How do I get a number and card?

To apply for a Social Security number and card:

- Complete an Application For A Social Security Card (http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf) (Form SS-5); and
- Show them original documents or copies certified by the issuing agency proving:
  - U.S. citizenship or immigration status (including Department of Homeland Security (DHS) permission to work in the United States);
  - Age; and
  - Identity.

Then, take or mail your completed application and documents to your local Social Security office (/social-security-office-finder).

Citizenship or immigration status: We can accept only certain documents as proof of U.S. citizenship. These include a U.S. birth certificate, U.S. consular report of birth, U.S. passport, Certificate of Naturalization or Certificate of Citizenship. If you are not a U.S. citizen, Social Security will ask to see your current U.S. immigration documents. Acceptable 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 the Department of Homeland Security (I-766 or I-688B).

International students must present further documentation. For more information, see International Students And Social Security Numbers (http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10181.html)(Publication No. 05-10181).

Age: You must present your birth certificate if you have it or can easily obtain it. If not, they can consider other documents, such as your passport to prove age.

Identity: they can accept only certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information and preferably a recent photograph. Social Security will ask to see a U.S. driver's license, state-issued nondriver identification card or U.S. passport as proof of identity. If you do not have the specific documents they ask for, they will ask to see other documents including:

- Employee ID card;
- School ID card;
- Health insurance card (not a Medicare card);
- U.S. military ID card;
All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. They cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents. We may use one document for two purposes. For example, they may use your U.S. passport as proof of both citizenship and identity. Or, they may use your U.S. birth certificate as proof of age and citizenship. However, you must provide at least two separate documents.

They will mail your number and card as soon as they have all of your information and have verified your documents with the issuing offices.

Replace Your Lost SS Card

Replace Your Social Security Card. Lost or Stolen Cards
Apply Online.

Similar entries

- Change name on a Social Security card (/faqs/315/change-name-on-a-social-security-card)
- What if my name changed? (/en/pubs/social-security-card-number/what-if-name-change)
- New Social Security Number or Card for Newborn Baby (/tips/social-security-card-number/newborn-number-card)
- Change Social Security Number (/tips/social-security-card-number/change-number)
- Replace Social Security Card (Adult) (/tips/social-security-card-number/replace-card)
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
Application for a Social Security Card

Applying for a Social Security Card is free!

USE THIS APPLICATION TO:

- Apply for an original Social Security card
- Apply for a replacement Social Security card
- Change or correct information on your Social Security number record

IMPORTANT: You MUST provide a properly completed application and the required evidence before we can process your application. We can only accept original documents or documents certified by the custodian of the original record. Notarized copies or photocopies which have not been certified by the custodian of the record are not acceptable. We will return any documents submitted with your application. For assistance call us at 1-800-772-1213 or visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Original Social Security Card
To apply for an original card, you must 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 and do not have DHS work authorization, you must prove that you have a valid non-work reason for requesting a card. See page 2 for an explanation of acceptable documents.

NOTE: If you are age 12 or older and have never received a Social Security number, you must apply in person.

Replacement Social Security Card
To apply for a replacement card, you must provide one document to prove your identity. If you were born outside the U.S., you must also provide documents to prove your U.S. citizenship or current, lawful, work-authorized status. See page 2 for an explanation of acceptable documents.

Changing Information on Your Social Security Record
To change the information on your Social Security number record (i.e., a name or citizenship change, or corrected date of birth) you must provide documents to prove your identity, support the requested change, and establish the reason for the change. For example, you may provide a birth certificate to show your correct date of birth. A document supporting a name change must be recent and identify you by both your old and new names. If the name change event occurred over two years ago or if the name change document does not have enough information to prove your identity, you must also provide documents to prove your identity in your prior name and/or in some cases your new legal name. If you were born outside the U.S. you must provide a document to prove your U.S. citizenship or current lawful, work-authorized status. See page 2 for an explanation of acceptable documents.

