

## Administration for Children &amp; Families

OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

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**TO:** STATE REFUGEE COORDINATORS  
NATIONAL VOLUNTARY AGENCIES  
OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

**FROM:** Carmel Clay-Thompson, Acting Director  
Office of Refugee Resettlement

**SUBJECT:** Change in Issuance of [Social Security Numbers to Asylees](#)

**As of April 4, 2001, asylees should receive unrestricted social security cards.** An asylee's social security card should NOT contain the notation "Valid For Work Only With INS Authorization." In addition, asylees no longer need an employment authorization document (EAD) to apply for a social security number. Asylees may present an I-94 Arrival/Departure Card, an EAD (I-688B or I-766) or an order of an Immigration Judge. This policy is reiterated in the attached Social Security Administration (SSA) Policy Instruction. ORR recommends that asylees bring a copy of the SSA Policy Instruction when they go to social security offices to apply for social security numbers.

With this policy change, asylees will not need to wait for the processing of their EAD application by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) before applying for a social security number. Therefore, ORR expects that asylees will be able to enter the workforce more quickly, participate fully in ORR programs, such as the Matching Grant program, and avoid the need for non-work social security numbers for benefits purposes. In many cases, asylees will want an EAD, regardless of whether it is required for the social security number application. ORR encourages asylees to apply for EADs, particularly if they do not have other forms of identification.

Asylees who previously received restricted social security cards may return to the local SSA office and apply for a replacement social security card that does not have the restrictive notation. As mentioned above, asylees should bring a copy of the SSA Policy Instruction when they go to social security offices.

If you have questions about the new [SSA Policy Instruction](#) or its effect on asylees, please call Anna Marie Bena at (202) 260-5186 or send an email to [abena@acf.dhhs.gov](mailto:abena@acf.dhhs.gov).

Enclosure