the military end-strength necessary for "backstopping diplomacy, confronting aggression, deterring conflict, projecting strength, and protecting the American people," as articulated in the *National Security Strategy* and emphasized by the *National Defense Strategy*.

To ensure SSS remains capable of responding quickly in times of crisis, we continue to invest in our people and quality of life initiatives to maintain a high-performance culture. We are committed to improving our top-10 ranking as one of the best places to work in the Federal government among small agencies and empowering our employees, military reservists, and volunteers to successfully execute the Agency's mission.

SSS is actively transforming its policies, procedures, and practices, while integrating improved technology, to operate more efficiently and effectively. We partner with DoD and other Federal agencies, as well as states and territories, to enhance our readiness to mobilize in the event Congress and the President authorize a return to conscription.

In keeping with the *President's Management Agenda*, this strategic plan will help drive customer experience improvements, while at the same time guide us as we more strategically execute our SSS registration efforts nationwide and ensure that our systems and structures are resilient and scalable.

Although we do not know what tomorrow will bring, SSS remains focused on being ready. Our mission is critical to the American people and our team is committed to executing it successfully.

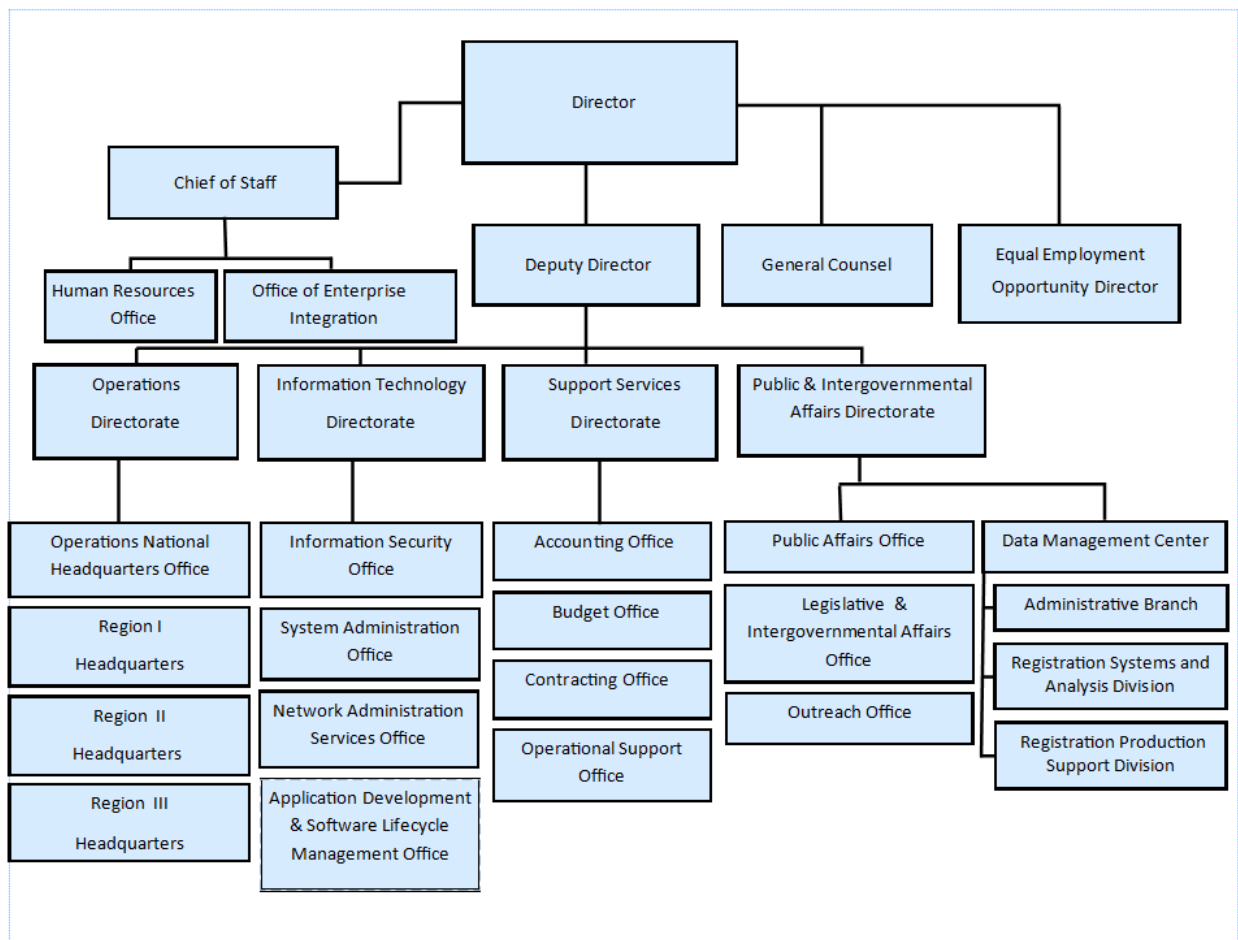


Joel C. Spangenberg
Acting Director

Organizational Structure

The Selective Service System employs approximately 120 full-time staff who support its National Headquarters, the Data Management Center (DMC), and three regional headquarters. Additionally, the Agency manages up to 56 State Directors and 1 Deputy State Director, who are part-time employees representing the 50 states, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia, and New York City. SSS also includes Reserve Service Members (RSMs) from most branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, with up to 175 authorized to serve nationwide. Furthermore, approximately 8,500 volunteers across the nation dedicate their time, serving as State Resource Volunteers and Board Members, who are responsible for deciding the reclassification claims of inductees seeking deferments, exemptions, or postponements when conscription is authorized by Congress and the President. SSS State Directors, RSMs, and volunteers are managed through its three regional headquarters, which are in North Chicago, IL; Marietta, GA; and Aurora, CO. The three regional headquarters also spearhead readiness efforts within their respective areas.

Based in North Chicago, IL, the DMC manages the registration functions, maintains the registration database, and is home to the SSS national call center.



