Frequently Asked Questions About Applying for a Social Security Number

1. Do I need to get a Social Security Number (SSN) while I am living in the US?

No. You can live in the US and do many of the things that American citizens do- like open a bank account and get a driver's license- without having the SSN. Some banks and Motor Vehicle offices are more knowledgeable than others about regulations regarding international students, so please visit our office in person if you would like help locating a knowledgeable bank or Motor Vehicle office.

In some instances, it seems that the SSN is required. For example, most cell phone providers ask for the SSN to run a credit check. However, most companies (i.e., AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon) offer prepaid plan options you can purchase as an alternative. The SSN might also be asked for when you start your electric or water services, but in most cases, you can ask to submit a signed affidavit instead of the SSN (or pay a deposit instead). Ask your provider what options you have if you do not have the SSN.

2. How do I get a Social Security Number (SSN)?

The ONLY way to get a Social Security Number (SSN) is to get a job. The process of applying for the SSN is as follows:

- Find a job using the Student Employment website.
- Once hired, have your employer complete Section 1 of the Employment Verification Form found here. The form can be completed electronically.
- You should complete Section 3: Terms and Conditions
- Submit your Employment Verification Form with Section 1 and Section 3 completed through Terra Dotta.
- An ISS staff member will review and process your request within 5-7 business days. You will be notified by email when it is ready and that email will contain additional instructions.
- After you have gone to the Social Security Administration and have a receipt for your SSN application, take all required documents to the Office of Student Employment in Yost 412. Student Employment has guidelines for international students on its website here.

3. Where is the Social Security Administration located?

Directions to 3 local SSA offices are listed on the Employment Verification Form; however your zip code determines which office you should visit for service.

We recommend that you consult the Social Security Administration's website or contact 1-800-772-1213 for more information about your local office and its operating hours to plan your visit.