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# The Social Security Star

## SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION RESUMES IN-PERSON SERVICES AT LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES



We are pleased to announce that local Social Security offices are offering more in-person appointments and have resumed in-person services for people without an appointment.

To avoid waiting in line, we strongly encourage people, who can, to use our online services at [www.ssa.gov/onlineservices](http://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices), call us, and schedule appointments in advance rather than walking in without an appointment. Phone appointments can save you a trip to a busy office. We thank the public for your patience as we work to increase service.

Customers who walk in without appointments may encounter delays and longer waits at our offices. Before

coming to an office, we encourage you to visit our emergency page at [www.ssa.gov/emergency](http://www.ssa.gov/emergency) to check the office status. Be aware that our offices tend to be the busiest first thing in the morning, early in the week, and during the early part of the month, so people may want to plan to visit at other times.

Given that many of the people we serve have health vulnerabilities, and consistent with our union agreements, we are continuing to require certain safety measures. These include masking regardless of local guidance, physical distancing, and self-health checks for COVID-19 symptoms. We will provide masks to the public and employees if they need them.

Most of our services are available to the public online and with a personal *my Social Security* account, or by telephone. And most of our services do not require the public to take time to visit an office. People may create their personal *my Social Security* account, a personalized online service, on our website at

[www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). Many of our services are also conveniently available by dialing toll-free, 1-800-772-1213. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778.

As we transition to a modern phone system, some people may experience a busy signal or be unintentionally disconnected from their call. We sincerely regret these disruptions and recommend people call when our National 800 Number may be less busy. Less busy times include before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. local time or later in the week. Like our offices, our waits are generally shorter later in the month.

To learn more, please visit our How to Get Help from Social Security page at [www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/gethelp](http://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/gethelp) and our [Online Services](#) page at [www.ssa.gov/onlineservices](http://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices).

**DO YOU QUALIFY FOR  
SOCIAL SECURITY  
SPOUSE'S BENEFITS?**



Social Security benefits are a crucial part of millions of Americans' retirement income. If you don't have enough Social Security credits to qualify for benefits on your own record, you may be able to receive benefits on your spouse's record.

To qualify for spouse's benefits, you must be one of the following:

- 62 years of age or older.
- Any age and have in your care a child younger than age 16, or who has a disability and is entitled to receive benefits on your spouse's record.

Your full spouse's benefit could be up to one-half the amount your spouse is entitled to receive at their full retirement age. If you choose to receive your spouse's benefits before you reach full retirement age, you will get a permanently reduced benefit.

If you wait until you reach full

retirement age to receive benefits, you'll receive your full spouse's benefit amount, which is up to one-half the amount your spouse can receive. You'll also get your full spouse's benefit if you are under full retirement age, but care for a child and one of the following applies:

- The child is younger than age 16.
- The child has a disability and is entitled to receive benefits on your spouse's record.

If you're eligible to receive retirement benefits on your own record, we will pay that amount first. If your benefits as a spouse are higher than your own retirement benefits, you will get a combination of benefits that equal the higher spouse benefit.

For example, Sandy qualifies for a retirement benefit of \$1,000 and a spouse's benefit of \$1,250. At her full retirement age, she will receive her own \$1,000 retirement benefit. We will add \$250 from her spouse's benefit, for a total of \$1,250.

Want to apply for either your or your spouse's benefits? Are you at least 61 years and nine months old? If you answered yes to both, visit [www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement) to get started today.

Are you divorced from a marriage that lasted at least 10 years? You may be able to get benefits on your former spouse's record. You can find out more by visiting [www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/divspouse.html](http://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/divspouse.html) for more information.

***Most Social Security services are available online by visiting [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://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/](http://www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency/) for up-to-date information about Social Security Office Closings and Emergencies. Subscribe to state or territory specific updates!***

**SOCIAL SECURITY SUPPORTS TEACHERS ONLINE**



(SOCIAL SECURITY SUPPORTS CONT'D)

## THE SOCIAL SECURITY STAR

The past two years have been difficult for everyone, including educators and students. Our nation's teachers have adapted and provided for their students in so many ways. This year, we celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week from May 2 through May 6, and honor all educators who prepare our children for the future.