Vision of the Selective Service System

To be a trusted, actively engaged national defense partner and the sole source of conscripted talent for national security in the event of a national emergency.



Mission of the Selective Service System

To register men and maintain a system that, when authorized by the President and Congress, rapidly provides personnel in a fair and equitable manner while managing an alternative service program for conscientious objectors.

Executive Summary

The Selective Service System is an independent Federal agency responsible for managing America's ability to conduct a fair and equitable military draft. With a notable history of public service spanning more than 100 years, the Agency's size during peacetime understates its significant mission to provide military personnel to DoD during a time of national crisis. Its mission also includes administering an alternative service program in lieu of military duty for men classified as conscientious objectors. SSS registration of men ages 18 through 25 directly relates to its strategic goal of readiness, in that it can support DoD during a national emergency and demonstrate America's resolve to international allies and adversaries.

The SSS is modernizing its operations and prioritizing three areas that advance execution of its mission: **readiness**, **registration**, and **management excellence**. As a readiness organization SSS provides a national strategic capability and it must remain ready for immediate transition to full operation if directed to do so by the President and Congress. Registration supports the foundation of fairness and equity for the full operation of the Agency. Management excellence depends on SSS employees consistently providing the full spectrum of functional and programmatic support to Agency operations and maintaining an "always audit ready" standard.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2026 Strategic Plan advances readiness, registration, and management excellence at SSS by driving large-scale readiness enhancements, increasing registration compliance through strategic and data-driven approaches, modernizing its IT and cybersecurity capabilities, improving the customer experience, and through several other actions that enhance its performance, resilience, and adaptability.

This strategic plan aligns to the *National Security Strategy*, *President's Management Agenda*, recent congressional direction, *National Defense Strategy*, *SSS Strategic Vision*, and findings from the report of the bipartisan National Commission on Military, National and Public Service.

Finally, the FY 2024-2026 Strategic Plan provides stakeholders – including the President of the United States, Congress, DoD, registrants, alternative service partners and many others – with a holistic view of SSS strategic goals and objectives from 2024 onward, and the steps it will take to achieve its mission.

