

# 2022 Social Security Administration Sustainability Plan

## 1. Social Security Administration Sustainability Plan Summary

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For more than 85 years, the Social Security Administration has provided services and programs that make a difference in millions of lives. This Sustainability Plan demonstrates our commitment to reducing energy use at our facilities; installing renewable energy technology, such as photovoltaic (PV) systems; using as much pollution-free electricity as possible; and reducing emissions from our vehicles and heating plants.

Our Energy Management Program strives to improve the energy and water efficiency of our facilities nationwide in support of the goals and objectives of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007; Energy Policy Act of 2005; Executive Order (E.O.) 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*; and E.O. 14057, *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability*. We continuously analyze and optimize our fleet of vehicles to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. We are also reducing our real property footprint as we renovate existing buildings and renew lease agreements.

## 2. Priority Actions Towards Goals

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### A. 100 Percent Carbon Pollution-Free Electricity

We are taking steps to increase use of carbon-pollution free electricity to 100 percent by 2030 by procuring new electric commodity contracts that we bundle with other agencies using the General Service Administration (GSA) Energy Auctions. We took the following priority actions in fiscal years (FY) 2021 and 2022:

- Starting in May 2021, we increased our renewable electricity from 0 percent to 50 percent at our headquarters (HQ) campus in Baltimore, MD and our National Support Center. We will remain at 50 percent renewable electricity through June 2025 at these locations through our electric commodity contracts.
- Starting in April 2022, we increased our renewable electricity from 20 percent to 100 percent at the Harold Washington Social Security Center in Chicago, IL. We will remain at 100 percent renewable electricity through March 2025 through our electric commodity contract.
- Starting in May 2022, we increased our renewable electricity from 5 percent to 20 percent at the Wilkes-Barre Data Operations Center in Wilkes-Barre, PA. We will remain at 20 percent renewable electricity through April 2025 through our electric commodity contract.
- Starting in June 2022, we increased our renewable electricity from 10 percent to 20 percent at the Mid-Atlantic Social Security Center in Philadelphia, PA. We will remain at 20 percent renewable electricity through May 2025 through our electric commodity contract.

### B. 100 Percent Zero-Emission Vehicle Fleet

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in our vehicle fleet through a comprehensive review of our fleet and mission needs. We started

transitioning to the goal of 100 percent acquisition of zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) by 2035, including 100 percent light duty acquisitions by 2027. In FY 2022, we are taking the following priority actions:

- Analyzing our vehicle utilization to eliminate under-utilized vehicles;
- Replacing older vehicles with ZEVs; and
- Identifying potential locations for Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment and building appropriate infrastructure.

## **C. Net-Zero Emissions Buildings, Campuses, and Installations**

### **i. Design and Construction for Net-Zero Emissions**

We are committed to achieving net-zero emissions in our facilities. We are working with GSA to conduct a study of our use of natural gas, and the steam we use from our natural gas, to identify zero-emissions technology to replace our mechanical system and reduce GHGs. This study will include 12 buildings at the HQ campus in Baltimore, MD. We are in the early planning stages of the study and will identify priority actions once the study is complete.

### **ii. Increasing Energy Efficiency**

We are committed to increasing energy efficiency in facilities where GSA delegated us the authority to operate and maintain them. We recently completed a Chiller Plant Optimization project at our HQ campus in Baltimore, MD. We are planning to install additional energy conservation measures, such as more energy efficient lighting at HQ and the Mid-Atlantic Social Security Center, and a Heat Recovery Chiller Programming Modification at our National Support Center.

### **iii. Increasing Water Efficiency**

As of FY 2021, we reduced our water consumption by 50.8 percent compared to our water consumption in FY 2007. We continue to identify and implement strategies to increase water efficiency as follows:

- Implementing strategies to prioritize water efficiency investments when modernizing existing facilities, where necessary.
- Adding smart meters, pending funding, to identify areas where we can reduce our energy and water usage.
- Performing energy and water audits and installing energy conservation measures, where funding allows, that will reduce energy and water usage and operating costs.

## **D. Reducing Waste and Pollution**

We are committed to waste prevention and recycling. We have recycled over 50 percent of our solid waste every year at our delegated sites since 2018.

## **E. Sustainable Procurement**

We are committed to utilizing sustainable procurement practices. We identified supply chain resiliency and contractor responsibility as top priorities to revitalize programs and accelerate sustainable procurement progress. We provided input to the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council on Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) amendment to include sustainable procurement policies, including supply chain resiliency and ensuring contractors' responsibility for mitigation planning for sourcing disruptions and risk management through lessons learned. Upon the issuance of the FAR final rule, we will amend our agency-specific acquisition policy to incorporate the updated FAR policy and reiterate climate considerations during the market research, acquisition planning, award, and post-award procurement stages. We will issue announcements and hold training to re-introduce the revised FAR policies for our contracting staff. Our contracting officers and managers continually perform contract reviews for each procurement to ensure the proper sustainable contract terms and conditions are included.

