

Social Security Online

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Immigration



Documents You Need To Work In The U.S.

Who is authorized to work?

All refugees have employment authorization based on their status as refugees.

All individuals granted asylum are authorized to work based on that status. An asylee does not need to show an employment authorization document as proof of employment authorization when applying for a Social Security number and card. However, some asylees may have those documents and provide them as evidence supporting their application.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) now considers aliens granted asylum to have permanent employment authorization and requests that we treat them as permanent resident aliens. This means that when an individual granted asylum submits appropriate documentation with an SS-5, we will issue an unrestricted Social Security card.

Like refugees, asylees are eligible for assistance and services from the Office of Refugee Resettlement for a limited period of time starting with the date asylum is granted. Because asylees need to be enrolled in certain programs within 31 days of the date they are granted asylum, it is important that the Social Security Administration assign them numbers and issue their cards quickly.

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), a separate office from DHS, also processes requests for asylum and may grant asylum.

NOTE: This does not apply to an individual who has applied for asylum or who has been recommended for asylum.

What document does an asylee need to show to get a Social Security number and card?

When an asylee applies for an original or replacement Social Security card, Social Security will accept as proof of alien status any of the following:

- An I-94 with a stamp showing the individual is granted asylum under section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). NOTE: Some I-94s issued to asylees are stamped or

annotated "EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZED," and some are not. An individual who has been granted asylum does not need an annotation on the I-94 or an employment authorization document to be issued an Social Security number and card for work purposes.

- An employment authorization document (either Form I-688B showing "274A.12(a)(5)" on the face of the card under Provision of Law or Form I-766 showing "A5" on the face of the card under Category); or
- An order of an Immigration Judge granting asylum under the INA. The document must be the original decision (not a copy) printed on paper stock bearing the letterhead "United States Department of Justice, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Immigration Court" and show the city where the immigration court is located.

NOTE: If you're a noncitizen, we must verify your documents with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) before we issue a Social Security number or replacement card. Most of the time, we can quickly verify your documents online with DHS. If DHS can't verify your documents online, it may take several weeks or months to respond to Social Security's request. For more details, please see the answer to the Frequently Asked Question, [How is SSA protecting Social Security numbers?](#)

