



SOCIAL SECURITY QUICK FACTS

- All J-1 participants must apply for a Social Security Number (SSN)
- Most participants will arrive at your workplace without having applied
- It is legal for J-1 participants to work and be paid before they receive their SSN, as long as they have applied with Social Security.

EMPLOYER BEST PRACTICE

- If you have a large number of J-1 participants, it is often helpful to develop a relationship with your local Social Security office
- If you have large groups arriving at the same time, they may be able to visit your work site and process applications at your orientation sessions
- Encourage students to use the employer’s address to send SSN as student housing tends to change frequently

I-94-PROCEDURE

Students will need a copy of their I-94 (record of admission) for employment authorization (Form I-9) as well as when they apply for their social security number. The paper version of Form I-94 is no longer provided to travelers upon arrival. The form can be printed from www.cbp.gov/I94. Upon entering the U.S., participants will receive a paper with instructions on how to access the website.

HOW YOUR J-1 PARTICIPANT SHOULD APPLY FOR A SSN

1. Register for SEVIS at least 5 days before applying – See SEVIS Knowledge Base
2. Apply in person at a Social Security Office – find a Social Security Office online here: <http://ssa.gov/locator>
3. Bring their passport, CIEE job offer and DS-2019 as well as a valid mailing address with them to apply. Students are recommended and encouraged to use their employer address.
4. Get a receipt/proof of application before leaving the Social Security Office
5. Students should receive their SSN in 2-6 weeks, depending on the volume at their local office
6. If students do not receive a letter or card in the mail in 2-3 weeks, they should visit the nearest Social Security Office with their passport, DS-2019, CIEE job offer and have a valid mailing address.
7. Contact CIEE if there are problems with a student’s application or you need our assistance in navigating the process

If there are any questions about when a participant should apply for their SSN, please call your local Social Security office to ask their advice.

Your Participant’s Responsibilities	Your Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Apply for their Social Security Number no later than ten days after arriving to the U.S. o Show proof of their application using one of the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Copy of the application form that they submitted o Acknowledgement letter or receipt from the Social Security Office o Signed statement that they have applied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Advise them they are required to apply for a Social Security number in order to be paid o Collect the following below prior to them starting work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Copies of all of their documents which would include DS-2019 Form, I-94 print out, J1 visa, passport photo page, U.S. entry stamp o Local address and U.S. phone number o Emergency contact o Home address (for W-2 purposes)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How should I pay students prior to the arrival of their SSN?

Check with your payroll company. Many employers use a dummy SSN as a placeholder. Once the real numbers arrives go in and change it out in your payroll system. The dummy number should be different for each student.

Can I allow my J-1 participants to start work before their SSN is issued?

It is legal for J-1 participants to work and be paid before they receive their SSN, as long as they have applied with Social Security. Our attorneys have carefully reviewed the laws involving Social Security Numbers and have advised us on the following. For more information, read their Legal Opinion Letter, available at www.ciee.org/work-travel-usa/employers/support/compensation/.

I did not receive a SSN from my J-1 participant. What should I do?

Contact them and ask them to provide it to you—they are legally required to provide their SSN to their employer

- If you are not able to contact them, contact CIEE to see if we can provide updated contact information
- If they were never issued a number, or they cannot be reached, see below for how to file wage reports without a SSN

You should always ask your participants to leave their home address, email address, and phone number, so that they can be contacted after returning home in the event of SSN issues. CIEE can also assist employers with reaching participants in these situations.

How do I file wage reports if I do not have their SSN?

The IRS provides instructions to employers for filing W-2/W-3 forms if they do not know their employee's SSN. If the employer must have the number, they can make a formal request to the Social Security Administration on company letterhead, stating that the number is needed for wage reporting purposes. The request must include the employer's contact details, the participant's full name, gender and date of birth, and proof that the individual worked for the employer in question. Requests should be taken to the closest SSA field office whenever possible but requests can be mailed if distance is a problem. If a request is mailed, it is a good idea to follow-up by phone two weeks later. If you receive their number after filing your wage reports to the IRS, you should file a form W-2c (Corrected Wage and Tax Statement) for the participant. Visit www.ssa.gov for instructions.

What if a participant is late filing their SSN application?

If the participant files their application late, causing reasonable doubt that they will receive it prior to returning home, they should file a form SS-7028 along with their SS-5 application. This form is used to authorize the Social Security Administration (SSA) to disclose the participant's number directly to their employer. SSA requests that employers/participants only use this form when the number is not likely to be issued before the end of the participant's program. Under normal circumstances, SSA encourages participants to only file the standard form SS-5 and rely on the established application process.

I received the participant's Social Security card at my address after my J-1 participant left. What do I do?

If you are not able to mail it directly to your participant, you can mail it to CIEE and we will forward it to them. If you have been assigned an International Recruitment Coordinator, you can send it to them. Otherwise, please send it to our Customer Service Center at: CIEE Customer Service, 300 Fore Street, Portland, ME 04101.

What if the student's SSN never arrives?

If a student leaves the U.S. before they receive their SSN, the student should call the Social Security office where they applied and ask them to supply the SSN over the phone so that they can provide it to you. If you need additional documentation for tax filing purposes, you can complete the W-2/W-3 filing [here](#) when you complete your taxes.



KNOWLEDGE BASE

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Internal Revenue Service

1.800.829.4933

www.irs.gov

Social Security Administration

1.800.772.1213

www.ssa.gov/employer

Employer Customer Service: 1-866-609-CIEE
Participant Customer Service: 1-888-COUNCIL

hire@ciee.org
contact@ciee.org

www.ciee.org/hire/work
www.ciee.org/wat