

14-2069

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to Their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to provide the following information regarding the issuance of Social Security numbers to non-U.S.-citizen foreign mission members and their dependents.

**For Employment Purposes**

Social Security numbers are used to report an individual's wages to the U.S. government and to determine a person's eligibility for Social Security benefits. Most workers in the United States need a Social Security number to work, collect Social Security benefits, and receive some other government services.

One exception to this general rule is that foreign mission principals who are not U.S. citizens are not required to obtain a Social Security number to work in the United States. Such individuals do not pay Social Security taxes on their earnings and may not pay voluntary contributions to the system. However, foreign mission principals who are not U.S. citizens are eligible to apply for a Social Security number if they hold an appropriate A or G visa or green card.

Domestic workers who hold A-3 or G-5 visas are eligible to apply for a Social Security number and are required to have one if they are covered by the U.S. Social Security system.

Dependents of foreign mission members who are authorized to work in the United States, have obtained employment for an entity other than a foreign government or international organization, and are covered under the U.S. Social Security system are required to have Social Security numbers. Such individuals will be liable for Social Security taxes through their employment.

### **How to Apply**

Individuals eligible to request a Social Security number can apply for one by following the instructions at [www.ssa.gov/ssnumber](http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber). Generally, individuals must complete Form SS-5 (Application for a Social Security Card) and present the following documents: unexpired foreign passport, I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record), and I-766 (work permit, if applicable). More details and tips are included with this note and also posted in a notice located at [www.state.gov/ofm/notes/tax/ss](http://www.state.gov/ofm/notes/tax/ss).

In addition to scheduling assistance that may be available through the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) in Washington or other regions, individuals can walk into any Social Security Administration (SSA) office at their convenience for assistance. Individuals can review the notice referenced above for more

information, or e-mail [OFMSocialSecurity@state.gov](mailto:OFMSocialSecurity@state.gov) or their nearest OFM regional office with any questions.

**For Non-Employment Purposes / Requesting a Denial Letter**

The SSA advises that although many companies, such as banks and credit companies, may ask for a Social Security number, individuals who do not have one generally are not required to provide one. Individuals do not need a Social Security number to register for school or obtain private health insurance. Most organizations will identify individuals by some other means if requested.

Dependents who have not obtained work authorization and do not plan to work for an entity other than a foreign government or international organization can visit an SSA office and request a denial letter (SSA-L676), which states that the individual is not eligible for a Social Security number. This letter does not affect an individual's ability to request a Social Security number in the future. *This option is strongly encouraged for minor children.*

Enclosure: Tips for Requesting a Social Security Number

Department of State,

Washington, December 3, 2014.



## TIPS FOR REQUESTING A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

- Individuals requesting a Social Security number (SSN) must appear in person.
- You must bring the originals of the documents required (valid foreign passport, valid U.S. visa, Form I-94, and if a dependent: Form I-766).
- If possible, *in addition to the originals*, you are encouraged to bring a photocopy of your passport picture page, entry stamp, visa, I-94, and I-766.
- Fill out Form SS-5 completely and legibly. You can download and complete it in advance of your appointment (<http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf>).
  - Include your mother's name at her birth.
  - Include a correct U.S. mailing address.
- Write down the name of the Social Security Administration (SSA) officer who assists you at your appointment.
- If you do not receive your Social Security card with two months of your appointment, contact the SSA directly at 1-800-772-1213 or visit the local SSA office and ask for the SSA officer who assisted you.
- If you are a dependent (spouse or child) and you think you need an SSN but you are not employed and you do not plan to request a work authorization, visit an SSA office with your passport and I-94 and request a **denial letter** (SSA-L676). The SSA will issue you a letter while you wait that says that you are not eligible for a Social Security number. (The letter cannot be issued at the OFM Customer Service Center.) You can then present this letter to banks, vendors, or schools that insist on an SSN, and encourage them to use your PID instead. This will save you the time and trouble from having to apply and wait a number of weeks for an SSN. Obtaining this letter does not affect your ability to request an SSN in the future. **This option is strongly encouraged for minor children.**
- If you are a dependent and you plan to work for an entity other than a foreign government or international organization, you will probably need an SSN because you will be liable for Social Security tax through your employment. You will first need to request a work authorization through the Department of State.