

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

What is a Social Security Number?

A Social Security number is intended to accurately record your earnings in the United States. Most employees are required to pay a certain percentage of their earnings to the Social Security System through the Federal Insurance Compensation Act (FICA tax). However, most F-1 and J-1 employees are usually exempt from the FICA tax.

Do You Need a Social Security Number? You must have a Social Security number in order to work in the United States. However, having a Social Security Card does NOT give your authorization to work.

You only need to apply for a Social Security Number if:

- you are applying for permission for on-campus employment, or
- you are applying for permission for practical training, or
- you have been offered a graduate assistantship or fellowship

Social Security Numbers are NOT needed for:

- class registration
- opening a bank account, or cashing a check
- applying for a driver's license
- renting an apartment

How Do You Apply for a Social Security Card?

The Social Security Administration now requires that all F-1 and J-1 students must show proof of employment *before* they can be issued a Social Security Number.

Steps to Apply for a Social Security Number

Step 1 - Get a Job

You must be employed or be starting a job in the near future. Obtain a letter of offer from your employer and take that letter to the Office of International Program (OIP). ([click here](#) to download a blank on-campus employment letter, your employer may copy it on their office letterhead before filling in the details.)

Step 2 - Obtain a letter from Office of International Programs (OIP) to take to Social Security Administration

Call OIP at 464-5333 and make an appointment with an international advisor. Bring the following items to the appointment:

- your I-20 or DS-2019
- your valid passport and I-94 card
- your employment letter
- a completed [Social Security Card application](#)

On number 2 (mailing address) of the application, put down:

your name

c/o Valparaiso University

Office of International Programs - Valparaiso University
Office of International Programs

1509 Chapel Drive, 209 Harre Union

Valparaiso, IN 46383-7123

Step 3 - Go to the Social Security Administration

Take the special letter issued to you by the international advisor, your I-20 or DS-2019, passport, I-94 card, and employment letter to Social Security Administration located at:

3810 Calumet Avenue

Valparaiso, IN 46383

The office opens Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please arrive no later than 3:30 p.m

Step 4 - Your Card

It takes two weeks to process the card. You will be notified by email when your card arrives OIP. You must then come to OUR office to complete your employment paperwork before you may begin working. You are responsible for taking this paperwork to the Human Resources Office in Kretzmann Hall.

For more information on Social Security Administration, [click here](#).

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