

SOCIAL SECURITY ONLINE

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THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE U.S. SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Search:

Retirement

Survivors

Watch a brief

video about our website

(less than two

minutes)

Disability

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Medicare

What You Can Do Online

Business Services Online

Your Social Security Earnings Statement

Estimate Your Retirement Benefits

Already Receiving Benefits

Forms and **Publications**

Report Fraud, Waste or Abuse

Find a Social **Security Office**

Careers with Social Security

Contact Us

Login

INFORMATION IF YOU ARE:

Filing Online for Retirement Benefits

Applying for Disability Benefits

Requesting a Social Security Card





Receive updates by email

QUESTIONS?

-- Choose Topic --

INFORMATION FOR...

-- Choose Group --

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Freedom of Information Act



News

Social Security Holds Third Disability Hearing on Compassionate Allowances

Court Certifies Two Nationwide Classes of Visually Impaired in Social Security Lawsuit

Social Security's New Retirement Estimator Rated the Federal Government's Best Online Service

Press Releases

More news...





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Social Security Online

FOIA | Freedom of Information Act



Freedom of Information Act

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Frequently Requested Documents

Manuals and Instructions

Privacy Impact Assessments The Freedom of Information Act allows members of the public to request records from various Federal government agencies. The FOIA was established to make the federal government accountable to the public for its actions and prevents agencies from having

secret policies.

The <u>Guide to Freedom of Information Act</u>

Requests explains how to request information and records from the Social Security

Administration, details information that we can not disclose, and outlines the various fees that are involved with a request.

In addition, you may find information on SSA's implementation of <u>Executive Order 13392 on Improving Agency Disclosure of Information</u>.

The links at the left are available to facilitate you in your search for information.

USA.gov

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Social Security Online **FOIA Home**

FOIA | Freedom of Information Act



Guide to FOIA Requests

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Freedom of Information Act Requests

Records We Make Available



Making a FOIA Request

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The Freedom of Information Act allows members of the public to request records from various Federal government agencies. The FOIA was established to make the federal government accountable to the public for its actions and prevents agencies from having secret policies.

Public Information

SSA prepares many documents for public distribution - such as leaflets about our benefits programs, press releases and reports. Many of these documents are available on SSA's Internet site at www.socialsecurity.gov. We encourage you to browse the site for documents that interest you. We do not process requests for public information materials as Freedom of Information Act requests.

Freedom Of Information Act Requests

Members of the public can get documents from Federal agencies based on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Records We Make Available

Administrative staff manuals of the Social Security Administration and Instructions to staff personnel that contain policies, procedures, or interpretations that affect the public are available for inspection and copying.

You can inspect and copy the following SSA records online, in any field office, at our headquarters in Baltimore, and at SSA hearings offices nationwide.

Program Operations Manual System (POMS)

State and Local Coverage Handbook for the Social

Security Administration and State Social Security Administrators

- Reference source for anyone who administers State Social Security coverage agreements.
- Available for inspection in SSA Regional Offices and SSA offices in State capitols.

The Handbook is also available online at: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/slge/slch.htm

SSA Organizational Chart

Shows reporting relationships within the Social Security Administrationhttp://www.socialsecurity.gov/org/

Compilation of the Social Security Law

http://www.socialsecurity.gov/OP_Home/ssact/compssa.htm

Social Security Administration Regulations

http://www.socialsecurity.gov/OP Home/cfr20/cfrdoc.htm

Social Security Rulings and Acquiescence Rulings

http://www.socialsecurity.gov/OP_Home/rulings/rulings.html

Hearings, Appeals and Litigation Law Manual (HALLEX)

http://www.socialsecurity.gov/OP_Home/hallex/hallex.htm



MAKE YOUR REQUEST ONLINE

Social Security Electronic Freedom of Information (eFOIA)

Now you can make a request online.

You can request a copy of the following online:

- Social Security Number Application (Form SS-5) of a deceased person. You can use online Form <u>SSA-711</u>.
- A computer extract of the Social Security number application. You can use online Form <u>SSA-711</u>.

You can make payment online with a secure online payment via pay.gov. You can use these credit cards:

- MasterCard
- Visa
- Discover
- American Express, and
- Diner's Club

Other Online FOIA Requests

If you would like to make an online FOIA request for records other than a photocopy of an application for a Social Security Card (SS-5) or a computer extract of a Social Security Card Application, you may make your request online using the eForm. However, there may be a fee for the information you request. After we receive your

Takes user directly to the eFOIA request screen.

request we will let you know if there is a fee. This type of request cannot be paid for online.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR REQUEST

How Do I Get This Information?

