



## NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

### COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Updates

*If you have questions about any of the below, please contact Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc. If you live in Erie or Niagara county, call (716) 847-0650. If you live in Genesee, Wyoming or Orleans county, call (585) 343-5450. Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) is not able to accept walk-in clients at this time. If you need help, please do not come to our office. Our reception staff will answer your calls and connect you with an NLS advocate who can help you with your legal problem.*

### Social Security (Retirement/Disability/Survivor's) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

#### Will I continue to receive my Social Security (Retirement / Disability / Survivor's) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment?

Yes – if you receive a paper check, you will still receive it in the mail. Direct deposit will also continue. If you are interested in setting up direct deposit, please go to: <https://www.ssa.gov/deposit/>.

Social Security is also warning about fraudulent letters threatening to stop Social Security benefits due to COVID-19-related office closures. Social Security IS NOT suspending or discontinuing benefits because their offices are closed to the public for in-person service. [Read the fraud advisory.](#)

Additionally, Social Security is also warning about scammers that are offering COVID-19 tests to Medicare beneficiaries in exchange for personal details, including Medicare information. However, the services are unapproved and illegitimate. [Read the full fraud advisory.](#)

#### Are Social Security offices open during the COVID-19 pandemic?

No. Do not go to your local Social Security office. They are not accepting walk-in visitors until further notice.

If you do need help, Social Security is providing some services via phone, mail and online. Most business can be accomplished on <http://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices>. You can also call your local office with questions.

To find your local office's phone number, visit <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>. Some of the Social Security offices in Western New York are:

- Batavia: 1-866-931-7103 or TTY: 1-585-344-4809
- Buffalo: 1-800-772-1213 or TTY: 1-800-325-0778
- Dunkirk: 1-888-862-2139 or TTY: 1-716-366-0344
- Jamestown: 1-877-319-3079 or TTY: 1-716-487-9055
- Niagara Falls: 1-877-480-4992 or TTY: 1-716-283-2614

- Olean: 1-877-319-5773 or TTY: 1-716-376-8932
- West Seneca: 1-800-772-1213 or TTY: 1-800-325-0778

You can also call the national hotline at **1-800-772-1213** (TTY **1-800-325-0778**).

### What can I get done online?

Among other things, you can

- Apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits;
- Check the status of your application or appeal;
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas);
- Request a replacement Medicare card (if you know your Medicare number, that's all your health care provider should need, though);
- Print a benefit verification letter;
- Print a SSA-1099;
- Change address; and
- Set up or change direct deposit.

For more information, please visit Social Security online Frequently Asked Questions at [www.ssa.gov/ask](http://www.ssa.gov/ask).

### What help can I get from Social Security over the telephone?

Please see below which number you should call for which issue:

#### **When to call the local Field Office (see phone numbers above:**

Field office employees can help you with the following issues:

- Taking disability and survivor applications for the most severe disabilities, including:
  - If you have a terminal illness;
  - If you are a Wounded Warrior;
  - If you may qualify for an [immediate Supplemental Security Income payment based on certain severe disabilities](#); and
  - If your disability qualifies for a [Compassionate Allowance](#) or [Quick Disability Determination](#) processes.
- Resolving payment-related issues:
  - If you did not receive your monthly payment;
  - If you are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
  - If you received an overpayment letter and need to request a reduced repayment schedule or request a waiver; or
  - If your benefits were suspended and can now be reinstated.

#### **When to call the National 800 Number [1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778)]:**

Social Security's 800# agents can assist with the following limited transactions:

- If you are not receiving benefits:
  - Scheduling a telephone appointment to apply for disability and survivor benefits
  - If you have a terminal illness;
  - If you are a Wounded Warrior;
  - If you may qualify for an [immediate Supplemental Security Income payment based on certain severe disabilities](#);
  - If your disability qualifies for our [Compassionate Allowance](#) or [Quick Disability Determination](#) processes; and
  - Other applications for benefits including retirement, survivors, Social Security disability, Medicare, and Supplemental Security Income claims.
- If you are receiving benefits:
  - Resolving payment-related issues including:
    - Change of Address;
    - Direct Deposit Change;
    - Death Reports;
    - Requests to reinstate benefits; and
    - Reports of non-receipt of payment. (Note: If you are reporting a non-receipt of payment, we will investigate and send payments by mail, or we will schedule an appointment for you to visit the office for pickup.)
- Other critical actions such as taking Medicare and Medicaid applications necessary for health-care coverage.
- Handling Representative Payee and other changes that ensure you continue to receive benefits.

### What should I do if I have an appointment already scheduled with Social Security?

Social Security will attempt to contact you by phone and/or reschedule for a telephone appointment. Social Security's call may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. Government phone. Be aware that there are bad actors trying to take advantage of this situation. Please read the information at this link (<https://faq.ssa.gov/en-us/Topic/article/KA-10018>) to know it is Social Security calling. Please remember that Social Security employees will never threaten you or ask for any form of immediate payment.

Social Security will contact you before your scheduled hearing to offer you a hearing by phone.

### Will Social Security extend deadlines to provide documentation and other information?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Social Security has stated it is extending deadlines wherever possible.

If Social Security asked you to contact them by a certain date, please do not go to their office. You can contact Social Security once their offices reopen or you can mail your documents to them.

Social Security will follow up with you once the COVID-19 public health emergency is over.

## What has Social Security stopped doing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Social Security has stopped doing the following until further notice:

- Social Security will not move forward with any medical continuing disability reviews. If you have a medical continuing disability review going on, please do not ask for medical information from your doctors at this time. Social Security will follow up with you for any medical evidence once the COVID-19 public health emergency ends.
- Where possible, Social Security is suspending processing and collection of overpayments.
- Social Security is not conducting organizational or individual representative payee accountings.
- Social Security will not be able to process third party requests for information, except from appointed representatives and representative payees
- Social Security will not process any Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

## Can I still get a new or replacement Social Security number card?

You may be able to request a replacement card online with your personal my Social Security account. Visit [www.ssa.gov/ssnumber](http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber) to learn how.

For more information, visit [www.ssa.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus).