

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS (SSN) AND CARDS

Do I need a Social Security Number?

Social security numbers *are* need for

- Employment

They *should not be* needed for

- Class registration
- Driver's license
- Banking: F visa holders do not need a Social Security number to open a bank account. The bank may ask F visa holders to fill out Internal Revenue Service form W-8BEN to prove that they are exempt from the requirement of providing a Social Security number

What is a Social Security Number

In order to work in the United States, you must obtain a Social Security card. This card contains your unique taxpayer identification number or Social Security Number. A non-U.S. citizen may obtain a U.S. Social Security Number if he/she has permission to work in the U.S.

A non-U.S. citizen who is ineligible for a Social Security Number is still required to file U.S. tax return and should instead apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) by filing out a Form W-7 submitting it along with his/her tax return. Copies of this form are available at <http://www.irs.gov>.

Since Social Security numbers and ITIN numbers are issued by the United States government, you may have to wait a few weeks to receive your card.

How do I apply for a Social Security card?

All applicants must present:

- A completed Form SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card. Click on [Social Security Card application](#).
- An unexpired passport*
- Form I-94

**The Social Security Administration will not issue a Social Security Number if the passport is less than one year old unless another document can prove your legal age and*

identity. Therefore, it is advisable to bring another piece of identification (national identity card, old passport, etc) with you if your passport is less than one year old.

F-1 Students must also present:

- SEVIS Form I-20
- Proof of employment authorization, which may be in the form of a verification letter for on-campus work from the International Student Advisor OR an Employment Authorization Card issued by USCIS.
- Proof of employment. Students engaged in on-campus employment must provide a letter from the employer on the employer's letterhead. The text for the letter, "Social Security Card Request," can be found under **Forms & Documents**. It must provide the following:

Name of the student employee
Nature of the job
Anticipated or actual date start
Anticipated number of hours of work per week
Employer identification number
Employer contact information, including the telephone number and name of the F-1 student's immediate supervisor.
Original signature and signatory's title
Date

Visit the [Social Security website](http://www.ssa.gov) at www.ssa.gov for more information.

- Social Security card application form – available at the International Office or at the Social Security Office, or
- online: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.pdf>
- Information on the SSN application is available at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.html>

Recent Update: Employment Requirements

The Social Security Administration (SSA) updated their Program Operations Manual System to provide new guidance on evidence requirements for F-1 and M-1 students applying for a Social Security Number (SSN). Under the new guidance:

- ✓ For non-EAD based F-1 student employment (CPT and on-campus employment) SSA will not process an application for a SSN if it is more than 30 days in advance of the scheduled employment start date.
- ✓ In the case of EAD –based F-1 or M-1 employment, the employment start date on the EAD must already have been reached before SSA will process the application for a SSN.

Before November 2007, there was no employment start date restriction on applying for a SSN.

Processing Time

It may take the Social Security Administration a few days to a few weeks to process the application. The actual card will be sent to the address listed on your application form. However, they will give you a receipt showing that you have applied for a Social Security card. If you are not starting to work right away, it is recommended that you wait at least 3 weeks after your arrival in the United States to apply.

Social Security Cards for Family Members

F-2 dependents are not eligible for social security number.

Many states request that an applicant for a driver's license have a social security number. In this case, the Social Security Administration may be able to issue a letter saying that your dependent is not eligible for a SSN for Department of Motor Vehicles.

Social Security Administration Office Locations

In Napa

1700 2nd Street, Rm. 245
Napa, Ca 94559
(800) 772-1213
Open Monday – Friday
9:00 am – 4:30 pm

In Santa Rosa

2099 Range Ave., Bldg A
Santa Rosa, Ca 95401
(707) 544-4302
Open Monday - Friday
9:00 am – 4:00 pm

More local SSA office addresses are available at: <http://www.ssa.gov>

For more information on Social Security numbers, call the Social Security Administration toll-free at 1-800-772-1213. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day. Service representatives are on call from 7 am to 7 pm on business days.