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The Social Security Star

EXPANDING SOCIAL SECURITY FIELD OFFICE HOURS



Beginning on January 8, 2020, field offices will remain open until 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, with typical field office hours from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can locate the closest field office to you using our [field office locator](#).

In another move to improve service to the public, Commissioner Saul announced in his Open Letter to the Public at www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/coss-message.html that the agency is hiring 1,100 front line employees to provide service on the agency's National 800 Number and in its processing centers. The agency is currently bringing onboard 100 new processing center employees and approximately 500 new teleservice representatives for the 800 Number. An additional 500 hires for the 800 Number will occur later in 2020.

“Improving service is my top priority. Increasing full public service hours at our nationwide network of more than 1,200 field offices is the right thing to do and will provide additional access,” Commissioner Saul said. The additional hiring of National 800 Number and processing center employees is an important step in the right direction to greatly improve the service we provide.”

While we continue to improve both the access to and the experience with our services, it is important to note that most Social Security services do not require the public to take time to visit an office. People may create a [my Social Security](#) account, a personalized online service, at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

Through their personal [my Social Security](#) account, people can check personal information and conduct business with Social Security. If they already receive Social Security benefits, they can start or change direct deposit online, and if they need proof of their benefits, they can print or download a current Benefit Verification Letter from their account.

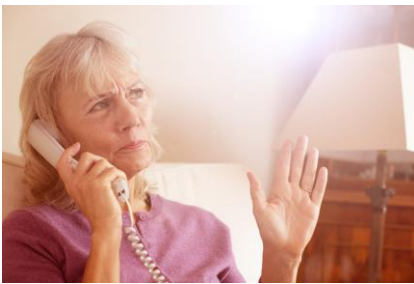
People not yet receiving benefits can use their online account to get a personalized *Social Security Statement*, which provides earnings history information as well as estimates of future benefits. Currently, residents in 40 states and the District of Columbia may request a replacement Social Security card online if they meet certain requirements. The portal also includes a retirement calculator and links to information about other online services, such as applications for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits.

Many Social Security services are also conveniently available by dialing our toll-free number, **1-800-772-1213**. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**.

Most Social Security services are available online by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov, and by calling Social Security toll-free at 1 (800) 772-1213 or 1 (800) 325-0778 TTY

Remember, visit www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency/ for up-to-date information about Social Security Office Closings and Emergencies. Subscribe to state or territory specific updates!

BEWARE OF SOCIAL SECURITY SCAMS



Scammers go to great lengths to trick you out of your personal information. We want to help you protect your information by helping you recognize a Social Security imposter.

There's a widespread telephone scam involving callers claiming they're from Social Security. The caller ID may even show a government number. These callers may tell you there's a problem with your Social Security number. They may also threaten to arrest you unless you pay a fine or fee using gift cards, pre-paid debit

cards, a wire transfer, or cash. That call is not from us.

If you receive a suspicious call from someone alleging to be from Social Security, please:

- Hang up right away.
- Never give your personal information, money, or retail gift cards.
- Report the scam at oig.ssa.gov/ to Social Security's law enforcement team at the Office of the Inspector General.

Social Security will **not**:

- Threaten you.
- Tell you that your Social Security Number has been suspended.
- Call you to demand an immediate payment.
- Ask you for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Require a specific means of debt repayment, like a prepaid debit card, a retail gift card, or cash.
- Demand that you pay a Social Security debt without the ability to appeal the amount you owe.
- Promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money.
- Request personal or financial information through email, text

messages, or social media.

Social Security will:

- Sometimes call you to confirm you filed for a claim or to discuss other ongoing business you have with them.
- Mail you a letter if there is a problem.
- Mail you a letter if you need to submit payments that will have detailed information about options to make payments and the ability to appeal the decision.
- Use emails, text messages, and social media to provide general information (not personal or financial information) on its programs and services if you have signed up to receive these messages.

Please share this information with your family and friends.

**THIS NEW YEAR,
SEE WHAT YOU
CAN DO ONLINE AT
SOCIALSECURITY.GOV**



Are you looking for new ways to save time this new year? Social Security offers many of its services online by signing up for a secure **my Social Security** account.

