

Social Security Number

A social security number is the U.S. equivalent of an identity number or social insurance number in other countries. You need it to do many things: open a bank account, obtain a credit card or buy a car. Be sure to keep your social security card and/or number in a safe place. Do not carry it in your wallet or have it listed on your driver's license. If this number is stolen or lost, the finder can use it to do everything you need it for and do it in your name – like opening bank accounts, obtaining credit cards etc.-this can financially ruin you. This is called identity theft. The SSA has a webpage dedicated to non U.S. citizens: <http://www.ssa.gov/people/immigrants/>. This pamphlet provides good information about identity theft: <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10064.pdf>.

You need to apply for your social security number in person at one of the local offices. You will need to bring your passport and all visa related documents (Form I-94 & Form I-797 or DS-2019).

The Cleveland offices are located at:

- 3591 Park East Drive. Beachwood, OH 44122
- 18711 Miles Avenue, Warrensville Heights, OH 44128
- 7517 Lorain Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44102
- Anthony J. Celebrezze Federal Building, Room 793, 1240 E. 9th Street, Cleveland, OH 44199.

When you can apply

H-1B holders can apply any time after arrival in the U.S.

J-1 holders need to wait until after their orientation. This is to allow time for either the IPS Team or ECFMG to validate your SEVIS record. **It is advised that you not apply until your SEVIS record has been validated. If you apply before the validation, the Social Security Administration will not be able to verify your J-1 status. This will cause further delays in processing your application.**

Dependents and Social Security Numbers

Dependents are generally not eligible for social security numbers. Only those eligible to work (J-2 with employment authorization) may apply for a number. However, for tax purposes you may be required to obtain Tax Identification Numbers (TIN) for each member of your family living with you in the U.S. You can find the application online at: <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Form-W-7,-Application-for-IRS-Individual-Taxpayer-Identification-Number>