Strategic Goal 1: Readiness

Strategic Objectives

- 1.1 Plan for, exercise, and assess the Agency's ability to respond to a request for an immediate return to full operation.
- 1.2 Elevate the readiness of the selection, notification, delivery, and classification mission essential functions.
- 1.3 Enhance the Agency's ability to execute the Alternative Service Program.
- 1.4 Modernize the Agency's technology infrastructure to deliver day-to-day and mobilization capabilities.
- 1.5 Ensure resource management systems and personnel structures are scalable for mobilization.

Strategic Goal 2: Registration

Strategic Objectives

- 2.1 Build on successful registration methods and identify new approaches to raise registration compliance rates.
- 2.2 Improve the use of evidence and data analytics to evaluate registration methods against outcomes and cost.

Strategic Goal 3: Management Excellence

Strategic Objectives

- 3.1 Deliver an excellent customer experience for all and measure success through feedback surveys, internal assessments, and focus groups.
- 3.2 Provide collaborative, efficient, and effective resource management.
- 3.3 Manage and promote programs that advance the SSS mission through external engagement.
- 3.4 Modernize and document SSS policies and procedures.
- 3.5 Identify, mitigate, and respond proactively to risks to SSS information systems and sensitive data while maintaining operational readiness.
- 3.6 Elevate the employee experience at SSS.
- 3.7 Provide effective human resources management and professional development opportunities.
- 3.8 Advance equal employment opportunity and maintain a work environment that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Strategic Goal 1: Readiness

The most essential component of SSS's mission is to lead the national conscription program in support of DoD when directed by Congress and the President. The Agency is currently in an "active standby" status, charged with maintaining a registration and classification structure capable of immediate operation in the event of a national emergency. SSS also maintains personnel to initiate full operational capability, including trained military reservists.

SSS recently performed a mission analysis, which examined the baseline requirements outlined in the Military Selective Service Act as well as those that are required of any Federal agency. The outcome was a clear articulation of six mission essential functions SSS must perform in the event of a national emergency, which are: 1) registration, 2) selection, 3) notification, 4) delivery, 5) classification, and 6) alternative service. The Agency's capability to execute these mission essential functions is at the core of its overall readiness.

The Agency then began a realignment to better achieve readiness. A key step in measuring progress in readiness has been using metrics for the mission essential functions, specifically metrics built on the development of response plans, training information, annual exercises, demonstrations of capability, and information systems validation.

SSS uses the test, training, and exercises (TT&E) planning model as a tool for all operations functions at various levels of scope and scale. This model also augments its continuous modernization efforts and the sustainment of its mission essential functions. Planned and executed correctly, TT&E events aim to mitigate force structure constraints and enhance the flexibility and operational reach of the Agency.

In 2024 and beyond, the Agency plans to continue its implementation of the Agency realignment that began in 2023 and conduct local board exercises, state headquarters tabletop exercises, and readiness exercises with external partners to review and analyze the sufficiency of its plans and the execution of mobilization activities.

SSS will continue to invest in advanced IT solutions as it matures capabilities to sustain day-to-day operational service delivery, as well as to prepare to scale in support of its mobilization needs and to address evolving requirements.

Readiness: Strategic Objectives and Performance Goals

Strategic Objective 1.1 – Plan for, exercise, and assess the Agency’s ability to respond to a request for an immediate return to full operation.

SSS is a readiness organization that must always be prepared to carry out its full mission. This means that SSS will focus on planning, conducting training on, exercising, and assessing its operations, with an emphasis on the mission essential functions.

Performance Goals

- 1.1.1 Review and update the SSS exercise plan to align to national-level or other mandated exercise requirements, maximizing the use of Agency resources to maintain a high state of readiness.
- 1.1.2 Conduct training on and exercise operational plans, systems, and processes to maintain a high state of readiness.

Strategic Objective 1.2 – Elevate the readiness of the Agency’s selection, notification, delivery, and classification mission essential functions.