LIMITS ON REPLACEMENT SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS
Public Law 108-458 limits the number of replacement Social Security cards you may receive to 3 per calendar year and 10 in a lifetime. Cards issued to reflect changes to your legal name or changes to a work authorization legend do not count toward these limits. We may also grant exceptions to these limits if you provide evidence from an official source to establish that a Social Security card is required.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS
If you have any questions about this form or about the evidence documents you must provide, please visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov for additional information as well as locations of our offices and Social Security Card Centers. You may also call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. You can also find your nearest office or Card Center in your local phone book.
EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

The following lists are examples of the types of documents you must provide with your application and are not all inclusive. Call us at 1-800-772-1213 if you cannot provide these documents.

IMPORTANT: If you are completing this application on behalf of someone else, you must provide evidence that shows your authority to sign the application as well as documents to prove your identity and the identity of the person for whom you are filing the application. We can only accept original documents or documents certified by the custodian of the original record. Notarized copies or photocopies which have not been certified by the custodian of the record are not acceptable.

Evidence of Age
In general, you must provide 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 birth)
- Religious record established before age five showing your age or date of birth
- Passport
- Final Adoption Decree (the adoption decree must show that the birth information was taken from the original birth certificate)

Evidence of Identity
You must provide current, unexpired evidence of identity in your legal name. Your legal name will be shown on the Social Security card. Generally, we prefer to see documents issued in the U.S. Documents you submit 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.). 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). Generally, documents without an expiration date should have been issued within the past two years for adults and within the past four years for children.

As proof of your identity, you must provide a:

- 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 the documents above or cannot get a replacement within 10 work days, we may accept other documents that show your legal name and biographical information, such as a U.S. military identity card, Certificate of Naturalization, employee identity card, certified copy of medical record (clinic, doctor or hospital), health insurance card, Medicaid card, or school identity card/record. 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 other school record maintained by the school.

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

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

Evidence of U.S. Citizenship
In general, you must provide your U.S. birth certificate or U.S. Passport. Other documents you may provide are a Consular Report of Birth, Certificate of Citizenship, or Certificate of Naturalization.

Evidence of Immigration Status
You must provide a current unexpired document issued to you by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) showing your immigration status, such as Form I-551, I-94, or I-766. If you are an international student or exchange visitor, you may need to provide additional documents, such as Form I-20, DS-2019, or a letter authorizing employment from your school and employer (F-1) or sponsor (J-1). 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 non-work reason. Your card will be marked to show you cannot work and if you do work, we will notify DHS. See page 3, item 5 for more information.
HOW TO COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION

Complete and sign this application LEGIBLY using ONLY black or blue ink on the attached or downloaded form using only 8 ½" x 11" (or A4 8.25" x 11.7") paper.

GENERAL: Items on the form are self-explanatory or 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.

4. Show the month, day, and full (4 digit) year of birth; for example, “1998” for year of birth.

5. If you check “Legal Alien Not Allowed to Work” or “Other,” 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 the requirements for the government benefit. NOTE: Most agencies do not require that you have a Social Security number. Contact us to see if your reason qualifies for a Social Security number.

6., 7. Providing race and ethnicity information is voluntary and is requested for informational and statistical purposes only. Your choice whether to answer or not does not affect decisions we make on your application. If you do provide this information, we will treat it very carefully.

9.B., 10.B. If you are applying for an original Social Security card for a child under age 18, you MUST show the parents' Social Security numbers unless the parent was never assigned a Social Security number. If the number is not known and you cannot obtain it, check the “unknown” box.

13. If the date of birth you show in item 4 is different from the date of birth currently shown on your Social Security record, show the date of birth currently shown on your record in item 13 and provide evidence to support the date of birth shown in item 4.