We know that well-informed instructors can have a powerful and positive influence on their students. That's why we created an Educator Toolkit. It's a shareable online resource for teachers to engage students and educate them on Social Security. The toolkit includes:

- Lesson plans with objectives.
- Infographics and handouts for each lesson plan.
- Links to Social Security webpages.
- Talking points.
- Quiz questions and answers.

You can access the toolkit at [www.ssa.gov/thirdparty/educators.html](http://www.ssa.gov/thirdparty/educators.html).

We value and welcome the efforts all teachers make to educate America's young people. We want to help spark discussion with students about Social Security. Please share our toolkit with the educators in your communities today!

MAY 2022

*We continue to provide help to you and other people in your communities.*

*You can speak with a representative by calling your local Social Security office or our National 800 Number. You can find local office phone numbers online by using our Social Security Office Locator at [www.ssa.gov/locator](http://www.ssa.gov/locator).*

## SOCIAL SECURITY HONORS OUR MILITARY HEROES



On Memorial Day, our nation honors military service members who have given their lives to preserve our freedoms. Families, friends, and communities come together to remember the great sacrifices of military members and ensure their legacies live on.

The benefits we provide can help the families of deceased military service members. For

example, widows, widowers, and dependent children may be eligible for Social Security survivors benefits. You can learn more about those benefits at [www.ssa.gov/survivors](http://www.ssa.gov/survivors).

We also offer support to wounded warriors. Social Security benefits protect veterans when injuries prevent them from returning to active duty or performing other work. Both the Department of Veteran Affairs and Social Security have disability programs. You may qualify for disability benefits through one or both programs. Read our new fact sheet, "*Social Security Disability and Veterans Affairs Disability — How Do They Compare?*" at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-64-125.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-64-125.pdf). Depending on your situation, some members of your family, including your dependent children or spouse, may be eligible to receive Social Security benefits.

Wounded military service members can receive quicker processing of their Social Security disability claims. If you are a veteran with a 100% Permanent & Total compensation rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs, we'll expedite your disability claim.

Want more information about how we can help? Visit [www.ssa.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.ssa.gov/woundedwarriors) for answers to frequently asked

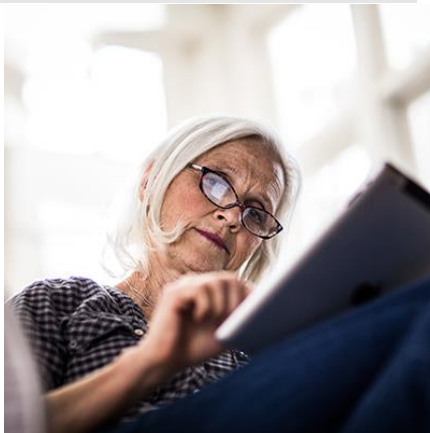
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questions or to find information about the application process.

Thinking about retirement or know a veteran who is? Military service members can receive Social Security benefits in addition to their military retirement benefits. For details, visit our webpage for veterans, available at [www.ssa.gov/people/veterans](http://www.ssa.gov/people/veterans).

Please share this information with the military families you know. We honor and thank the veterans who bravely served and died for our country and the military service members who serve today.

### NEW STATEMENT FACT SHEET FOR PEOPLE WITH LIMITED EARNINGS



If you have a personal *my Social Security* account, you can view your *Social Security Statement* online to learn about your future benefits and recent earnings history. Included with the *Statement* are fact sheets that provide useful information based on your age

group and earnings situation. Last month, we released a new fact sheet specifically for people with limited earnings.

