

# Solutions, Strategies, Answers

Newsletter of the 18 Social Security Administration offices in  
Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, and Philadelphia counties



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Social Security and the Office of the Inspector General are again partnering to raise awareness about imposter scams. **Our fourth annual “Slam the Scam Day” will be March 9.** Social Security scams – where fraudsters attempt to mislead people into making cash or gift card payments to fix supposed Social Security number problems or to avoid arrest – are an ongoing problem.

**If you receive a call, text, letter, email or a social media message that does any of the following, it’s a scam:**

**Pressures you** for personal information

**Threatens** to “suspend” your Social Security number or seize your bank account

**Demands** or requests an immediate payment by gift card, prepaid debit card or by mailing cash

**Promises** to increase your Social Security payment

**Warns** of arrest or legal action

**Requests** secrecy

Scammers may use legitimate names and phone numbers of SSA employees. Do not rely on names or caller ID to verify that the caller is a government employee. Scam calls often “spoof” official government phone numbers or even numbers for local police departments. We at Social Security mainly only call people who are already conducting business with us; we do not “cold-call.”

**Don’t be a victim. Hang up on fraudsters.  
Slam the Scam!**

[Scam Alert | Office of the Inspector General \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov)



## Spotlight on ... SSI Spotlights

The needs-based Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program provides monthly cash benefits and Medicaid to people who are disabled or who are age 65 or older. They also must meet income and resource limits. You may have run into some complex situations with your clients, so perhaps our online **SSI Spotlights** page can help. Here’s a sampling of the 32 topics covered there:

**Trusts** Is the trust revocable or irrevocable? What about Special Needs Trusts and Pooled Trusts?

**The One-Third Reduction Provision** When a SSI recipient lives in another person’s household, what happens if the recipient is not paying a fair share of expenses?

**Burial Funds** How much money can a recipient set aside for burial? How can the funds be excluded from counting as a resource?

**Student Earned Income Exclusion** Find out how working students under age 22 can have some of their earnings not count against their SSI benefit.

**Interpreter Services** SSA will provide free interpreter services if an individual needs language assistance, including sign language. Read more about it here.

**Dedicated Accounts for Children** When a child is due more than six months of retroactive payments, the child’s representative payee may have to open a separate bank account.

**Continued Medicaid for People Who Work** Find out how Medicaid continues when earnings prohibit payment.

You can find all the Spotlights at:

[Links to SSI Spotlights \(ssa.gov\)](https://ssa.gov)



## Sometimes, Life Can Be Taxing

Yes, April 18 is coming, so perhaps you will find this information very timely.

**SSA-1099** is a tax form that shows the total amount of Social Security benefits received in the prior year. It is mailed each January and indicates how much Social Security income to report on a federal tax return.

Noncitizens who live outside the U.S. receive a **SSA-1042S** instead of the 1099. People who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are not issued either form because SSI is not taxable.

A replacement 1099 or 1042S is currently available. Just log in to your *my Social Security* online account and download a printable copy. [Replacement SSA-1099 | SSA](#)

**W-4V** is an IRS form used to have taxes withheld from Social Security benefits throughout the year. This is used by someone who does not want to have a big bill at tax time.

Federal taxes are due on benefits when a person's combined yearly income (*half of their Social Security plus any other earned income*) exceeds \$25,000 when filing individually or \$32,000 if filing jointly.

The withholding tax rates are either 7, 10, 12 or 22 percent of a person's Social Security,

You can mail or fax the form to your local SSA office.

[Request to withhold taxes | SSA](#)

**Tax Preparers** may want to visit our website page that highlights online services that can assist with their work. If you manage payroll responsibilities for your clients, you can use our *Business Services Online* to report employee wages and verify names and Social Security numbers for W-2s. Tax preparers must register and create a password to access *Business Services Online*.

[Information for Tax Preparers | SSA](#)

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## What is an "Effective Date" for SSI?

The month of March is chock full of notable dates on the calendar. March 16 starts the craziness of the NCAA basketball tournament. Of course, Irish eyes will be smiling on March 17. And spring will be sprung on March 21.



But, for someone who wants to file for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a key date in any month is the "**effective date**" of their application.

Here's how it works. When someone contacts us to request a claim for SSI, the effective date of their application is always the first day of the next month. So, if you call us on, say, March 10, the effective date of your application would be April 1.

Why is this important to know? Well, suppose today was March 28 and you are working with a person who wants to file. You intend to contact us to request a claim, but you are busy with other things and decide you will call us "next week." The problem here is "next week" is now sometime in April, which means the application effective date now will be May 1. That small delay in requesting the claim would cost the person a month's worth of cash benefits and Medicaid entitlement if the person later gets benefits.

Just to be clear, there is no retroactivity with SSI claims. On the other hand, claims for Social Security retirement, disability or survivors benefits could be retroactive anywhere from six months to one year.

**People who want to request a SSI claim can do so on our website.** Or, if you want to help someone else apply, you likewise can request a claim online. Doing this online will "protect" the person's application date, ensuring that they have the earliest "effective date" possible. The online request process will take about 5 to 10 minutes. We ask for the applicant's name, date of birth, Social Security number, mailing address and phone number. Afterwards, SSA schedules an appointment date within 7-14 business days and will notify the applicant by mail (and email, if provided).

[Get Started to Apply for SSI | SSA](#)