



24-949

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. This circular note replaces the Department's circular note No. 14-2069, dated December 3, 2014.

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 members 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.

Dependents of foreign mission members who are authorized to work in the United States 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/number-card. Generally, individuals must complete Form SS-5 (Application for a Social Security Card) and must present the following documents: unexpired foreign passport, unexpired U.S. visa (A or G), I-94 (Arrival/Departure Record), and I-766 (work permit, if applicable). Details and tips for requesting a Social Security number are enclosed.

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 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 encouraged for minor children.

Enclosure (as stated):

Tips for Requesting a Social Security Number

Department of State,

Washington, May 17, 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

TIPS FOR REQUESTING A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Eligible foreign nationals who wish to obtain a Social Security number must fill out the necessary form and present proper documentation in-person to a Social Security Administration (SSA) officer for processing as follows:

- Find your local SSA office (<https://www.ssa.gov/locator/>)
- Complete **Form SS-5, Application for Social Security Card**. You can download and complete it in advance (<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>) or pick it up and complete it at your local SSA office.

It is **mandatory** that the following original items be available during your session:

- **Valid foreign passport**
- **Valid U.S. visa (A or G)**
- **Form I-94** (print at www.i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home)
- **I-766, if a dependent**

TIPS FOR EXPEDITING YOUR REQUEST

- Individuals requesting a Social Security number (SSN) must appear in person.
- You must bring the originals of the documents required.
- 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 SSA Form SS-5 completely and legibly. You can download and complete it in advance (<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/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 during your appointment.

- If you do not receive your Social Security card within 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 a Social Security number, but you are not employed and you do not plan to request 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 you are not eligible for a Social Security number. (The letter cannot be issued by OFM). 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 time and trouble from having to apply and wait weeks for an SSN. Obtaining this letter does not affect your ability to request an SSN in the future. **This option is encouraged for minor children.**
- If you are a dependent eligible for work authorization and you plan to work while in the United States, you will probably need an SSN because you will be liable for Social Security tax through your employment. You will first need to request work authorization through the Department of State Office of Foreign Missions.