16. Show an address where you can receive your card 7 to 14 days from now.

17. WHO CAN SIGN THE APPLICATION? If you are age 18 or older and are physically and mentally capable of reading and completing the application, you must sign in item 17. If you are under age 18, you may either sign yourself, or a parent or legal guardian may sign for you. If you are over age 18 and cannot sign on your own behalf, a legal guardian, parent, or close relative may generally sign for you. 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 additional information on the signature line as this may invalidate your application. Call us if you have questions about who may sign your application.

HOW TO SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION

In most cases, you can take or mail this signed application with your documents to any Social Security office. Any documents you mail to us will be returned to you. Go to https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp to find the Social Security office or Social Security Card Center that serves your area.
PROTECT YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND CARD

Protect your SSN card and number from loss and identity theft. DO NOT carry your SSN 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. Use caution in giving out your Social Security number to others, particularly during phone, mail, email and Internet requests you did not initiate.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT
Collection and Use of Personal Information

Sections 205(c) and 702 of the Social Security Act, as amended, authorize us to collect this information. The information you provide will be used to assign you a Social Security number and issue a Social Security card.

The information you furnish on this form is voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information may prevent us from issuing you a Social Security number and card.

We rarely use the information you supply for any purpose other than for issuing a Social Security number and card. However, we may use it for the administration and integrity of Social Security programs. We may also disclose information to another person or to another agency in accordance with approved routine uses, which include but are not limited to the following:

1. To enable a third party or an agency to assist Social Security in establishing rights to Social Security benefits and/or coverage;

2. To comply with Federal laws requiring the release of information from Social Security records (e.g., to the Government Accountability Office and Department of Veterans' Affairs);

3. To make determinations for eligibility in similar health and income maintenance programs at the Federal, State, and local level; and

4. To facilitate statistical research, audit or investigative activities necessary to assure the integrity of Social Security programs.

We may also use the information you provide in computer matching programs. Matching programs compare our records with records kept by other Federal, State, or local government agencies. Information from these matching programs can be used to establish or verify a person's eligibility for Federally-funded or administered benefit programs and for repayment of payments or delinquent debts under these programs.

Complete lists of routine uses for this information are available in System of Records Notice 60-0058 (Master Files of Social Security Number (SSN) Holders and SSN Applications). The Notice, additional information regarding this form, and information regarding our systems and programs, are available on-line at www.socialsecurity.gov or at any local 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 to: SSA, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235-6401. Send only comments relating to our time estimate to this address, not the completed form.
**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

Application for a Social Security Card

**NAME**

TO BE SHOWN ON CARD  
First  
Full Middle Name  
Last  

FULL NAME AT BIRTH  
First  
Full Middle Name  
Last  

IF OTHER THAN ABOVE  

OTHER NAMES USED

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Social Security number previously assigned to the person listed in item 1

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PLACE OF BIRTH  
(Do Not Abbreviate)  
City  
State or Foreign Country  
FCI

**DATE OF BIRTH**  
MM/DD/YYYY

**CITIZENSHIP**  
☐ U.S. Citizen  
☐ Legal Alien Allowed To Work

Legal Alien Not Allowed To Work (See Instructions On Page 3)

Other (See Instructions On Page 3)

**ETHNICITY**  
Are You Hispanic or Latino?  
(Your Response Is Voluntary)  
☐ Yes  
☐ No

Race  
Select One or More  
☐ Native Hawaiian  
☐ American Indian  
☐ Other Pacific Islander

☐ Alaska Native  
☐ Black/African American  
☐ White

**SEX**  
☐ Male  
☐ Female

A. PARENT/MOTHER'S NAME AT HER BIRTH

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B. PARENT/MOTHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER  
(See Instructions for 9 B on Page 3)

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☐ Unknown

A. PARENT/FATHER'S NAME

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B. PARENT/FATHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER  
(See Instructions for 10 B on Page 3)

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☐ Unknown

Has the person listed in item 1 or anyone acting on his/her behalf ever filed for or received a Social Security number card before?

☐ Yes (If "yes" answer questions 12-13)  
☐ No  
☐ Don't Know (If "don't know," skip to question 14.)