We issue reminders to approximately 119 contracting staff and 833 agency contracting officer's representatives (COR) to include climate considerations during the market research, acquisition planning, award, and post-award procurement stages. The reminders also recommend contracting staff and CORs seek out sustainable procurement training and include a few suggested courses.

## **F. Climate- and Sustainability-Focused Federal Workforce**

We provide employees climate literacy training conducted by the Federal Energy Exchange, Sustainable Facilities Tool, and Federal Energy Management Program. We also encourage participation in the sustainability speaker webinar series hosted by the White House Office of the Federal Chief Sustainability Officer.

## **G. Incorporating Environmental Justice**

We are committed to furthering environmental justice and plan to consider efforts for future approaches to address environmental justice.

## **H. Accelerating Progress through Partnerships**

We partner with GSA on leasing facilities and considering climate vulnerabilities of these leased locations and delegated facilities.

## **3. Progress Examples**

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### **A. 100 Percent Carbon Pollution-Free Electricity**

We will increase our percentage of CFE included in our new electric commodity contracts that we bundle with other agencies using GSA Energy Auctions. The contracts included new percentages of CFE to help us reach 100 percent CFE by 2030.

- Starting in June 2021, we increased renewable electricity from 0 percent to 50 percent at our HQ campus in Baltimore, MD and our National Support Center. We will remain at 50 percent renewable electricity through June 2025 at these locations through our electric commodity contracts.
- Starting in April 2022, we increased renewable electricity from 20 percent to 100 percent at the Harold Washington Social Security Center in Chicago, IL. We will remain at 100 percent renewable electricity through March 2025 through our electric commodity contract.
- Starting in June 2022, we increased renewable electricity increased from 5 percent to 20 percent at the Wilkes Barre Data Operations Center in Wilkes Barre, PA. We will remain at 20 percent through April 2025 at this location through our electric commodity contract.
- Starting in June 2022, we increased renewable electricity from 10 percent to 20 percent at the Mid-Atlantic Social Security Center in Philadelphia, PA. We will remain at 20 percent through May 2025 at this location through our electric commodity contract.

## **B. 100 Percent Zero-Emission Vehicle Fleet**

In FY 2022, our light duty ZEV acquisitions averaged 25 percent of all acquisitions, compared to 10 percent in FY 2018.

We continually review our vehicle fleet and utilization to identify and return under-utilized vehicles. In FY 2022, we returned 21 vehicles. Additionally, our Office of Facilities and Logistics Management monitors and reviews vehicle mileage and utilization and recommends components with vehicles consider returning those that do not meet Federal Management Regulation minimum standards.

## **C. Net-Zero Emissions Buildings, Campuses, and Installations**

### **i. Design and Construction for Net-Zero Emissions**

We plan to start a study on our use of natural gas, and the steam we use from our natural gas, to identify zero-emissions technology options. The study will include 12 buildings at HQ in Baltimore, MD. Natural gas is used in some of our buildings on campus for the following purposes:

- to make steam to heat six buildings;
- to make steam for domestic hot water for seven buildings;
- to heat water for furnaces that make heat for the building; and
- to use in the campus' main kitchen area.

### **ii. Increasing Energy Efficiency**

In November 2021, we completed a Chiller Plant Optimization project at HQ in Baltimore, MD. We are making plans to install additional energy conservation measures that include:

- replacing remaining light-emitting diode (LED) lighting at HQ;

- reviewing the possibility of increasing our PV site at the National Support Center; and
- reviewing the 100 percent draft of a study for interior light fixture replacement at the Mid-Atlantic Social Security Center in Philadelphia, PA.

### **iii. Increasing Water Efficiency**

We reduced our water consumption by 50.8 percent from the FY 2007 baseline. We continue to identify and implement strategies to increase water efficiency as noted on page 2. We are also installing stormwater management projects at HQ in Baltimore, MD as follows:

- Water runoff islands on parking lots that will reduce the stormwater going into a stream on our campus, which eventually runs into the Chesapeake Bay.
- Installing impervious pavement that will also reduce the stormwater going into this stream.

## **D. Reducing Waste and Pollution**

We are committed to waste prevention and recycling. We made a strong commitment by recycling over 50 percent of our solid waste at our delegated sites. Our Recycling Program involves:

- Allowing employees to recycle as many items as possible and encouraging them to support their local recycling program.
- Collecting a majority of recyclable materials at HQ, including leased facilities, as part of the SSA Sensitive Paper Destruction contract.
- Recycling aluminum cans, plastic bottles, white paper, mixed paper, magazines, newspaper, phone books, cardboard, batteries, scrap metal, fluorescent lamps, and electronic ballasts at HQ.
- Implementing recycling programs in our program service centers and Wilkes-Barre Data Operation Center that includes paper/cardboard, aluminum cans, and fluorescent bulbs ballasts, and ensuring the programs conform to the recycling guides set up for HQ.
- Ensuring our recycling programs in our leased facilities conform to State and local law, code, or ordinance requiring recycling programs.
- Requesting that prospective lessors establish a recycling program in leased spaces in the Solicitation for Offerors.