

# Foreign Workers And Social Security Numbers



**A**re you temporarily in the United States to work? If you are, your employer will ask for your Social Security number. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security numbers can be assigned to foreign workers who are authorized to work in the United States.

## What do I have to do to work in the United States?

First, you must have documents from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) showing your U.S. immigration status and eligibility to work while in the United States. Then, you should apply for a Social Security number and card from the Social Security Administration.

## How do I apply for a Social Security number and card?

Applying for a Social Security number and card is free. To apply for a Social Security number:

- Complete an *Application For A Social Security Card* (Form SS-5); and
- Show us original documents proving your:
  - Immigration status;
  - Work eligibility;
  - Age; and
  - Identity.
- Take your completed application and original documents to your local Social Security office.

## Immigration status

To prove your U.S. immigration status, you must show us the current U.S. immigration document, I-94, *Arrival/Departure Record*, issued to you when you arrived in

the United States. If you are an F-1 or M-1 student, you also must show us your I-20, *Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status*. If you are a J-1 or J-2 exchange visitor, you must show us your DS-2019, *Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status*.

## Work eligibility

For most foreign workers, we only need to see your I-94, *Arrival/Departure Record*. Some foreign workers also must show their work permits from DHS (I-766 or I-688B). International students must present further documentation. For more information, see *International Students And Social Security Numbers* (Publication No. 05-10181).

## Age

You must present your birth certificate if you have it or can easily obtain it. If not, we can consider other documents, such as your passport or a document issued by DHS, to prove your age.

## Identity

Social Security will ask to see your current U.S. immigration documents. Acceptable immigration documents include your:

- Form I-551 (includes machine-readable immigrant visa with your unexpired foreign passport);
- I-94 with your unexpired foreign passport; or
- Work permit card from DHS (I-766 or I-688B).

***All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents.*** We also cannot accept a receipt showing you applied for the document. We may use one document for two purposes. For example, we may use your

(over)

DHS work permit as proof of both work eligibility and identity. ***However, you must provide at least two separate documents.***

### **How long will it take to get a Social Security number?**

We must verify your documents with DHS before we assign a Social Security number to you. We will issue your Social Security number and mail your card after receiving the verification from DHS. Most of the time, we can verify your documents quickly with DHS online. If your documents cannot be verified online, it may take DHS several weeks to respond to our request. We are working closely with DHS to reduce these delays.

### **Do I need to have my number before I start working?**

We do not require you to have a Social Security number before you start work. However, the Internal Revenue Service requires employers to report wages using a

Social Security number. While you wait for your Social Security number, your employer can use a letter from us stating that you applied for a number. Your employer may use your immigration documents as proof of your authorization to work in the United States. Employers can find more information on the Internet at [www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/employer/hiring.htm).

### **Contacting Social Security**

For more information and to find copies of our publications, visit our website at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or call toll-free, **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.

# SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

## Application for a Social Security Card

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**Applying for a Social Security Card is free!**

### USE THIS APPLICATION TO APPLY FOR:

- An **original** Social Security card
- A **replacement** Social Security card
- A **change of information** on your record

**IMPORTANT:** You **MUST** provide the required evidence before we can process the application. Follow the instructions below to provide the information and evidence we need.

- STEP 1** Read the instructions on this application. They contain important information about documents that can be submitted as evidence, and how to complete and submit the application.
- STEP 2** Complete and sign the application using **BLUE** or **BLACK INK**. **Do not** use pencil or other colors of ink. Please write legibly. If you print this application from our website, you must print it on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper (if you live abroad and cannot obtain 8 1/2" x 11" paper, A4 size paper (8.25" x 11.7") is the only acceptable alternative).
- STEP 3** Submit the completed and signed application with all required evidence to a Social Security office.

### HOW TO SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION

**In most cases**, you can mail or take this application with your evidence documents to any Social Security office. However, if you live in an area serviced by a Social Security Card Center, you may need to visit the Social Security Card Center in person for all SSN related business. We will return your documents to you.

**IMPORTANT:** If you are **age 12 or older** and have **never** been assigned a Social Security number before, you **MUST** apply **in person**.

**If you have any questions** about this form, or about the evidence documents we need, please visit our website at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). Visiting our Internet site will help you make sure you have everything you need to apply for a card or change information on your record. You may also call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or contact your local office. You can find your nearest office or Social Security Card Center in your local phone directory or on our website.

### PROTECT YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND CARD

Protect your SSN card and number from loss and identity theft. **DO NOT** carry the card with you. Keep it in a secure location and only take it with you when you must show the card, e.g. to obtain a new job, open a new bank account, or to obtain benefits from certain U.S. agencies. **DO NOT** allow others to use your Social Security number as their own.