Name shown on the most recent Social Security card issued for the person listed in item 1

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Enter any different date of birth if used on an earlier application for a card

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TODAY'S DATE  
MM/DD/YYYY

**DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER**

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MAILING ADDRESS

(Do Not Abbreviate)  
Street Address, Apt. No., PO Box, Rural Route No.  
City  
State/Foreign Country  
ZIP Code

**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.**

YOUR SIGNATURE

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PERSON IN ITEM 1 IS:

☐ Self  
☐ Natural Or Adoptive Parent  
☐ Legal Guardian  
☐ Other  
☐ Specify

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE (FOR SSA USE ONLY)**

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**EVIDENCE SUBMITTED**

**SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF EMPLOYEE(S) REVIEWING EVIDENCE AND/OR CONDUCTING INTERVIEW**

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Form SS-5 (08-2011) or (08-2011)  
Destroy Prior Editions  
Page 5
Are you temporarily in the United States to attend a college, language, vocational, or nonacademic school with a nonimmigrant F-1, M-1, or J-1 student classification? Your school may ask you for your Social Security number. Some colleges and schools use Social Security numbers as student identification numbers. If you don't have a Social Security number, the college or school should be able to give you another identification number.

Social Security numbers generally are assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security will not assign a number to you just to enroll in a college or school.

To apply for a Social Security number at your local Social Security office:
- Complete an application for a Social Security card, and
- Show us documents proving your:
  - Work-authorized immigration status;
  - Age; and
  - Identity.

Immigration status
To prove your immigration status, you must show us a current admission stamp in your unexpired foreign passport and Arrival/Departure Record (Form I-94), if available. If you're an F-1 or M-1 student, you must also show us your Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status (Form I-20). If you're a J-1 exchange visitor, you must show us your Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (Form DS-2019).

Work eligibility
If you're an F-1 student and eligible to work on campus, you must provide a letter from your designated school official that
- Identifies you;
- Confirms your current school status; and
- Identifies your employer and the type of work you are, or will be, doing.

We also need to see evidence of that employment, such as a recent pay slip or a letter from your employer. Your supervisor must sign and date the employment letter. This letter must describe
- Your job;
- Your employment start date;
- The number of hours you are, or will be, working; and
- Your supervisor's name and telephone number.

If you're an F-1 student authorized to work in curricular practical training (CPT), you must provide us your Form I-20 with the employment page completed and signed by your school's designated official.
If you're an F-1 or M-1 student and have a work permit (Form I-766) from the DHS, you must present it.

If you're a J-1 student, student intern, or international visitor, you must provide a letter from your sponsor. The letter should be on sponsor letterhead with an original signature that authorizes your employment.

We cannot process your application if
- Your on-campus or CPT work begins more than 30 days from your application date; or
- The employment start date on your work permit from the DHS (Form I-766) is a future date.

Age
You must present your foreign birth certificate if you have it or can get it within 10 business days. If you can't present your foreign birth certificate, we can consider other documents, such as your passport or a document issued by the DHS, as evidence of your age.

Identity
We can only accept certain documents as proof of identity. An acceptable document must be current (not expired) and show your name, identifying information, and preferably, a recent photograph. Social Security will ask to see your current U.S. immigration documents, such as a current admission stamp in your unexpired foreign passport and Arrival/Departure Record (Form I-94), if available.

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 admission stamp in the unexpired foreign passport as proof of both work eligibility and identity.

Do I need a Social Security number before I start working?

We don't 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.

Contacting Social Security

Visit www.socialsecurity.gov anytime to apply for benefits, open a my Social Security account, find publications, and get answers to frequently asked questions. Or, call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778). We can answer case-specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Generally, you'll have a shorter wait time if you call after Tuesday. We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service, so a second Social Security representative monitors some telephone calls. We can provide general information by automated phone service 24 hours a day. And, remember, our website, www.socialsecurity.gov, is available to you anytime and anywhere!