



## Social Security & Coronavirus

### How can I stay updated about what SSA is doing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Created: March 16, 2020

Please continue to check this web page for updates. You may select *Subscribe* above to receive alerts from us when we add or change information on this page.

You also may follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

### Will I continue to receive my Social Security benefit or Supplemental Security Income payment if I use Direct Deposit?

Created: March 16, 2020

Yes. You will continue to receive your monthly benefit amount if you use Direct Deposit.

### Inspector General Warns Public About New Social Security Benefit Suspension Scam

Created: March 20, 2020

The Inspector General of Social Security, Gail S. Ennis, is warning the public about fraudulent letters threatening suspension of Social Security benefits due to COVID-19-related office closures. We will not suspend or discontinue benefits because our offices are closed to the public for in-person service. [Read the fraud advisory.](#)



## Fraud Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 20, 2020

<https://oig.ssa.gov>

### **Inspector General Warns Public About New Social Security Benefit Suspension Scam**

The Inspector General of Social Security, Gail S. Ennis, is warning the public about fraudulent letters threatening suspension of Social Security benefits due to COVID-19 or coronavirus-related office closures. The Social Security Administration (SSA) will not suspend or discontinue benefits because their offices are closed.

The Social Security Office of the Inspector General has received reports that Social Security beneficiaries have received letters through the U.S. Mail stating their payments will be suspended or discontinued unless they call a phone number referenced in the letter. Scammers may then mislead beneficiaries into providing personal information or payment via retail gift cards, wire transfers, internet currency, or by mailing cash, to maintain regular benefit payments during this period of COVID-19 office closures.

As of Tuesday, March 17, 2020, local SSA offices are closed to the public due to COVID-19 concerns; however, Social Security employees continue to work. Social Security will not suspend or decrease Social Security benefit payments or Supplemental Security Income payments due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Any communication you receive that says SSA will do so is a scam, whether you receive it by letter, text, email, or phone call.

Social Security will never:

- threaten you with benefit suspension, arrest, or other legal action unless you pay a fine or fee;
- promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment;
- require payment by retail gift card, cash, wire transfer, internet currency, or prepaid debit card;
- demand secrecy from you in handling a Social Security-related problem; or
- send official letters or reports containing personally identifiable information via email.

If you receive a letter, text, call or email that you believe to be suspicious, about an alleged problem with your Social Security number, account, or payments, hang up or do not respond. We encourage you to report Social Security scams using our dedicated online form, at <https://oig.ssa.gov>. Please share this information with your friends and family, to help spread awareness about Social Security scams.

*For more information, please visit <https://oig.ssa.gov/scam>. Members of the press may make inquiries to Social Security OIG at [oig.dcom@ssa.gov](mailto:oig.dcom@ssa.gov).*

## Will SSA provide in-person services during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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No. Please do not come into one of our local offices. We cannot accept walk-in visitors at this time.

On Tuesday, March 17, 2020, we suspended face-to-face service to the public in our field offices and hearings offices nationwide until further notice. This decision protects the population we serve—older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions—and our employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

## How can I get help from SSA?

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We will provide limited, critical services via phone, mail, and online, while we focus our efforts on serving people most in need.

- Online at [www.SSA.gov](http://www.SSA.gov) – You can conduct most business online without assistance
- By Phone
  - You can call your [local office's General Inquiry \(GI\) line](#). We have employees available to help you.
  - You can call our National 800 Number. We also offer many [automated telephone services](#) so you do not have to wait to speak with a telephone agent.



Our National 800 Number and field office staff will direct you to:

- Visit [www.SSA.gov](http://www.SSA.gov) for business you can do online.
- Call your [local office's General Inquiry \(GI\) line](#).

## What can I do online?

Created: March 18, 2020

You can conduct most business online with our secure and convenient online services available at [www.ssa.gov/onlineservices](http://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices). Our online services are available from anywhere and from any of your devices. You can:

- Apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits;
- Check the status of an application or appeal;
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas);
- Request a replacement Medicare card (You may not need to request a card: Your healthcare provider can verify Medicare eligibility if you know your Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) number.);
- Print a benefit verification letter;
- Print a SSA-1099;
- Change address;
- Set up or change direct deposit; and
- Much more.

