How to Apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)

Students in F-1 Status with Optional Practical Training

The requirements for applying for a Social Security Number (SSN) vary based on your immigration status. These instructions are tailored to students in F-1 status applying for or in an approved period of Optional Practical Training (OPT). If you already have an SSN, you <u>do not</u> need to reapply.

- An SSN is required to receive wage income in the U.S. and for filing taxes. You can start working without an SSN, but you must provide it to your Human Resources (HR) office as soon as you receive it. Contact your supervisor for secure submission instructions.
- You may apply for an SSN no earlier than your EAD authorization start date.
- It is free to apply for an SSN.
- The Social Security Administration (SSA) typically takes 2 to 4 weeks for the SSA to process an SSN application.

Required Documentation to bring to SSA Appointment

- Valid passport
- [Most recent I-94](#)
- Most recent I-20 (F-1)
- *Unexpired* Form I-766 Employment Authorization Document (EAD card)
  - You can apply for an SSN throughout your employment authorization validity period but no earlier than the start date.

  Note: An ISSS SSN letter is NOT required for students in F-1 status *in an approved period of Optional Practical Training*

The SSA Application Process

Make your SSA Appointment

- After you have gathered all the required documentation (see above), complete the [Online Social Security Number Application](#) on the Social Security Administration website.
- Make an appointment after completing the online application.
- Keep a copy of your confirmation number.

Visit a local Social Security Office

- You should visit the SSA within 45 days of submitting your online application to complete the process.
- Bring your confirmation number and hard copies of the required documentation (see above).
- The closest Social Security Administration (SSA) Office to CU Boulder is 480 West Dahlia Street, Louisville, Colorado 80027.
  - You must [book an appointment](#) before you visit the Louisville SSA office
  - [Map and directions to SSA in Louisville, CO](#)
  - You may find other office locations on the [SSA website](#).
  - Check the SSA's [hours of operation](#) before going to an SSA office to submit your documentation.