The Agency is required to manage a conscription program to deliver personnel to DoD if authorized by Congress and the President. To accomplish this, SSS will execute a national draft lottery; contact registrants selected through the lottery; and arrange for their transportation to a Military Entrance Processing Station for testing and evaluation before induction into military service. Once they have received induction orders, registrants can file a claim for deferment, exemption, or postponement, which is part of the classification mission essential function.

Performance Goals

- 1.2.1 Develop, maintain, and continually improve processes and procedures for selection, notification, delivery, and classification mission essential functions.
- 1.2.2 Maintain necessary agreements with other organizations that support selection, notification, delivery, and classification mission essential functions to maintain a high state of readiness.

Strategic Objective 1.3 – Enhance the Agency’s ability to execute the Alternative Service Program.

All men classified as conscientious objectors are required to serve in a non-military capacity for two years if conscripted. SSS is responsible for managing this through its Alternative Service Program, which corresponds to the alternative service mission essential function. The Alternative Service Program relies heavily on building agreements – through its Alternative Service Employer Network – with Federal and state agencies, as well as other organizations. These agreements would be executed during a time of conscription.

Performance Goals

- 1.3.1 Develop and maintain processes and procedures for the Alternative Service Program maximizing the use of Agency resources to maintain a high state of readiness efficiently and effectively.
- 1.3.2 Increase the number of organizations in the Alternative Service Employer Network.

Strategic Objective 1.4 – Modernize the Agency’s technology infrastructure to deliver day-to-day and mobilization capabilities.

SSS will continue to invest in IT to sustain day-to-day operational excellence, as well as to prepare for the execution of its mobilization needs and address evolving requirements. The Agency will execute its IT modernization plan to mature its enterprise architecture, IT governance, and IT business processes to provide enterprise solutions and align IT decision-making with mission outcomes. Additionally, SSS’s Cloud Smart strategy will develop a next-generation solutions architecture to support microservices and development, security, operations – DevSecOps – methodologies in the cloud.

Performance Goals

- 1.4.1 Develop and use data-driven approaches to collaboratively fill gaps in readiness and deliver improvements to Agency IT systems and applications.
- 1.4.2 Migrate to and administer applications within the FedRAMP cloud to deliver enhanced IT resilience and capabilities.

Strategic Objective 1.5 – Ensure resource management systems and personnel structures are scalable for mobilization.

SSS will ensure it is able to handle a surge in registrations, efficiently manage data, and comply with legal requirements. This will require resource management systems and organizational structures that can be rapidly scaled.

Performance Goal

- 1.5.1 Assess and continually improve resource management systems and organizational structures for rapid scalability to maintain a high state of readiness.

Strategic Goal 2: Registration

Registration is the most publicly visible part of the Selective Service System's mission and stands out as a mission essential function that occurs during peacetime and in times of national emergency. If conscription becomes necessary, the Agency must have registered as many eligible men as possible to assure the public of a fair and equitable conscription process. By registering, men comply with Federal law and remain eligible for certain student loans, job training, and government employment opportunities. In the case of immigrant men, their eligibility for U.S. Citizenship is protected through registration.

The Agency continues to face declining national registration rates for men ages 18 to 25, largely driven by the loss of the requirement for a man to register with SSS to receive Federal student aid and the removal of the option to register on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, which are both outcomes of the passage of the FAFSA Simplification Act in 2020. Since this method of registration historically accounted for up to 20 percent of all annual registrations, SSS expects the national registration compliance rate to further decrease over the coming years. This will require investment in more outreach, an increase in states with driver's license issuance linked to registration, as well as the innovative use of additional data streams to increase registration compliance rates, among other potential approaches.

To implement this, the Agency will enhance its relationships with legislative bodies and other Federal agencies, as well as organizations serving men ages 18 to 25, who must register with SSS. It also plans to expand registration messaging through digital media platforms and out-of-home advertising, based on an integrated marketing program that targets a range of audiences, to ensure that it increases registration awareness and reinforces its call to action.

Registration: Strategic Objectives and Performance Goals

Strategic Objective 2.1 – Build on successful registration methods and identify new approaches to raise registration compliance rates.