- Complete the <u>eForm</u> request to tell us what information you want. Please note that space is limited to 2000 characters.
- 2. Complete the requester's information.

Is There A Fee For This Information?

 We will let you know if there is a fee for the information that you request before we start a search. The FOIA fees are based on the grade of the employees doing the work and the amount of time spent on your request, plus 10 cents per page for photocopying.

Online service is available (Eastern time):

Our eFOIA service is available all the time, except for a brief period from 10:00 p.m. Saturday – 4:30 a.m. every Sunday.

Mail In Requests

It is easy to make a written FOIA request by mail. No form is needed. We process FOIA requests in two locations, depending on the type of request. Mark both the envelope and its contents: "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST." Be sure to include your name and address on your request. It is a good idea to include a daytime phone number or e-mail address in case we need to contact you about your request. Do not include a return envelope.

There is a form available to request copies of applications for a Social Security Number (Form SS-5) for people who are deceased. Form <u>SSA-711</u> (Adobe reader required to view) may be used for this purpose; however, you do not need to use the form. Address your request to:

Social Security Administration OEO FOIA Workgroup 300 N. Greene Street P.O. Box 33022 Baltimore, Maryland 21290-3022

You can use Form <u>SSA-714</u> (Adobe reader required) to pay by credit card.

Make checks or money orders payable to the Social Security Administration.

DO NOT SEND CASH

Frequently Requested Records and Fees

Requests for records of <u>Social Security number</u> (SSN) holders, claimants and wage earners, are covered by the fee schedule below.

Many numident records of older individuals, primarily those born in 1910 or earlier, are abbreviated records that do not contain the names of the individual's parents and may not contain the place of birth.

The Social Security Administration did not begin keeping records until November 1936.

We can not search for the SSN of anyone born before 1865.

Fees For Processing Requests For Individual's		
Social Security Record		
Request for copy of Original Application for Social Security Card (Form SS-5), SSN Provided (Printout from microfilm)	\$27	
Request for copy of Original Application for Social Security Card (Form SS-5), SSN Not Provided (Printout from microfilm)	\$29	
Request for Computer Extract of Social Security Number Application, SSN Provided (*Numident only requested)	\$16	
Request for Computer Extract of Social Security Number Application, SSN Not Provided (*Numident only requested)	\$18	
Search for Information about Death of an Individual, SSN Provided (SSA does not usually have place of death, burial, or cause of death)	\$16	
Search for Information about Death of an Individual, SSN Not Provided (SSA does not usually have place of death, burial, or cause of death) Forward a letter to inform a person about		
roiward a letter to inform a person about	⊅ ∠5	

entitlement to money

We can not search for the SSN of anyone born before 1865.

*The Numident record is a computer extract of information from the original application for a Social Security card.

Send all other FOIA requests to:

Social Security Administration Office of Public Disclosure 3-A-6 Operations Building 6401 Security Boulevard Baltimore, Maryland 21235

If you want to request a record which we don't publish or which we don't make available in one of our offices, mark your envelope and its contents "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST" and include the following:

- Information you are requesting (include as many details as possible, for example: dates, subject matter, location)
- Your name
- Your address and
- Daytime phone number or e-mail address.

DO NOT INCLUDE A RETURN ENVELOPE

You can also write or give your written request to any Social Security field office.

There may be a fee for information you requested. We will let you know if your request will cost more than \$250 before we start a search. The FOIA fees are based on the grade of employees doing the work and the amount of time spent on your request, plus 10 cents per page for photocopying.

The Hourly Fees for Search and Review Are:

Search by Grade:	
GS-1 through GS-8	\$16.00
GS-9 through GS-14	\$33.00
GS-15 or above	\$59.00

Records We Generally Can Not Disclose

The FOIA does not require agencies to disclose all records. Some examples of records we may not disclose are:

- Classified records:
- Internal personnel rules;
- · Confidential by law;
- Trade secrets or confidential financial information;
- Personal information about living people, or
- Records of investigations.

How The Privacy Act Affects Your Request

Your Own Record

If you are requesting your own record(s), we will process your request under the Privacy Act first, instead of under the FOIA.

