

Getting a social security number

A social security number (SSN) is assigned to those who have authorization to work in the United States. If you do not have work authorization, you are not eligible for an SSN.

Students holding F-1 and J-1 status who are employed in the U.S. must apply for an SSN. F-2 dependents are not eligible to work and are not eligible for a Social Security number.

You will need to wait until you have been in the U.S. at least 10 days and registered in SEVIS by your DSO before applying for an SSN. You may not apply for a number until you have begun working, and you can be paid before you have received your SSN.

Checklist

1. Obtain proof of both employment and work authorization.

On-campus employment: A letter from your employer.

Curricular Practical Training: I-20 with CPT authorization and signature on page 2.

Optional Practical Training & Severe Economic Hardship: Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).

Students on J-1 visas must also present letters from their sponsors authorizing them to accept employment.

2. Collect the following documents and take them with you to apply for your card.

- [SS-5 Application for a Social Security Card](#)
- Proof of employment
- I-20 (Make sure this includes CPT authorization if applicable)
- I-94 card or proof of change of status to F-1 (I-797 Notice of Action)
- Passport
- F-1 Visa

3. Your Social Security card will be mailed to you anywhere from two weeks to three months. In the meantime your employer's Human Resources office may want to see your receipt showing that you have applied for a card.
4. After receiving your Social Security card, give a copy to your employer and keep it in a safe place. *The Social Security Administration advises that you should not carry your card with you.*

You do not need a number to obtain a driver's license, cell phone, credit card, insurance, or other non-work reasons.

The nearest Social Security Administration office is located at 323 Hope Dr., Winchester, VA 22601. It is open 9-noon on Wednesday, and 9-4 all other weekdays.