Once you create an account, you can review your work history and see an estimate of your future Social Security benefits. We recently made several enhancements and introduced new features to **my Social Security**. With your personal **my Social Security** account, you can also:

- Estimate future benefits with a Retirement Calculator that allows you to compare different retirement dates and include future earnings estimates (**NEW**)
- Request a replacement Social Security card
- Check the status of your Social Security application

If you already receive benefits, you can:

- Get a benefit verification or proof of income letter
- Set up or change direct deposit
- Change your address
- Request a replacement Social Security or Medicare card
- Get a Social Security 1099 form (SSA-1099)
- Opt out of certain mailed notices (**NEW**)

The Message Center is a secure, convenient portal where you can receive secure, sensitive communications. The Message Center now allows you to opt out of receiving some mailed notices. You can now choose to receive the annual cost-of-living adjustments and the income-related monthly adjustment amount online. Unless you opt out of receiving notices by mail that are available online, you will receive both mailed and online notices.

All of these features can help you save time by doing business with us online. Create a **my Social Security** account today at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

We also offer many other online resources at www.socialsecurity.gov/online-services. Let friends and family know they can access them from the comfort of their home

or office and on the go from their mobile phone.

**SMALL BUSINESSES
AND
SOCIAL SECURITY**



According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the 28.8 million small businesses in the United States represent 99.7% of all U.S. businesses, and employ 56.8 million people.

Running a small business can be a 24-7 endeavor. Managing employees, inventory, scheduling, services, and marketing can be challenging. If you are a small business owner or you work for one, we can help make your life easier with our suite of services. Our services allow you to file W-2/W-2Cs online and verify your employees' names and Social Security numbers against our records.

If you run a business, make us your first stop at www.socialsecurity.gov/employer. It will save you valuable time when you need information on W-2s, electronic filing, and verifying Social Security numbers. Small business owners can also take

advantage of our Business Services Online at www.socialsecurity.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm. You must register to use this free service, which also offers fast, free, and secure online W-2 filing options to CPAs, enrolled agents, and individuals who process W-2s and W-2Cs.

This publication provides more information about electronic wage reporting www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/E N-05-10034.pdf.

MAKING WISE CHOICES WHEN A REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE MANAGES YOUR MONEY



Some of the millions of people who get monthly Social Security or Supplemental Security Income benefits need help managing this money. A person assigned to help you manage your monthly benefits is called a representative payee. We may decide you need a representative payee if we receive information that indicates you need help to manage your money. We try to

select someone who knows you and wants to help you. Your representative payee should be someone who you trust, who sees you often, and who clearly understands your needs.

A representative payee receives your monthly benefits on your behalf and must use the money to pay for your current needs.

Eligible costs include:

- housing and utilities;
- food;
- medical and dental expenses;
- personal care items;
- clothing; and
- rehabilitation expenses (if you're disabled).

If there is someone you want to be your representative payee, tell a Social Security representative, and they will consider your request. Social service agencies, nursing homes, or other organizations are also qualified to be your representative payee. Ask them to contact us.

If you receive a decision that you are appointed a representative payee and don't agree that you need one, or if you want a different representative payee, write to us within 60 days to appeal that decision.

If you can't manage your finances, someone else can help. If you have a trusted friend or family member who can be your representative payee, this publication at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/E N-05-10076.pdf will provide

[more information on our representative payee rules.](#)

Do you suspect someone of committing fraud, waste, or abuse against Social Security? SSA's OIG Fraud Hotline takes reports of alleged fraud, waste, or abuse.

Reporting is easy, safe, and secure. You can reach us by internet, phone, mail, or facsimile.

Internet: [Fraud Reporting Form](https://www.ssa.gov/fraudreport/oig/public_fraud_reporting/form.htm)
https://www.ssa.gov/fraudreport/oig/public_fraud_reporting/form.htm

U.S. Mail: Social Security Fraud Hotline
P.O. Box 17785
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

FAX: 410-597-0118

Telephone: 1-800-269-0271
from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

TTY: 1-866-501-2101 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

Note: If you cannot reach a representative on the Fraud Hotline between 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, you can report Social Security program fraud directly to any Social Security office, including representatives at the SSA's toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. SSA employees will take your information and send it directly to our office.