

SOCIAL SECURITY CARD APPLICATION



Social Security cards are necessary in order to secure employment and receive government services and benefits. Most newcomers have a social security application submitted on their behalf upon arrival to a U.S. port of entry.

OVERVIEW

There are a few different ways that Social Security cards are processed depending on where the newcomers are arriving from and what type of immigration path they came through. If you are unsure which applies to the newcomers you are working with, connect with your local WR office for guidance. For applications filed at the US port of entry, the EAD notice receipt will arrive within 3 weeks, and the SS card within 14 days of that. Newcomers should apply at the final destination within 7 working days after arrival if application was not submitted upon arrival.

Applications Filed Prior to Arrival

Social Security number applications are currently being filed overseas for refugees processed out of:

- Resettlement Support Center (RSC) Middle East & North Africa (MENA)
- RSC Africa
- RSC Eurasia
- RSC Latin America
- RSC Turkey/Middle East (TUME)
- Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) that receive their visa from an Embassy

*If no EAD notice receipt is received within 3 weeks after arrival, a follow-up with a local SS office should take place within 4 weeks after arrival.

*If no SS card arrives within 14 days of the EAD receipt, follow-up with a local SS office within 3 working days.

Applications to be Filed Locally

All refugees and SIVs arriving through the following channels will need an application for a Social Security number to be filed once they arrive in the US.

- RSC Asia
- RSC Austria
- Refugees processed through U.S. Embassies (i.e. Visa 93 cases)
- SIVs processed through military bases

Evidence of application

When applying overseas, there is no receipt, but the application will be documented on the newcomer's Travel Letter. The Travel Letter is a refugee case's written permission for initial entrance into the US. It provides personally identifying information for all case members traveling together. It is only used for this purpose and will not be used as proof of status for applying for benefits and services. The I-94 will act as a refugee's proof of status after arrival to the U.S. Keep in mind, however, that the travel letter is a required case file document.

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Delays

If there are any delays of receipt of Social Security cards after applying locally, this will need to be reported to the local WR office/affiliate. WR will contact the appropriate external entity to report the delay and request a status update. When the process is delayed, be sure to document it in the case notes or make sure WR is aware if your group is not providing case notes. Explain the special circumstances, and what you are doing to ensure the Social Security card if your group is not providing case notes.

Where will the Social Security card be sent?

Social Security cards that are applied for upon U.S. entry will be sent to the local WR office/affiliate. Once WR receives them, they will forward them to the address of the newcomer.

Documentation

Port of Entry applications: Include in case notes that the application was confirmed via the Travel Letter.

APPLYING FOR SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS

Where to go

It is best to take newcomers to the Social Security offices closest to them. To locate an office, use the Social Security Office Locator at the SS Website. <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

Contact the local SS office to determine if you need to make an appointment. Research this prior to a newcomer's arrival for best results.

What to bring

- SS Application: Prior to the appointment, you will need to assist the newcomers in filling out one SS application per person.
- I-94 or Passports: The I-94 is an official electronic record of entry into the US for refugees. They can be accessed by World Relief shortly after entry, usually within 24 hours. If delayed, WR will need to make an official inquiry with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, but issues are usually resolved within 24-48 hours. Special Immigrant Visa holders (SIVs) have Legal Permanent Residency upon arrival to the U.S. so they will not receive an I-94 but can instead use their passport until their green card is received.
- An interpreter will not be needed to apply for Social Security cards. If the newcomers need interpretation, you can request it at the Social Security office.

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At the Social Security office

If you do not have an appointment, you will likely be given a number when you arrive. Once your number is called give the clerk the completed application and documents.

IMPORTANT: Each family member will receive a receipt proving that they have applied for a Social Security card. This receipt will be needed when visiting the Department of Social Services (DSS) soon after the Social Security appointment. These receipts are a required case file document. Allow for 2-4 weeks to receive SS card(s).

REMEMBER TO

- Log your volunteer hours on Track-it-Forward
- Log case notes if required of GNT or inform WR of:
 - SS application completed
 - Any delays of SS
 - SS card receipt

KEEP IN MIND

Allow for 2-4 weeks to receive SS cards(s).