



Social Security Number Overview

A **Social Security Number (SSN)** is a U.S. Federal government number issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The number is used to keep a record of an individual’s earnings for the purpose of government retirement and disability programs. It is also used for tax reporting purposes. All non-immigrants who will earn income in the U.S. must obtain a number in order for the employer to properly report earnings and tax withholdings. Visit <http://www.ssa.gov/> for additional information.

When should I apply for a Social Security Number?

In order to avoid delays in obtaining your social security number, please do NOT apply until 15 days after your arrival in the U.S.

What documents do I need to apply for a SSN?

In addition to the SSN application form, you will need documents that establish your age, identity and lawful immigration status. The immigration status must be one that allows you to work (for example, J-1, H-1B, O-1, etc.). In addition, you will also need a copy of your NIH award or appointment letter

I. For age and identity:

[Note: All foreign language documents must be translated into English]

You will need a valid passport

[Note: it is also helpful to bring an expired passport if your current passport was issued less than one (1) year ago]

OR

An original birth certificate or one that has been certified as original by the issuing authority

OR

A religious document that indicates your birth and that was issued prior to three (3) months of age

OR

An original hospital record of birth made before the age of five (5)

II. For lawful immigration status:

Verify that your passport and Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record, received after your arrival to the U.S.) are stamped with the **proper immigration status**, for example, J-1, H-1B or O-1. **In addition, verify that your name appears on the Form I-94 as per your passport.** When applying for the SSN, your name must match how it appears on your passport and Form I-94.

Can my dependents apply for a SSN?

Dependents that are not authorized to work in the U.S. are **NOT** eligible for a SSN. For tax purposes, however, they can apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). ITIN information can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96287,00.html>

****When you arrive in the U.S., you must report to the DIS no later than your first day in the laboratory or branch to activate your stay at the NIH. At that time, you will be provided detailed instructions on how to apply for your Social Security Number.****



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