The new fact sheet covers how you and your family members may qualify for benefits, including:

- Supplemental Security Income.
- Social Security retirement benefits.
- Children's benefits.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Help with health care costs – including Medicare, Medicare Savings Programs, *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug costs, and Medicaid.

We're committed to helping you learn about all your benefit options. Our Benefits Eligibility Screening Tool at [ssabest.benefits.gov](http://ssabest.benefits.gov) is a convenient way to find potential benefits that best fit your situation.

To learn more, visit our Social Security Statement webpage at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount/statement.html](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/statement.html). Please share this article with your friends and family – and post it on social media.

### CELEBRATING A DECADE OF MY SOCIAL SECURITY

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Can you believe it's been 10 years since we launched *my Social Security*? Since then, 67 million people have signed up and benefited firsthand from the many secure and convenient self-service options. And we've added and upgraded features that make your life easier when doing business with us online. We take great pride in providing this and all of our services. It's part of how we help you secure today and tomorrow.

If you still don't have a personal *my Social Security account*, you're missing out. A secure account provides personalized tools for everyone, whether you receive benefits or not. If you don't currently receive benefits, you can:

- Estimate your future benefits and compare different dates or ages to begin receiving benefits.
- Get *instant* status of your Social Security application.

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- Review your work history.
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most states).

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

- Get your *instant* benefit verification or proof of income letter for Social Security, Medicare, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Check your information and benefit amount. Start or change your direct deposit
- Change your address and telephone number
- Request a replacement Medicare card.
- Get an *instant* Social Security 1099 form (SSA-1099) or SSA-1042S. Report your wages if you work and receive disability benefits and SSI.

Visit [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount) today and join the millions to take advantage of your own personal *my Social Security* account. Please also encourage your friends and family to sign up for their personal *my Social Security* account today.

## GUARD YOUR CARD: PROTECT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU

We encourage you not to carry your Social Security card with you every day. The best way to “Guard Your Card” is to keep it in a safe place and share it only when required, which is rare. In fact, in most cases, just knowing the Social Security number should be enough. In 49 states and the District of Columbia, a Social Security card isn’t required to request a Real ID. Only Pennsylvania requires it.

Please be careful about sharing your number when asked for it. You should always ask why your number is needed, how it will be used, and what will happen if you refuse. Also, you shouldn’t carry documents that display your number.

If you need a replacement Social Security card, we make it easy. You may be able to use a personal *my Social Security* account to request a replacement on our website. If you live in one of 45 participating states or the District of Columbia, and are requesting a replacement card with no changes, like a name change, you can use our free online service.

Visit our Social Security Number and Card page to learn more about your Social Security card.

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## READY TO SIGN UP YOUR MY SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT?

You can now create your new *my Social Security* account through either of these two credential partners: Login.gov or ID.me. Visit our website.

- Login.gov is the public’s one account for simple, secure, and private access to participating U.S. government agencies.
- ID.me is a single sign-on provider that meets the U.S. government’s online identity proofing and authentication requirements.

**DO YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE OF  
COMMITTING FRAUD, WASTE, OR  
ABUSE AGAINST  
SOCIAL SECURITY?**

**REPORTING FRAUD TO THE SSA  
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
GENERAL IS EASY, SAFE, AND  
SECURE.**

**REPORT SOCIAL SECURITY SCAMS  
AT  
[HTTPS://SECURE.SSA.GOV/IPFF/HOM  
E](https://secure.ssa.gov/ipff/home)**

**REPORT OTHER SOCIAL SECURITY  
FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE AT  
[HTTPS://SECURE.SSA.GOV/PFRF/HO  
ME](https://secure.ssa.gov/pfrf/home)**

**OR VIA U.S. MAIL:**

**SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD HOTLINE  
PO BOX 17785  
BALTIMORE, MD 21235**

**FAX:  
(410) 597-0118  
PHONE:  
(800) 269-0271**

**10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M. ET, MONDAY  
TO FRIDAY,  
EXCEPT FEDERAL HOLIDAYS**

**(866) 501-2101 TTY**