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Social Security Column

ACCESS SOCIAL SECURITY FROM JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE

By Jacqueline Weisgarber

Social Security Public Affairs Specialist in Richmond, Virginia



You can access our programs and services from just about anywhere with your personal and secure *my Social Security* account. It's easy to sign up for one, and it will give you access to important information you can't find anywhere else. With your personal *my Social Security* account, you can:

- Use our Retirement Calculator to compare future benefit estimates for different dates or ages to begin receiving benefits.
- Check the status of your application or appeal for benefits.
- Review your work history.
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most States).

If you already receive benefits, you can also:

- Get a benefit verification or proof of income letter.
- Set up or change your direct deposit.
- Change your address.
- Request a replacement Medicare card.

- Get a Social Security 1099 form (SSA-1099).

You can even use your personal *my Social Security* account to opt out of receiving certain notices by mail, such as the annual cost-of-living adjustments and the income-related monthly adjustment amount notice. These notices are now available in your Message Center when you sign in to your account.

Please let your friends and family know that they can create their own *my Social Security* account today at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

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Social Security Column

NEW BENEFIT VERIFICATION LETTERS

By **Jacqueline Weisgarber**

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We are excited to announce the release of a new, standardized Benefit Verification letter.

People receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits can obtain their letter by using their personal *my Social Security* account. You can use the letter as proof of income for loans, housing assistance, mortgage, and other verification purposes.

Please create your personal *my Social Security* account to access your new Benefit Verification letter online in a safe, quick, and convenient way without needing to contact us. People not receiving benefits can use their account to get proof that they do not receive benefits, or proof that benefits are pending, in the same standardized letter. Individual representative payees can also use the new *my Social Security* Representative Payee Portal to access the new Benefit Verification letter online for themselves or their beneficiaries.

You can access your Benefit Verification letters at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. If you don't want to use your personal *my Social Security* account, you can call our National 800 Number to speak

with a representative or to use the Interactive Voice Response system. You can also contact your local office.

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Social Security Column

SOCIAL SECURITY CAN HELP WITH YOUR PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF SUPPORT

By Jacqueline Weisgarber

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If you rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments or Social Security Disability (SSDI) benefits and want to start working or return to work, we can help. A Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) is a rule under SSI to help people with disabilities return to work. If you receive SSI or could qualify for SSI after setting aside income or resources so you can pursue—or achieve—a work goal, you could benefit from a PASS.

How does a PASS help someone return to work?

- We base SSI eligibility and payment amounts on income and resources (things of value that the individual owns).
- PASS lets a disabled individual set aside money and things he or she owns to pay for items or services needed to achieve a specific work goal.
- The objective of the PASS is to help disabled individuals find employment that reduces or eliminates SSI or SSDI benefits.

You can read all about the PASS program at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11017.pdf.

The plan must be in writing, and Social Security must approve it beforehand. To start, contact your local Social Security office for an application (Form SSA-545-BK) or you can access the form at www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-545.html.

There are many people who can help you write a PASS, including a Ticket to Work service provider, a vocational counselor, or a relative. Social Security's Ticket to Work (Ticket) program supports career development for SSDI beneficiaries and SSI recipients who want to work and progress toward financial independence. The Ticket program is free and voluntary. Please call the Ticket to Work Help Line at 1-866-968-7842 or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET to learn more about the Ticket program.

Your job isn't just a source of income — it can be a vehicle to independence or a beginning to fulfilling your dreams. Let Social Security's PASS help you achieve your goals.

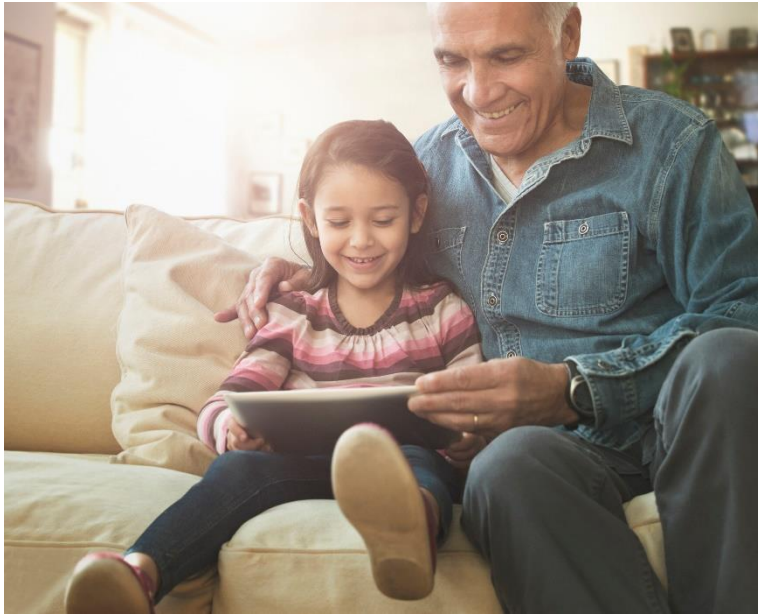
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Social Security Column

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SECURITY SURVIVORS BENEFITS

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We are here for surviving family members when a worker dies. In the event of your death, certain members of your family may be eligible for survivors benefits. These include widows and widowers, divorced widows and widowers, children, and dependent parents.

The amount of benefits your survivors receive depends on your lifetime earnings. The higher your earnings, the higher their benefits. That's why it's important to make sure your earnings history is correct in our records. You can do this by creating a personal *my Social Security* account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. A *my Social Security* account is secure and gives you immediate access to your earnings records, Social Security benefit estimates, and a printable *Social Security Statement* to see an estimate of survivors benefits we could pay your family.

You may also want to visit our Benefits Planner for Survivors to help you better understand your and your family's Social Security protections as you plan for your financial future at www.ssa.gov/planners/survivors.

Please visit www.ssa.gov or read our publication Survivors Benefits at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10084.pdf for more information. You can also help us spread the word by sharing this information with your family and friends.

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Social Security Column

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM EXPERTS CAN ANSWER YOUR IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

By **Jacqueline Weisgarber**

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There are many online resources about Social Security, so it is important that you come to us as the first place for answers. You can find many of the answers about our programs and services on our Frequently Asked Questions page at [faq.ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov/faq). We feature our most-asked questions at the top of the page to help you find answers to the most common questions quickly, like:

- Are Social Security services affected by Coronavirus (COVID-19)?
- What should I do if I receive a call from someone claiming to be a Social Security employee?
- How do I change or correct my name on my Social Security number card?
- How do I apply for a new or replacement Social Security number card?
- How can I get a Social Security Statement that shows a record of my earnings and an estimate of my future benefits?

You can also browse by topics like:

- Disability.
- Social Security Payments.
- Retirement.
- Medicare.

You can visit our publications library at www.ssa.gov/pubs for detailed information on nearly all of our topics. We make each publication available in text, audio, and downloadable formats.

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