SSS will strive to develop and leverage strategic approaches that will increase registration compliance rates nationwide. This can be achieved in several ways, such as through new technologies, compelling social media content, legislation, and stakeholder engagement.

Performance Goals

- 2.1.1 Build broader awareness of the registration requirement, including through the employment of social media strategies, to increase registration compliance and maximize the fairness and equity of registration.
- 2.1.2 Increase the number of states with driver's license legislation, particularly the automatic version, to improve registration compliance.
- 2.1.3 Develop data-driven approaches to track registration compliance and address challenges.

Strategic Objective 2.2 – Improve the use of evidence and data analytics to evaluate registration methods against outcomes and cost.

SSS will work to provide clarity on the cost and value of registration methods to best use its resources to achieve registration compliance results nationwide. Moreover, the use of tested and proven data analytics will support strategic decision-making involving registration improvement efforts.

Performance Goals

- 2.2.1 Improve the use of registration data for trend analysis and synchronize efforts to support registration improvement, to include the acquisition of additional data streams.
- 2.2.2 Identify and use analytical tools to detect areas most in need of registration improvement and address those areas with the optimal approach.
- 2.2.3 Conduct regular data analysis reviews to ensure registration methods are improving the registration compliance rate in an effective, efficient, and economical manner.

Strategic Goal 3: Management Excellence

The Selective Service System must maintain a high standard of performance in its management functions to deliver on its mission. Moreover, as an independent Federal agency, SSS needs to capably execute functions expected of Federal agencies much larger than itself. SSS works to achieve the standard of being “always audit ready,” meaning that SSS is committed to doing the right things, the right way every time; having the needed policies, processes, resources, and systems in place; maintaining necessary administrative capabilities; and continuously looking for best practices to implement to strengthen itself.

The Agency’s financial management team continues to focus on achieving an “unqualified” audit opinion under the auspices of the Accountability of Tax Dollars Act. SSS will enforce existing internal financial controls and use self-assessments, as well as annual financial audits, to establish new internal controls where necessary. It will continue to explore opportunities to create efficiencies and leverage shared services. These improvements will advance the integration of budgeting, accounting, contracting, and logistics in support of the strategic goals and objectives articulated in this strategic plan. Additionally, the new Office of Enterprise Integration will provide an internal assessment and program evaluation capability for SSS that will complement efforts within the Support Services Directorate and other Agency directorates.

The Selective Service System has maturing relationships with the Department of the Interior and Department of Justice to leverage shared services for information security, human resources, and personnel security. These relationships have enhanced the Agency’s ability to provide exceptional support to its most valuable asset, its employees. As the Agency looks to 2024 and beyond, those shared services will provide it with a greater ability to prioritize strategic initiatives, such as personnel policies and employee development.

SSS will also focus on improving the employee experience, which ultimately enhances the customer experience for those who work with the Agency. This will include further empowering its workforce to carry out SSS’s mission through continuous improvement and innovation initiatives to maximize value and achieve excellence.

Management Excellence: Strategic Objectives and Performance Goals

Strategic Objective 3.1 – Deliver an excellent customer experience for all and measure success through feedback surveys, internal assessments, and focus groups.

SSS strives to provide consistent, reliable, and timely service to deliver a great experience to all customers. Toward this end, the Agency is continuing to develop new opportunities to reach its external customers, while providing external support through its national call center, where most of its public interactions occur. For its internal customers, SSS actively works to modernize its processes, improve communications, and reduce administrative burdens.

Performance Goals

- 3.1.1 Identify and implement new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to further elevate the customer experience.
- 3.1.2 Maintain systems and networks to minimize downtime to reduce service gaps.
- 3.1.3 Use customer surveys, internal assessments, and focus groups to enable a data-driven approach to improving customer experience.

Strategic Objective 3.2 – Provide collaborative, efficient, and effective resource management.

SSS maintains a mature financial management system containing deliberate processes for planning, programming, budgeting, and execution in support of the Agency's mission. This ensures that the Agency properly manages its fiscal responsibilities and maintains effective internal controls. SSS is working to integrate its resource management systems across directorates and functional areas and is updating its policies and procedures to enable this.