### ABOUT YOUR EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

You must provide the required documents based on your type of request. There will be situations when we must verify a document with the issuing agency. If your documents do not meet these requirements, we cannot process your application.

- We need **ORIGINAL** documents or **copies certified by the custodian of the record**. We will return your documents after we have seen them.
- **We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents.**
- See **EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS WE NEED TO SEE** on page 3.

**ORIGINAL CARD:** To apply for an **original card**, you will need to provide **at least two** documents to prove **age, identity, and U.S. citizenship or current lawful, work-authorized immigration status**. **If you are not a U.S. citizen or do not have current lawful, work-authorized immigration status, you MUST prove that you have a valid nonwork reason for requesting a card.** (See **HOW TO COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION, Page 2, Item 3.**)

**REPLACEMENT CARD:** To apply for a **replacement card**, you must prove your **identity** (See **IDENTITY**, Page 3). If you were born outside of the U.S., you will also need to prove your **U.S. citizenship or current lawful, work-authorized immigration status**.

**CHANGE OF INFORMATION:** If you need to correct information on your SSN card, or information shown in our records (e.g., a name change, or corrected date of birth), you will need to prove your **identity and provide documents that support the change and establish the reason for the change (e.g., a birth certificate to show your corrected date or place of birth)**. A name change document (e.g., marriage document) must identify you by both your old and new names. If it does not have enough identifying information (See **IDENTITY**, Page 3), we will request an identity document in your prior name and another in your new legal name in addition to the name change document. If you were born outside of the U.S., you also need to prove your **U.S. citizenship or current lawful, work-authorized immigration status**.

## LIMITS ON REPLACEMENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN) CARDS

Public Law 108-458 imposes **limits on the number of replacement SSN cards** you may receive at 3 per year and 10 in a lifetime. In determining these limits, SSA will not count changes in legal name (i.e., first name or surname), or changes to a restrictive legend (i.e., Valid for Work with DHS Authorization, Not Valid for Employment) shown on the SSN card. In addition, we may grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis if you provide evidence to establish a need for an SSN card **beyond these limits** (e.g., a letter from a social services agency stating you must show the SSN card in order to get benefits).

## HOW TO COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION

Most items on the form are self-explanatory. Those that need explanation are discussed below. The numbers match the numbered items on the form. If you are completing this form for someone else, please complete the items as they apply to that person.

2. Show the address where you can receive your card 10 to 14 days from now.
3. If you check "Legal Alien **Not** Allowed to Work," you must provide a document from a U.S. Federal, State, or local government agency that explains why you need a Social Security number and that you meet all of the requirements for the U.S. government benefit. NOTE: Not all U.S. State or local benefits are acceptable for non-work SSN purposes. Contact SSA to see if your reason qualifies.  
  
If you check "Other," you must provide a document from the U.S. government agency that explains why you need a Social Security number and that you meet all of the requirements for a Federal benefit except for the number.
5. Providing race/ethnic information is voluntary. However, providing this information helps us prepare statistical reports on how Social Security programs affect people. We do not reveal the identities of individuals in these reports.
6. Show the month, day and full (4 digit) year of birth, for example, "1998" for year of birth.
- 8.B. You **must** show the mother's Social Security number only when the application is for an **original** Social Security card for a person under age 18. However, this item may be left blank if the mother was never assigned a Social Security number, or if you do not know the mother's Social Security number and are unable to obtain it. We will still be able to assign a number to the person under age 18.
- 9.B. You **must** show the father's Social Security number only when the application is for an **original** Social Security card for a person under age 18. However, this item may be left blank if the father was never assigned a Social Security number, or if you do not know the father's Social Security number and are unable to obtain it. We will still be able to assign a number to the person under age 18.
13. If the date of birth you show in item 6 is different from the date of birth you used on a prior application for a Social Security card, show the date of birth you used on the prior application and submit evidence of age to support the date of birth in item 6.
16. If you are age 18 or older, you **must sign** the application. If you are under age 18, you or a parent or legal guardian may sign. If you are physically or mentally incapable of signing the application, generally a parent, close relative, or legal guardian may sign the application. If you cannot sign your name, you should sign with an "X" mark and have two people sign as witnesses in the space beside the mark. Please do not alter your signature by including any additional information on the signature line as this may invalidate your application. Call us if you need clarification about who can sign. (See the "IMPORTANT" note under evidence of **IDENTITY** on page 3.)



