

Walk-in service at Social Security offices still on hold



Evelyn Linares
Guest columnist

Question: Are Social Security services affected by coronavirus? — B. Garcia, Hialeah Gardens

Answer: We are still able to provide critical services. Please note that all local Social Security offices are closed for walk-in service, though an in-person appointment may be possible.

This decision protects the population we serve — older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions — and our employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our local office employees are answering calls to their office and our telephone representatives are answering calls to our national 800 number (1-800-772-1213).

Our website offers many safe and secure self-help services and a wealth of information to help you.

Please read our COVID-19 information page to learn more, including how to get help from the Social Security Administration by phone and online.

Question: What is a “my Social Security” online account and how do I get one? — I. Zayas, Doral

Answer: A personal my Social Security account is an online service you can use to check your Social Security information and conduct some business

with us. To find all the services available and how to create an account, go to our my Social Security page.

You can trust that your information is safe with us. The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a) requires us to protect the information we collect from you. We respect your right to privacy and we protect it when you visit our website.

We partnered with Login.gov and ID.me to provide alternative methods for members of the public to access their personal my Social Security account. You may have previously created an account with Login.gov or ID.me. If not, you can create one.

When you access our website to sign in to your account, you will have the choice to sign in with a my Social Security username and password you previously created or to sign in with a Login.gov or ID.me account.

If this is your first time trying to access my Social Security, you must choose to sign in with a Login.gov or an ID.me account. You will be directed to Login.gov or ID.me to register for an account if you do not have one.

After successfully registering for your Login.gov or ID.me account, you will be redirected to our website to read and agree to the my Social Security Terms of Service.

From there, you can complete the registration and access your my Social Security account.

If you are unable to create an account or encounter a problem with your per-

sonal my Social Security account, you may call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. At the voice prompt, say “helpdesk.” Or, you can contact your local Social Security office.

Question: Will creating a my Social Security account affect my credit score or credit report? — V. Worthing, Miami Springs

Answer: When we verify your identity through an identity services provider’s “soft inquiry,” it will not change your credit score. Your report will show that Social Security made a soft inquiry. Lenders cannot view soft inquiries on your credit reports.

Soft inquiries are generally removed from your credit report after 12 months. We will not make any other inquiries when you use your my Social Security account.

Please be aware that if you have a fraud alert on your credit report you cannot create a my Social Security account online. You first must ask our identity services provider to remove the alert. Contact your local Social Security office to create a personal my Social Security account without removing the fraud alert.

There is no charge to set up a personal my Social Security online account.

Evelyn Linares is a public affairs specialist for the Social Security Administration. If you have Social Security questions, call 800-772-1213.