We also have a wealth of information to answer most of your Social Security questions online, without having to speak with a Social Security representative. Please visit our online Frequently Asked Questions at [www.ssa.gov/ask](http://www.ssa.gov/ask).

## How will SSA help me by phone?

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are focusing on providing specific critical services to people in dire need. We will accept requests for dire need benefit payments, which include:

- If you did not receive your monthly payment;
- If you are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless; or
- If your benefits were suspended and can now be reinstated.

For critical payments, we will send payments by mail, or we will schedule an appointment for you to visit the office for pickup.


We will take applications for benefits and assist people already receiving benefits. We are prioritizing the critical claims first, including:

- Disability applications for the most severe disabilities including:
  - If you have a terminal illness;
  - If you are a Wounded Warrior;
  - If you may qualify for an immediate Supplemental Security Income payment based certain severe disabilities <https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-expedite-ussi.htm>;
  - If your disability qualifies for our Compassionate Allowance <https://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/> or Quick Disability Determination <https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/qdd.htm> processes.
- Medicare and Medicaid applications necessary for health-care coverage.
- Representative Payee and other changes that ensure you continue to receive benefits.
- To the extent possible, we will complete all other applications for Retirement, Survivor, Disability or Supplemental Security Income benefits.



We will take actions that could directly affect your payments including:

- Change of address;
- Change of direct deposit;
- Report of a death; and
- Representative payee changes.

 Important Note: If you already have a scheduled appointment, we will attempt to contact you by phone and/or reschedule for a telephone appointment. Our call may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. Government phone. We know that some bad actors are trying to take advantage of this situation. Please read the information at this link <https://faq.ssa.gov/en-us/Topic/article/KA-10018> to know it is SSA calling. Please remember that our employees will never threaten you or ask for any form of immediate payment.

## **If your offices are closed, will I still have my hearing?**

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Yes. We will contact you prior to your scheduled hearing to offer you a hearing by phone.

## Will SSA extend our deadlines to provide documentation and other information?

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Yes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are extending our deadlines wherever possible.

- If we asked you to contact us by a certain date, please **do not come to the office**. You can contact us once our offices reopen to the public or you can mail your documents to us. We will follow up with you once the COVID-19 public health emergency subsides.
- We are providing maximum flexibility in applying our good cause policy. This policy allows us to extend the time limits for submitting appeals and taking other actions during this public health emergency.

## What workloads is SSA not doing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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We have suspended the following workloads until further notice:

- We will not start or complete any current medical continuing disability reviews. If you have a medical continuing disability review pending, please do not request medical information from your doctors at this time. We will follow up with you for any medical evidence once the COVID-19 public health emergency subsides.
- Where possible, we are suspending our processing and collection of overpayments.
- We are not conducting organization or individual representative payee accountings.

- We will not be able to process a third party requests for information, except from appointed representatives and representative payees
- We will not process any Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

## How can I get a new or replacement Social Security number card?

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**New Card Requests:** We will continue to process new card requests through our automated processes for Enumeration at Birth, Enumeration at Entry, and Enumeration beyond Entry.

**Replacement Card Requests:** You may be able to request a replacement card online with your personal *my* Social Security account. Visit [www.ssa.gov/ssnumber](http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber) to learn how.

## How can I find out if my Social Security office is open?

Created: March 16, 2020

All local Social Security offices will be closed to the public for in-person service starting Tuesday, March 17, 2020. This decision protects the population we serve—older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions—and our employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are still able to provide critical services.

**If you need to contact your local office for a dire need situation**, please look for the general inquiry telephone number at [Social Security Office Locator](#) under “**Show Additional Office Information**” for the office you select. Please visit our [Office Closings and Emergencies](#) page for the latest information about office closings.