

Solutions, Strategies, Answers

Newsletter of the Social Security Administration Offices in
Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, and Philadelphia counties



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Welcome to the May 2022 **Solutions, Strategies, Answers**, a newsletter produced by Social Security Administration offices in southeastern Pennsylvania

New Way to Request an Application for SSI

We are pleased to tell you about a new [tool](#) people can use to tell us they, or someone they are helping, wants to apply for [Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\)](#) and other benefits. The process takes only five to ten minutes and asks for basic information about the person who wants to apply for SSI. A Social Security Administration representative will schedule an appointment and send the appointment information by mail (or email, if provided). In some cases, a SSA representative may call to schedule the appointment.

Using this tool documents an intent to file an application and establishes a protective filing date. The protective filing date determines when payments can begin if an application is approved.

Certain third parties, such as parents of minor children, family members, representatives, or members of advocacy groups, can also use the tool to express interest about applying for SSI on behalf of someone they are helping. For someone is unable to use the tool, we will continue to establish the protective filing date based on a written statement of intent to apply or an oral inquiry about program eligibility.

This tool is part of our ongoing commitment to expanding online services and making it easier for people who face barriers to service to get the support they need from us. If you have any questions, please email us at OEA.Net.Post@ssa.gov.



In-Person Service Resumes at SSA Offices

Social Security offices resumed providing in-person services, including for people without an appointment, on April 7. However, we ask that before people come in, that they first consider conducting business online or by telephone.

“To avoid waiting in line, I strongly encourage people who can, to use our online services at www.socialsecurity.gov, or to call us, and schedule appointments in advance rather than walking in without an appointment,” said SSA Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi. “Phone appointments can save you a trip to a busy office. I thank the public for your patience as we work to increase service.”

Customers who walk in without appointments may encounter longer waits. Be aware that offices tend to be the busiest the first thing in the morning, early in the week, and during the early part of the month. We require certain safety measures, including making and physical distancing. We will provide masks to the public and employees as needed. To learn more, please visit: www.socialsecurity.gov/coronavirus/gethelp and www.socialsecurity.gov/online-services/.



May ... Means Many Things ...

The month of May brings us those long-awaited flowers, the three-year-olds running down in Louisville, and a special day for that extra-special person who always seemed to be there when we needed her most. But, at the very end of May, we take a time-out from spring fun activities to pause and reflect.

On Memorial Day we remember all those who *died* in the military service of our country. In this regard, it is different than November's Veterans Day, which celebrates those who honorably served. This year Memorial Day will take place on May 30, which was its fixed date for over 100 years until it was changed in 1970 to the last Monday in May.

When a servicemember dies, certain family members may be eligible for benefits through Social Security survivor's program. Since so many of the military personnel who are killed in conflict are of a younger age, we are focusing here on benefits categories for young families:

Surviving spouse – A widow or widower of any age who is caring for a child of the deceased servicemember is eligible. The child in care must be under age 16 or have a disability for the surviving spouse to receive benefits.

Children – A child of the deceased servicemember can receive benefits up to age 18 (*or 19 if the child is a full-time student in an elementary or secondary school*). Young adults age 18 or older who were disabled before age 22 can also be eligible under the Disabled Adult Child benefit.

For information on survivor benefits for various situations, go to <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/survivors/>



"Equitable Relief" for Some Medicare Enrollments and Disenrollments

Recent systemic technical issues surrounding our national toll-free 800 number and local office general inquiry phone lines may have caused difficulties for some people attempting to contact us. Therefore, people seeking to submit Medicare enrollment or disenrollment requests who were unable to reach us due to telephone or fax issues since January 2022 will be granted additional time. This "equitable relief" will be available through December 30, 2022.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is providing equitable relief to individuals who could not submit premium-Part A (Hospital Insurance) or Part B (Medical Insurance) enrollment or disenrollment requests timely. This relief applies to the three Medicare 2022 enrollment periods - the General Enrollment Period (GEP), Initial Enrollment Period (IEP), and Special Enrollment Period (SEP).

We will consider equitable relief on a case-by-case basis for individuals who allege having experienced difficulty submitting timely requests. We are currently working to resolve the phone issues with our vendors.

For more information, call 1-800-772-1213 or go to <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/>

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