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## EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS WE NEED TO SEE

The following lists are not all inclusive. However, they provide examples of the types of documents we need to see. **All documents must meet the criteria shown under "ABOUT YOUR EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS" on Page 1 in order to be considered.** If you have questions or need to discuss additional documents, see "If you have any questions" also on Page 1. Some documents we may accept are as follows:

**AGE:** In general, we must see your birth certificate. In some situations, we may accept another document that shows your age. Some of the other documents we may accept are:

- U.S. Hospital record of your birth (created at the time of your birth)
- Religious record established before age five showing your age or date of birth
- Passport
- Final Adoption Decree (the adoption decree must indicate that the birth data was taken from the original birth certificate)

Call us for advice if you cannot obtain one of these documents.

**IDENTITY:** We must see evidence of identity in your legal name. Your legal name will be shown on the SSN card. Generally, we prefer to see documents issued in the U.S. Documents submitted to establish identity must show your legal name **AND** provide biographical information (your date of birth, age, or parents' names) **and/or** physical information (photograph, or physical description-- height, eye and hair color, etc.). Additionally, if you send a photo identity document but do not appear in person, the document **must** show your biographical information (e.g., your date of birth, age, or parents' names). To protect your Social Security card and number, identity documents **must** be of recent issuance.

### WE **MUST** SEE YOUR:

- U.S. driver's license; **or**
- U.S. State-issued non-driver identity card; **or**
- U.S. passport

If you do not have one of these documents, or cannot get a replacement within 10 days, we may accept other documents such as a U.S. military identity card, Certificate of Naturalization, or employee identity card. For young children, we may accept medical records (clinic, doctor, or hospital) maintained by the medical provider. We may also accept a final adoption decree, or a school identity card or a school record maintained by the school.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, we **must** see your current U.S. immigration document and your foreign passport with biographical information or photograph.

**WE CANNOT ACCEPT A BIRTH CERTIFICATE, HOSPITAL SOUVENIR BIRTH CERTIFICATE, SOCIAL SECURITY CARD OR CARD STUB, OR A SOCIAL SECURITY RECORD as evidence of identity.**

**IMPORTANT:** If you are **applying for a card on behalf of someone else, you must provide evidence that establishes your authority to sign the application on behalf of the person to whom the card will be issued** (e.g., a minor child's birth certificate establishes the authority of a parent to sign on behalf of the child). **In addition**, we must see different documents as proof of identity for both you and the person to whom the card will be issued.

**U.S. CITIZENSHIP:** In general, we can accept your U.S. birth certificate or U.S. Passport. Other documents we may accept are a Consular Report of Birth, Certificate of Citizenship, or Certificate of Naturalization.

**IMMIGRATION STATUS:** We need to see a current document issued to you by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) showing your immigration status, such as Form I-551, I-94, I-688B, or I-766. We **CANNOT** accept a receipt showing you applied for the document. If you are not authorized to work in the U.S., we can issue you a Social Security card only if you need the number for a valid nonwork reason. (See HOW TO COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION, Page 2, Item 3.) Your card will be marked to show you cannot work. If you do work, we will notify DHS.

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## THE PAPERWORK/PRIVACY ACT AND YOUR APPLICATION

The Privacy Act of 1974 requires us to give each person the following notice when applying for a Social Security number.

Sections 205(c) and 702 of the Social Security Act allow us to collect the facts we ask for on this form.

We use the facts you provide on this form to assign you a Social Security number and to issue you a Social Security card. You do not have to give us these facts, however, without them we cannot issue you a Social Security number or a card. Without a number, you may not be able to get a job and could lose Social Security benefits in the future.

The Social Security number is also used by the Internal Revenue Service for tax administration purposes as an identifier in processing tax returns of persons who have income which is reported to the Internal Revenue Service and by persons who are claimed as dependents on someone's Federal income tax return.

We may disclose information as necessary to administer Social Security programs, including to appropriate law enforcement agencies to investigate alleged violations of Social Security law; to other government agencies for administering entitlement, health, and welfare programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, veterans' benefits, military pension, and civil service annuities, black lung, housing, student loans, railroad retirement benefits, and food stamps; to the Internal Revenue Service for Federal tax administration; and to employers and former employers to properly prepare wage reports. We may also disclose information as required by Federal law, for example, to the Department of Homeland Security, to identify and locate aliens in the U.S.; to the Selective Service System for draft registration; and to the Department of Health and Human Services for child support enforcement purposes. We may verify Social Security numbers for State motor vehicle agencies that use the number in issuing drivers' licenses, as authorized by the Social Security Act. Finally, we may disclose information to your Congressional representative if they request information to answer questions you ask him or her.