Someone Else's Records

If you are requesting another living person's record, you need the person's written consent to disclose the record to you. In these cases, send your request, with the signed consent, to your <u>local Social Security office</u>.

Records Needed for a Social Security Benefit Application

If you need your records in connection with your claim for Social Security benefits, or if you are a representative of someone pursuing a claim for Social Security benefits; send your request to your local Social Security office.

How We Process Your Request

We try to handle your request within 20 days from the date we receive it. Sometimes it may take us longer depending on the difficulty of finding the record and how much other work we have. We process requests under a "first in" "first out" basis using the following categories:

Normal

Simple requests where the receiving office has all the information it needs for the answer. These requests will take the least amount of time to process.

Longer

These requests often require the receiving office to obtain more information from another SSA office(s).

Longest

Requests that require:

- More information or records from another SSA office or another government office(s);
- · a voluminous amount of records, or
- Additional decisions on releasing records from these offices.

These requests take the longest to answer.

Expedited Process

We provide expedited handling when the request:

- Involves an imminent threat to a person's life or physical safety, or
- Is made by a member of the media to obtain information that the public has an urgent need to know. The records would cover actual or alleged Federal Government activity.

If you think your request should be expedited, please explain your reasons fully in your request. Within 10 days from the date of your request, we will decide whether we will expedite it and notify you of our decision.

Denials And Appeals

Sometimes we cannot disclose some or all of the records you requested. When we cannot disclose some or all of the records you requested, we will send you a written denial, explaining our reason(s) and your appeal rights.



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Electronic Freedom of Information Act

www.socialsecurity.gov



General Request for Social Security Records

Form OPD Internet Request Form Approved: OMB No. 0960-0716

Do not use this form to request a photocopy or a computer extract of Social Security Number application. Please use Form SSA-711.

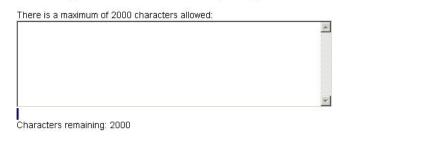
Do not use this form to request birth or death certificates, missing person information, letter forwarding or earnings information.

Please send these requests to: Social Security Administration OEO FOIA Workgroup 300 N. Greene Street P.O. Box 33022

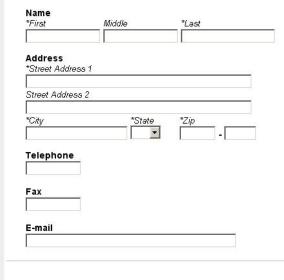
Baltimore, Maryland 21190-3022

* Indicates required information

Describe the Type of Information You are Requesting



Requester's Information



PAPERWORK/PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

Cancel

Submit

PAPERWORK/PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT: This information collection meets the clearance requirements of 44 U.S.C. §3507, as amended by section 2 of the <u>Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995</u>. You are not required to answer these questions unless we display a valid Office of Management and Budget control number. We estimate that it will take you about 3 minutes to read the instructions, gather the necessary facts, and answer the question. PLEASE READ THIS SECTION, BEFORE COMPLETING THE FORM.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT: The Social Security Administration (SSA) has the authority to collect the information requested on this form under 5 U.S.C. § 552 and the applicable regulations at 20 CFR § 402.130. The information you provide will be used to respond to your request for information or records maintained by SSA. You do not have to give us this information. However, without the information we will be unable to respond to your request.

We rarely use the information you supply for any purpose other than the one stated above. However, we may use it for the administration and integrity of Social Security programs. We may also disclose information to another person or to another agency in accordance with approved routine uses, which include but are not limited to the following:

To enable a third party or an agency to assist Social Security in establishing rights to Social Security benefits and/or coverage;

To comply with Federal laws requiring the release of information from Social Security records (e.g., to the Government Accountability Office and Department of Veterans' Affairs);

To the Department of Justice (DOJ) to defend SSA in FOIA litigation involving a record maintained in this system of records;

To a congressional office in response to an inquiry from that office made at the request of the subject of a record;

To facilitate audit or investigative activities necessary to assure the integrity of Social Security programs.

Complete lists of routine uses for this information are available in System of Records Notice 60-0340 (Electronic Freedom of Information Act (eFOIA) System). The Notice, additional information regarding this form, and information regarding our systems and programs, are available on-line at www.ssa.gov or at your local Social Security office.