

Monthly Information Package

July 2024

Columns & Features

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Produced at U.S. taxpayer expense.

Social Security Column

CELEBRATE YOUR INDEPENDENCE WITH SOCIAL SECURITY



Every July 4, we celebrate our nation's independence. For nearly 90 years, our programs have helped create financial independence for millions of hardworking people. We have useful online resources like the *Social Security Statement (Statement)* and our benefits estimator tool that helps people not yet receiving benefits. The *Statement* shows the benefits that you and your family may be eligible for and provides personalized fact sheets tailored to your age and earnings situation. The benefits estimator tool allows you to get estimates based on different ages. These online tools can help you better prepare for your retirement.

If you're not receiving benefits

You can get the most out of your online experience if you have a personal *my Social Security* account. You can:

- Request a replacement Social Security card.
- Get estimates for spouse's benefits.
- Get your *Statement* instantly.
- Get proof that you do not receive benefits.

- Check your application status.

If you're receiving benefits

You can use your personal *my* Social Security account to:

- Request a replacement Social Security card.
- Get an instant benefit verification letter.
- Start or change your direct deposit. (Social Security beneficiaries only)
- Change your address. (Social Security beneficiaries only)
- Get a replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S instantly for tax season.
- Opt out of mailed notices for those available online.

You can create your personal *my* Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

Our blog at blog.ssa.gov features news and information about our programs and services. You can subscribe and get notified each time we post a new blog so you can stay informed. From the blog, you can also connect with us on Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

With so many services and helpful information available online, we are here for you when you need us. Learn more at www.ssa.gov.

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Social Security Column

DEFENDING AGAINST SCAMMERS WHO TARGET YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS



Scammers are always finding new ways to steal your money and personal information. The best way to defeat scammers is to know how to identify scams and to ignore suspicious calls and emails.

One common tactic scammers use is posing as federal agents or other law enforcement officials. They may claim your Social Security number (SSN) is linked to a crime. They may even threaten to arrest you if you do not follow their instructions. Here are three things you should do:

1. Hang up right away or do not reply to the email.
2. Never give personal information or payment of any kind.
3. Report the scam at oig.ssa.gov to immediately notify the law enforcement team in our Office of the Inspector General.

You should continue to remain vigilant if you receive a phone call from someone who claims there's a problem with your SSN or your benefits. If you owe money to us, we will mail you a letter explaining your rights, payment options, and information about appealing.

When trying to identify if a call or email is a scam, **remember we will never:**

- Threaten you with benefit suspension, arrest, or other legal action.
- Promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment.
- Require payment by retail gift card, cash, wire transfer, internet currency, or prepaid debit card.
- Demand secrecy from you in handling a Social Security-related problem.
- Send official letters or reports containing personally identifiable information via email.

For more information on scams please visit www.ssa.gov/scam. Please share this information with anyone who may need it.

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Social Security Column

HOW WE SERVE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY



We strive to deliver great customer service with helpful information for everyone. This includes improving access for underserved communities. We aim to reduce language barriers and increase access to Social Security programs, services, and benefits. If you are a person with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), know that we have the resources available to help you in your preferred language. We encourage you to learn about the resources that are available to serve LEP communities.

What resources are available?

We offer publications in languages other than English. Our non-English publications and other resources at www.ssa.gov/multilanguage are available in more than 12 languages. The multilanguage website also lists resources to support you in your preferred language.

We provide benefit information in Spanish at SeguroSocial.gov that includes:

- Retirement.
- Disability.

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Our free interpreter services are available, by phone and in person, in more than 200 languages. These services are accessible by calling our toll-free number at **1-800-772-1213** or by visiting a local Social Security office and asking for an interpreter in your preferred language.

Diversity is one of our nation's greatest strengths. We want to ensure an inclusive environment for everyone we serve. Our Language Access Plan affirms our commitment to increase access to benefits and services for people who prefer a language other than English. To learn more, we encourage you to visit www.ssa.gov/site/languages.

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Social Security Column

SOCIAL SECURITY'S TOP 5 WAYS TO PROTECT AGAINST IDENTITY THEFT



Identity theft is when someone uses your personal information to impersonate you or steal from you. It is important that you stay safe online. Please review these data privacy and identity protection resources:

1. A great online resource is www.ssa.gov/myaccount. You can visit this page to open a secure *my Social Security* account, keep track of your earnings record, and identify any suspicious activity.
2. Our blog post, *Protect Yourself from Identity Thieves*, helps you understand how to spot, prevent, and report identity theft. You can check out this blog at blog.ssa.gov/protect-yourself-from-identity-thieves.
3. In our blog post, *Protect Your Online Identity With Strong Passwords*, we encourage better password habits to keep online data and accounts safe and secure. You can check out this

blog for tips to help make sure passwords are strong at blog.ssa.gov/protect-your-online-identity-with-strong-passwords.

4. Our blog post, *Protecting Yourself from QR Code Fraud*, provides details to help safeguard from using Quick Response (QR) codes that may compromise your personal information. You can read this blog at blog.ssa.gov/protecting-yourself-from-qr-code-fraud.
5. Fraudsters use Social Security scams to mislead victims into making cash, gift card, or wire transfer payments to fix alleged Social Security number problems. Learn how to spot scams, check out our blog post *Social Security's Top 5 Scam Awareness Articles* at blog.ssa.gov/social-securitys-top-5-scam-awareness-articles.

We encourage you to help protect your vital information. Please share these resources with your loved ones.

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Social Security Column

SOCIAL SECURITY VIDEO CONNECT: CONNECT WITH US FROM ANYWHERE



We continue to find ways to make doing business with us easier. With our Social Security Video Connect option, you can conduct business with us using video on your personal device, from your preferred location.

Social Security Video Connect is available for:

- No-change replacement Social Security cards (U.S. citizens only).
- Date of birth corrections (U.S. citizens only).
- Benefit applications.
- Redeterminations.
- Overpayments.
- Medicare.

How to get started

To get started with this new service, you will need a computer, tablet, or smart phone with a webcam and internet access. Once you have your device, please complete the following steps:

1. Contact your local Social Security office or call 1-800-772-1213 between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday to schedule a video appointment. A representative will

determine if a video appointment is appropriate for you. If a video appointment isn't appropriate for your needs, we can conduct the interview over the phone or in the office.

2. Provide your email address and phone number to receive an email with a link for the Microsoft Teams meeting.
3. Connect with us using that Microsoft Teams meeting link on the date and time of your appointment.

If you run into issues with Teams or need to reschedule your appointment, please contact your local Social Security office or call 1-800-772-1213.

We strive to improve our customer service and increase the ways you can connect with us. Please share this information with your friends and family who may need it – and post it on social media.

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