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Social Security Column

THIS NEW YEAR, LEARN ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY ONLINE

By Lizna Odhwani

Social Security Public Affairs Specialist in Virginia



Social Security programs touch the lives of more than 70 million people. We work hard to ensure critical benefits and other services are accessible to you. Consider the start of the new year as an opportunity for you to engage with Social Security online. This begins with creating your free and secure personal **my Social Security** account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Once you create an account, you can:

- Apply for retirement, spouses, or disability benefits.
- Apply for Medicare.
- Check your application status.
- Request a replacement Social Security number card.

If you do not receive Social Security benefits, you can use your personal **my Social Security** account to:

- Get personalized retirement benefit estimates.
- Get your *Social Security Statement*.
- Get estimates for spouse's benefits.
- Get instant proof that you do not receive benefits.

If you receive benefits, you can use your personal *my Social Security* account to:

- Change your address (Social Security benefits only).
- Set up or change your direct deposit information (Social Security benefits only).
- Instantly get proof of benefits.
- Print your SSA-1099.

Your personal *my Social Security* account has a secure Message Center. You can 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.

Your personal *my Social Security* account offers easy access to features that save you time when you do business with us online. Check out our other resources available at www.ssa.gov/onlineservices for your convenience.

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it.

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Social Security Column

GENERAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR MEDICARE PART B

By Lizna Odhwani

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If you did not apply for Medicare Part B (medical insurance) within three months before or after turning age 65, you have another chance each year during the General Enrollment Period. The period runs from January 1 to March 31 every year.

If you don't enroll in Part B when you're first eligible for it, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Part B coverage. Your monthly premium will increase 10% for each 12-month period that you were eligible for Part B but did not sign up for it. Your coverage begins on July 1 of the year you enroll.

To learn more about Medicare, please visit our Medicare Benefits page at www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare. You may also read our publication at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10043.pdf.

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it – and share it on social media.

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Social Security Column

NEW: SELF-ATTESTATION OF SEX MARKER IN SOCIAL SECURITY RECORDS

By Lizna Odhwani

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Effective October 2022, you can self-select your sex on your Social Security number (SSN) record.

“The Social Security Administration’s Equity Action Plan includes a commitment to decrease administrative burdens and ensure people who identify as gender diverse or transgender have options in the Social Security Number card application process,” said Acting Commissioner of Social Security, Kilolo Kijakazi. “This new policy allows people to self-select their sex in our records without needing to provide documentation of their sex designation.”

You need to apply for a replacement SSN card to update your sex marker in our records. You still need to show a current document to prove your identity, but you no longer need to provide medical or legal documentation of your sex designation.

We will accept your self-identified sex designation of either male or female, even if it is different from the sex designation shown on identity documents. Identity documents include a passport, a state-issued driver's license, and an identity card. SSN cards do not include sex markers. Currently, our record systems are unable to include a non-binary or unspecified sex designation. We are exploring possible future policy and systems updates to support an "X" sex designation for the SSN card application process.

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it – and share it on social media.

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Social Security Column

SSI: 50 YEARS OF FINANCIAL SECURITY

By Lizna Odhwani

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The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program helps support many American families. As we celebrate 50 years of SSI, it is a great time to briefly share the history of SSI and information on how to apply.

On October 30, 1972, President Nixon signed SSI into law. In January 1974, we began paying SSI to people who met the eligibility requirements.

Fifty years later, SSI remains a lifeline program for millions of people and households with limited income and resources. SSI also helps children and adults under age 65 who have a disability or are blind and who have income and resources below specific financial limits. People age 65 and older without disabilities—who meet the financial qualifications—may also receive SSI payments.

You can let us know that you want to apply for SSI online at www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/start.html. This process only takes about five to ten minutes, and no documentation is required to start. We will need the following basic information about you or the person you're helping:

- The name, date of birth, Social Security number, mailing address, and phone number of the person who is interested in applying for SSI. (Providing an email address is optional.)
- If helping another person, we need your name and phone number. (Providing an email address is optional.)

Once you provide this information and answer a few questions, we will schedule an appointment to help you apply for SSI. We will send a confirmation with the appointment date and time by mail and email (if provided). In some cases, we may call you to schedule the appointment.

If you're unable to begin the process online, you may schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday. You may also contact your local Social Security office. You can find the phone number for your local office on our website.

Once your SSI application is submitted, you can check the status online by creating a personal [my Social Security](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount) account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. SSI will continue to support families for many years to come.

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it – and share it on social media.

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Social Security Column

SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS ARE SAFER AT HOME

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Scams to steal your personal information are at an all-time high. The need to safeguard important personal documents such as your Social Security card continues to be very important.

A Social Security card is not an identification document. In many situations, you only need to know your Social Security number (SSN). Your physical card is not necessary for most business needs.

Do you need evidence for work? There are several documents you can use instead of your card. Other acceptable evidence includes the following:

- Birth Certificate.
- Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt.
- Employment Authorization Document.
- Form I-94 or Form I-94A.

You do not need to show your physical card to apply for certain benefits. You can simply provide your SSN for benefits like:

- Housing.
- Health insurance.
- Food assistance.

You should also know your physical card is not required as evidence for the Department of Motor Vehicles or Driver License (REAL ID). The only state that requires a physical card is Pennsylvania. For all other states, other acceptable evidence includes:

- W-2 forms.
- Form SSA-1099.
- Non-SSA-1099 forms.
- Pay stubs.

Keeping your card at home reduces the risk of loss or theft – and helps you keep your information safe.

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