

Texas Foster Youth Justice Project

www.texasfosteryouth.org

(877) 313-3688

Getting a Social Security Card

- The first time you get a Social Security card, you are also given a Social Security number. Even if you replace your Social Security card, your Social Security number does not change.
- You do not need the signature of a parent or guardian to get a Social Security card.
- There is no age limit for getting a Social Security card. As long as you can fill out and sign the form, you can apply on your own.
- Getting a Social Security card and a Social Security number is always free. Getting a replacement card is always free.
- If you think you may have already been issued a Social Security number, you should try to find your original card before you ask for a replacement. This is because you can only replace your card ten times during your entire life. You can only replace your card three times during any one year.
- **I'm not sure if I've ever had a Social Security card; how do I find out? I know that I have never had a Social Security card or number; how do I get one?**
 - If you are over the age of 12, you must visit your local Social Security office with proof of your identity and citizenship. Once you have proven your identity and citizenship to their satisfaction, they will look up your records to see whether you have ever had a social security card, and help you fill out the form to either replace your old card or request a new one, depending on your situation.
 - Social Security offices see people on a drop-in basis, so you do not need to make an appointment. You should expect to have to wait a while before you can speak with someone, though.
- I know I used to have a Social Security card, but I can't find it; how do I get a replacement?
 - You may either
 - Visit your local Social Security office with proof of your identity and citizenship, and speak to a representative there who will help you.
 - or
 - Mail in proof of your identity and citizenship and a completed SS-5 application in to your local Social Security office.
 - SS-5 applications are available at <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.pdf>

- How do I prove my citizenship?
 - A certified copy of your birth certificate [See Getting a Copy of a Birth Certificate] is the best way to prove your citizenship.
 - If you cannot get a certified copy of your birth certificate, but you have a U.S. passport, that can sometimes also prove your citizenship.
- How do I prove my identity?
 - The best identification is a driver's license, state issued identification card, or U.S. passport.
 - If you do not have a driver's license, state-issued identification card, or U.S. passport, Social Security will accept other documents as proof of your identity. They decide whether your documents are enough to prove your identity on a case-by-case basis. This means that before you go in to the office, there is no way to know for sure whether your documents will be enough. It also means that you should bring as much documentation with you as you possibly can.
 - Social Security only accepts original documents and certified copies. Uncertified copies are not accepted, even if they are notarized.
 - Social Security will return your original documents to you after they are finished processing them.
 - Courts and other government offices will certify copies of their records for you, usually for a small fee.
 - If a school, hospital, or other entity that is not a government office prints out a record for you from their computer (rather than xeroxing you a copy), it can count as an original document, even though it isn't the first time someone has printed out that record.
 - Some examples of documents that can help prove your identity to Social Security:
 - A health insurance card in your name (but not a Medicare card).
 - Photo ID from your school or your work.
 - Prison or military ID.
 - Medical records or school records, if they contain your biographical information.
 - "Biographical information" means information about your name, your date of birth, your citizenship, or the city and state where you were born.
 - Your adoption decree.
 - Other court records, especially if they contain your biographical information.
 - CPS records, especially if they contain your biographical information.
 - Criminal records, especially if they contain your biographical information.

- How do I find a Social Security office?
 - Visit the website <https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp> . If you enter your ZIP code into the search form, you will get directions and a map to your nearest Social Security office. You can also find this search form through a link from the main Social Security website at <http://www.ssa.gov> .