

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER APPLICATION PROCESS

<https://isso.columbia.edu/content/social-security-number-application>

Why You Need a Social Security Number

To work in the U.S., an employee must have a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN) for tax withholding purposes. Columbia University is also required to participate in the federal E-Verify program, which matches employee Form I-9 information with Social Security Administration (SSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) records to confirm employment eligibility.

After completing the I-9 work authorization process at Columbia University, you may start working while you are in the process of applying for your SSN. If you do not have an SSN at the time you are hired, you will be required to provide evidence that you are in the process of applying for a Social Security Number.

Your Step-By-Step Action Plan

1. Gather your documents, including On-Campus and ISSO Social Security Letters (Step A-B)
2. Submit your SSN application and provide SOA Student Payroll with your appointment confirmation/application receipt for payroll activation (Step C)
3. Wait to receive Social Security Card in the mail
4. Sign Social Security Card and submit to SOA Student Payroll (Step D)

Step A: Pick up On-Campus Employee Letter* from SOA Student Payroll

*This step does not apply to J-1 visa holders.

Step B: Apply for the ISSO Social Security Letter

You will need a copy of your most [recent I-94 arrival record](#) to apply for the ISSO Social Security Letter. As this is a touchless application, [follow these directions for free UEMS shipping](#) and save your order number which is needed in your application in Compass. Log in to Compass with your UNI and password to request your ISSO Social Security Letter. Click on the link for your campus:

- [ISSO Morningside: F-1 Students](#)
- [ISSO Morningside: J-1 Students](#)

After you submit the request, ISSO will email you when your ISSO Social Security Letter has been processed and is ready for shipping. **You must go to the Social Security Card Center to apply for the SSN within 30 days from the date the letter is issued.**

Step C: Submit SSN Application to the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA)

Start the application process online on the SSA website and finish it in person:

- A. Go to www.ssa.gov/ssnumber and follow the prompts.
- B. After you click submit, you will be prompted to schedule an appointment by selecting a day, time, and location (123 William St, NY, NY).
 - a. Email soa-studentpayroll@columbia.edu a copy of your confirmed SSA appointment, which is needed to activate you in the payroll system to access and submit timesheets.
- C. At your appointed day and time at the SSA, check in at the kiosk. An SSA employee will then verify the information that you completed online and review your documentation. The SSA will

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not accept digital images on your phone, so be sure to take original documents and a printed version of your I-94 to your appointment.

- D. If your application is accepted by the SSA, you will receive a paper receipt. This is important because Columbia's Human Resources office requires this receipt as part of the payroll registration process.
 - a. Email SSN receipt to soa-studentpayroll@columbia.edu for our records.

Step D: Sign and Submit Social Security Card to SOA Student Payroll

As soon as your physical card arrives in the mail, notify SOA student payroll to submit a copy of the card to our office. This can be completed by stopping by our 305 Dodge office with your card or uploading via DocuSign. For DocuSign option, please request link from soa-studentpayroll@columbia.edu once you receive card.

Our office needs a photocopy of your signed card to finalize your Form I-9 and update your official employment records.

Please note: I-9s must be updated with your SSN within 60 days of your hire in order to maintain University compliance. Our office will follow up if you have not submitted your Social Security Card in a timely manner.

Timeline and Expectations

The Social Security Administration generally advises that it may take several weeks to receive your card in the mail.

You are expected to provide your official SSN within 30 days of applying. If your card has not arrived within 30 days, you must provide your hiring department with updated documentation proving that your application is still pending.

Please monitor your email and respond promptly to any follow-ups from Human Resources regarding the status of your application.

Failure to apply for an SSN when eligible, failure to provide requested documentation regarding a pending application, or failure to provide your SSN after it has been issued may affect the University's ability to comply with federal employment verification requirements and may result in further review of employment status.

If you have any questions about this process or need assistance with your employment letter, please reach out to soa-studentpayroll@columbia.edu or contact i-9information@adcu.columbia.edu.