

## Applying for a Social Security Card

Social Security numbers generally are assigned to individuals 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.

The unique nine-digit Social Security number remains valid for life and therefore may be used during future visits to the United States.

A social security card alone is not legal work authorization in the United States. You must have an updated I-20 with work authorization.

If a DSO has authorized you to work on campus, off campus, CPT or OPT and you meet Social Security's eligibility requirements, you can get a Social Security number. In general, only noncitizens who have DHS' permission to work can apply for a Social Security number.

To apply for a Social Security number at your local Social Security office the student will be required to

- Complete an Application for a Social Security card (SS-5);
- Provide documentation proving your work-authorized immigration status, age and identity.

Students should be prepared to provide the following original documentation to the Social Security office

1. Passport
2. Birth certificate
3. F-1 visa
4. I-20 with work authorization endorsed by DSO
5. I-94
6. State issued ID or Driver License
7. Job offer letter
8. Letter from DSO

Important reminders:

- You may apply for your SSN up to 30 days prior to your employment start date. If you are new to the United States, you must wait at least 10 days after entering the country to obtain your SSN.
- If you have ever been granted an SSN in the past, you do not need to apply for a new one.
- This number is issued only once per individual. You may apply for a replacement card if you lost your previous card.
- Once you obtain your social security card, be sure to keep this in a safe place with your other important documents. Do not carry your card with you and avoid giving the number out unnecessarily to protect against misuse of your number. You may be asked to provide the number at times, but rarely need to show the card. For this reason, it is advised that you memorize your social security number if possible.
- F-2 dependents are not eligible for a social security number.
- For more information, visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- Be sure to request a verification receipt on your application at the SSN office