We may use the information you give us when we match records by computer. Matching programs compare our records with those of other Federal, State, or local government agencies to determine whether a person qualifies for benefits paid by the Federal government. The law allows us to do this even if you do not agree to it.

Explanations about these and other reasons why information you provide us may be used or given out are available in Social Security offices. If you want to learn more about this, contact any Social Security office.

This information collection meets the requirements of 44 U.S.C. §3507, as amended by Section 2 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. You do not need to answer these questions unless we display a valid Office of Management and Budget control number. We estimate that it will take about 8.5 to 9.5 minutes to read the instructions, gather the facts, and answer the questions. *You may send comments on our time estimate above to: SSA, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235-6401. **Send only comments relating to our time estimate to this address, not the completed form.***

MAIL OR TAKE THE COMPLETED FORM TO A LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE. The office is listed under U.S. Government agencies in your telephone directory or you may call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. You may also locate the nearest Social Security office on the Internet at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov>.

# SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

## Application for a Social Security Card

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0960-0066

|   |   |   |   |                        |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>NAME</b> _____<br><small>TO BE SHOWN ON CARD</small>   | First   | Full Middle Name  | Last                   |
|   | <b>FULL NAME AT BIRTH</b><br><b>IF OTHER THAN ABOVE</b>   | First   | Full Middle Name  | Last                   |
|   | <b>OTHER NAMES USED</b>   |   |   |                        |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>MAILING ADDRESS</b> _____<br><small>Do Not Abbreviate</small>  | Street Address, Apt. No., PO Box, Rural Route No.   |   |                        |
|   |   | City  | State   | ZIP Code               |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>CITIZENSHIP</b> _____<br><small>(Check One)</small>  | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Alien Allowed To Work <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Alien <b>Not</b> Allowed To Work (See Instructions On Page 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (See Instructions On Page 2)   |   |                        |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>SEX</b> _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female   |   |                        |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>RACE/ETHNIC DESCRIPTION</b> _____<br><small>(Check One Only - Voluntary)</small>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian, Asian-American or Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Black (Not Hispanic) <input type="checkbox"/> North American Indian or Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> White (Not Hispanic)   |   |                        |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>DATE OF BIRTH</b> _____<br><small>Month, Day, Year</small>   | <b>7</b>  | <b>PLACE OF BIRTH</b> _____<br><small>(Do Not Abbreviate) City State or Foreign Country FCI</small>   |                        |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>A. MOTHER'S NAME AT HER BIRTH</b> _____  | First   | Full Middle Name  | Last Name At Her Birth |
|   | <b>B. MOTHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER</b> (See instructions for 8B on Page 2) _____   |   | <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> </div> |                        |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>A. FATHER'S NAME</b> _____   | First   | Full Middle Name  | Last                   |
|   | <b>B. FATHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER</b> (See instructions for 9B on Page 2) _____   |   | <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> </div> |                        |
| <b>10</b>                                       | Has the applicant or anyone acting on his/her behalf ever filed for or received a Social Security number card before?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If "yes", answer questions 11-13.) <input type="checkbox"/> No (If "no," go on to question 14.) <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know (If "don't know," go on to question 14.) |   |   |                        |
| <b>11</b>                                       | Enter the Social Security number previously assigned to the person listed in item 1. _____  | <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> </div> |   |                        |
| <b>12</b>                                       | Enter the name shown on the most recent Social Security card issued for the person listed in item 1. _____  | First   | Middle Name   | Last                   |
| <b>13</b>                                       | Enter any different date of birth if used on an earlier application for a card. _____   | <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> <span style="font-size: 1.2em;">  </span> </div> <small>Month, Day, Year</small>   |   |                        |
| <b>14</b>                                       | <b>TODAY'S DATE</b> _____<br><small>Month, Day, Year</small>  | <b>15</b>   | <b>DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER</b> (    ) - _____<br><small>Area Code Number</small>   |                        |
| <b>16</b>                                       | I declare under penalty of perjury that I have examined all the information on this form, and on any accompanying statements or forms, and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.  |   |   |                        |
|   | <b>YOUR SIGNATURE</b> _____   |   | <b>17 YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PERSON IN ITEM 1 IS:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Or Adoptive Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____   |                        |
| DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE (FOR SSA USE ONLY) |   |   |   |                        |
| NPN   |   | DOC   | NTI   | CAN                    |
| PBC   | EVI   | EVA   | EVC   | PRA                    |
| EVIDENCE SUBMITTED                              |   | SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF EMPLOYEE(S) REVIEWING EVIDENCE AND/OR CONDUCTING INTERVIEW<br><br><div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%; text-align: right;">DATE</div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 100%; text-align: right;">DCL DATE</div>  |   |                        |