

If you do not have a visa that is eligible for employment, then you cannot get a Social Security Number.

All F- and J- visa holders can get:

Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN)

Take your I-20, your passport, your I-94 card and go to the

FALLS BUILDING

22 North FRONT STREET

4th Floor Suite 400

This is downtown, about 6 miles west of campus. Union Avenue is usually your best route to Front Street.

This is the **local Internal Revenue Service Office**. This office issues official U.S. Government Taxpayer identification numbers. **You must apply in person.** You can **not** apply by phone or by mail.

NOTE: ANY F- or J visa holder who does not qualify for a social security card must get this kind of number. This includes spouses!

Caution: Even if a company or agency has an official policy for international students with no SS#, the front desk staff may not know about it. That well-meaning but untrained person may turn away a qualified international student, simply because they are not familiar with all of their company's policies. Simply ask to speak with a person with more experience with internationals.

Why do businesses want that number anyway?

Businesses and landlords ask for a social security card because they routinely check a person's credit history. However, international students who are new to the U.S. do not have any credit history, and it is useless for these businesses to ask for a SSN.

Many businesses will say that a social security number is mandatory. However, this is misleading. Social Security numbers are the most common form of identification in the U.S., but they are **NOT** the only form of acceptable identification.

In the University of Memphis area, most landlords, banks and utility companies have grown accustomed to working with international students, and will accept a University of Memphis I.D. card, form I-20AB and passport.

The Tennessee Department of Motor Vehicles has an official policy for international students without a SSN. Pick up a copy in 102 Old Brister!



<http://CIPSwb.memphis.edu>

Social Security

Where to go?

What to bring?

Do I qualify?

Bring your PASSPORT, I-20 or IAP-66, I-94 card, proof of a job offer, and a letter from the International Students Office, showing that you have begun the enrollment process at the U of M.

You must bring **ALL** these documents, or your application will be denied.

1330 Monroe Ave.

This is at the Intersection of Monroe and Cleveland. West of the Campus, towards downtown. Check this website for map and phone numbers and directions. Use zip code 38104 for your search.

<http://s3abaca.ssa.gov/pro/fo/fo-form.cgi>

OR, you may catch the MATA Bus #2 by the Smith Chemistry bldg. on Walker. Depart bus at Madison and Cleveland. Walk SOUTH one block to Monroe.

3220 Players Club Parkway

This is **very far** from the Campus, in East Memphis. Check this website for map and phone numbers and directions. Use zip code 38117 for your search.

<http://s3abaca.ssa.gov/pro/fo/fo-form.cgi>

What if I don't qualify for a SSN yet?

There is another government-issued number that works like a SSN! *(see inside)*

Remember the Easy Steps:

1. **Arrive prepared.** Bring any and all documents that an agency could ask for. Students need to bring their passport, I-20 or IAP-66, I-94 card, and U of M I.D. card. **For Social Security cards, bring a letter** or contract, or copy of completed job application from your on-campus employer!

2. **Plan your time carefully.** Don't expect to get your driver's certificate or bank account on a one-hour lunch break. Be prepared for long lines and considerable waits. If you are rushed, it is easy to become impatient and frustrated with the process.

3. **Know the rules** that protect you. **Banks have a special form, called a W-8, that internationals use in place of Social Security Cards.** The Tennessee Department of Motor Vehicles has an official memo to their employees listing all visa types that are not required to show SS# for driver's certificate.

4. **Remain calm and polite.** Usually, front desk staff are willing to work with customers as long as communications remain civil. Losing your temper, yelling, or other displays of anger rarely achieve progress. However, it is appropriate to ask to speak with a manager or supervisor if you believe it would help the situation.

5. **When applying for a social security card:** Currently, the Social Security offices in Memphis require that F-1 and J-1 visa holders bring their passport, I-20 or IAP-66, I-94 card, and an official school letter or a photocopy of a completed job application. Additionally, you **MUST** be registered in SEVIS. They will **NOT** issue social security cards without **ALL** of these items!

6. For F-2 and non-employed F-1, J-1 and J-2 visa holders, **taxpayer I.D. numbers (ITIN)** are available. Many businesses accept these numbers in place of social security numbers.

7. When all else fails, **leave and come back later with re-enforcements.** If no one can help you at the time you visit a business or agency, come back when a higher-level authority is available. If the International Student's Office can be of assistance, ask for an official letter on your behalf. There are always other paths to achieving your goal.



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Driver's Licenses

You do **NOT** need to have a social security number to get a driver's license, **IF** you have an F or J visa.

You **DO** need to bring your passport, I-20 and be ready to take the written and driving tests, and be ready to pay the fee for the license.

If you have a driver's license from another country, you should skip the driving test if you turn in your home country license. Most people want to keep their home country license, and choose to take the driving test.

Be prepared for very long lines at the driver's license office. It is common to wait for more than 2 hours to get to take your test. The lines are usually shorter at testing centers outside of the city limits, or in nearby rural counties.

Study for the written test for your drivers' license at:

www.state.tn.us/safety/handbook.htm

Find all drivers license offices in Tennessee, including maps showing how to get there:

www.state.tn.us/safety/whered1.htm

For more information on Form W-8

BEN: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/iw8ben.pdf>