Performance Goals

- 3.2.1. Implement and institutionalize a forward looking and durable multiyear budget process.
- 3.2.2 Ensure that the SSS budget is executed to optimize the use of appropriated funds and to meet personnel requirements.
- 3.2.3 Maintain excellence in Agency contracting through an emphasis on cost management, compliance, and timely processes.

- 3.2.4 Initiate and implement updates to SSS inventory management to further increase accountability of Agency property.

Strategic Objective 3.3 – Manage and promote programs that advance the SSS mission through external engagement.

Guided by an updated Agency strategic communications plan, SSS will enhance its outreach and engagement across multiple domains, including social media. Additionally, and in collaboration with other Federal agencies, SSS will seek opportunities to build partnerships that reinforce Agency efforts, such as highlighting opportunities for military, national, and public service.

Performance Goals

- 3.3.1 Enhance the impact of SSS’s digital media to support its strategic efforts.
- 3.3.2 Create and build partnerships with Federal agencies that will benefit SSS and its mission.

Strategic Objective 3.4 – Modernize and document SSS policies and procedures.

SSS will continue its efforts to ensure compliance with enacted laws and regulations, as well as policies such as Executive Orders. This will support the completion of an authoritative library of Agency policies and procedures, which will be updated on a recurring basis.

Performance Goals

- 3.4.1 Review and update Agency policies and procedures to support effective and efficient operations that comply with Federal laws, regulations, and policies.
- 3.4.2 Identify and implement technology solutions that enable an authoritative library that can be readily maintained and updated by SSS personnel.

Strategic Objective 3.5 – Identify, mitigate, and respond proactively to risks to SSS information systems and sensitive data while maintaining operational readiness.

SSS must balance protection of its networks, systems, functions, and data from cyberattacks with operational readiness. The Agency will continually mature techniques to enable a strong cybersecurity posture in full compliance with government-wide guidance and reduce risks to Agency information systems and data by rigorously adhering to standards for cybersecurity; remaining on the leading edge of all technologies

for security in the FedRAMP cloud; and monitoring all attack surfaces to allow only authenticated multifactor access to its domain.

Performance Goals

- 3.5.1 Ensure compliance with all Federal government-wide cybersecurity policy requirements.
- 3.5.2 Identify and implement comprehensive cybersecurity and network security compliance, monitoring, investigation, and threat identification solutions that comply with Federal laws, regulations, and policies.

Strategic Objective 3.6 – Elevate the employee experience at SSS.

SSS will continue creating conditions that enable its employees to succeed. These conditions include providing clear communications to employees, developing knowledgeable and engaged supervisors and managers across the Agency, and ensuring that excellent work by employees is recognized and rewarded.

Performance Goals

- 3.6.1 Promote an Agency culture that encourages employee participation in efforts to continuously improve SSS.
- 3.6.2 Identify and implement engagement opportunities with SSS employees that foster teamwork and mission focus.
- 3.6.3 Leverage the Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to identify opportunities to improve the workplace.

Strategic Objective 3.7 – Provide effective human resources management and professional development opportunities.

To achieve the best possible results – and excellence in all that SSS does – requires that the Agency have well-qualified and highly-capable employees across the entire organization. SSS relies on its human resources employees and shared services to ensure its policies, plans, programs, and practices provide great support to SSS employees while always supporting mission success.

Performance Goals

- 3.7.1 Ensure SSS human resources services meet or exceed standards.
- 3.7.2 Enable and execute an Agency professional training and development environment that raises employee skill levels and supervisor engagement.

Strategic Objective 3.8 – Advance equal employment opportunity and a work environment that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

SSS will continue to provide training to employees on topics such as communications, employee performance, equal employment opportunity (EEO), diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The Agency will emphasize the availability of alternative dispute resolution to help resolve disputes, which may otherwise lead to EEO complaints and employee grievances.

Performance Goals

- 3.8.1 Execute a special emphasis program that supports a respectful and supportive work environment for all employees.
- 3.8.2 Work to ensure that the Agency mirrors the diversity of the American people in support of the SSS mission.



SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

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