

Social Security Administration (SSA)

# Congressional Update



## Welcome from the Acting Commissioner

As we begin 2023, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year and welcome you to the 118th Congress. Social Security's goal is to ensure that everyone who needs our services can access them. Our employees are ready to assist you in serving your constituents and helping you understand our programs. I wish you great success during the new Congress and look forward to working with you.

### Kilolo Kijakazi

*Acting Commissioner of Social Security*

## Our Resources for You

Social Security's Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs (OLCA) is committed to supporting our congressional partners as you serve your constituents and our nation. OLCA is your point of contact for any questions you may have about Social Security's policies or procedures. Examples of the assistance we can provide include:

- Information about Social Security policy and regulations and laws affecting Social Security's programs;
- Technical assistance for legislation;
- Briefings to members and staff on program issues
- Informational resources;
- Assistance with complex cases; and
- Briefings to members and staff on program issues.

If you have questions or would like to request technical assistance on legislative matters, please contact our policy staff at (202) 358-6030.

The Congressional Inquiries Guide (Guide) is available to assist congressional offices with Social Security-related issues. The Guide contains an overview of SSA, descriptions of various aspects of the programs we administer, and useful points of contact. Click the following link to request your copy: [ssa.gov/legislation/congguide.html](https://ssa.gov/legislation/congguide.html)

For claims-related activities or inquiries on behalf of constituents, our Congressional Constituent Relations Staff (CCRS) can help expedite critical casework and special handling requests from district, State, and Capitol Hill offices. Contact information for CCRS can be found in the Guide. We also encourage staff in the state and district to establish relationships with their local Social Security field offices. If you need assistance with contacting your local field office, please contact your regional communications director (RCD). For a list of RCDs and coverage areas, please visit [ssa.gov/agency/rcds.html](https://ssa.gov/agency/rcds.html)

We invite you to visit our award-winning website at [ssa.gov](https://ssa.gov), which contains extensive information about our programs and benefits. OLCA's home page, [ssa.gov/legislation](https://ssa.gov/legislation), contains links to information we hope will be useful to you, including state and district level statistics, archives of relevant legislation, our testimony, and legislative proposals.

Best wishes for the 118th Congress. We are here to help you serve your constituents.

## SOCIAL SECURITY ESTABLISHING NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN OFFICE

Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi has announced the establishment of the Office of Native American Partnerships, reporting to the Commissioner. The Office will elevate and centralize efforts to administer comprehensive programs and policies related to American Indians and Alaska Natives. It will enhance the agency's relationship with Tribes and serve as the primary point of contact on Tribal affairs for all stakeholders.

The Office will seek to improve services to communities, coordinate internal agency Native American efforts, increase program awareness to the Tribal community, help to recruit a diverse hiring pool, and serve as a primary point of contact for Tribal Government Offices. It will also conduct data collection and analysis to improve outreach to Tribal communities.

To learn more, please visit our American Indians and Alaska Natives page at [ssa.gov/people/aian/](https://ssa.gov/people/aian/)

**Want more information from Social Security?**  
Check our other **publications**

**SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATE**  
[SSA.gov/news/newsletter](https://ssa.gov/news/newsletter)

**SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS BLOG**  
[blog.SSA.gov](https://blog.SSA.gov)

**PRESS RELEASES**  
[ssa.gov/news/press/releases](https://ssa.gov/news/press/releases)



Securing today  
and tomorrow



### CASEWORK CORNER

You can get answers to the most frequently asked questions about Social Security at [faq.ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov/faq). We also provide information in multiple languages at [ssa.gov/site/languages/en/](https://www.ssa.gov/site/languages/en/)



### HILL STAFF HELP

OLCA's fact sheets to help you answer inquiries from your boss or constituents are available at [ssa.gov/legislation/resources.html](https://www.ssa.gov/legislation/resources.html)



### OFFICE CLOSURES & DELAYS

We would like to remind you and your constituents that you can always find the latest information about weather-related and other emergency closures or delays for our offices at [ssa.gov/agency/emergency/](https://www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency/).

## Updates to our Safety Protocols

We no longer require visitors to physically distance in our offices. However, everyone must continue to wear a mask and may not enter if they have COVID-19 or its symptoms. If you have questions, please contact OLCA at 202.358.6030.

## Changes to Medicare Part B Enrollment

Beginning January 2023, Medicare Part B coverage will start sooner for your constituents who enroll at certain times in their Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) and for everyone who enrolls during the General Enrollment Period (GEP). These changes are because of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* (P.L. 116-260).

The IEP is a seven-month period that occurs when a person first becomes eligible to enroll in Part B. For people turning age 65, the IEP starts the third month before the month of their birthday and ends the third month after the month of their birthday. For example, if a person's 65th birthday is in October, his or her IEP starts with July and ends at the end of January.

People who do not enroll in Part B during their IEP and do not qualify for a Special Enrollment Period may enroll during the GEP, which runs from January 1 through March 31 of every year.

### 2023 Part B Coverage Changes

The following table compares when Part B coverage starts currently to when it will start in 2023:

When a Person Enrolls	Part B Coverage Begins Currently	Part B Coverage Begins 2023
GEP—Any month	July 1	The month after enrollment
IEP—First, second, or third month	Month person turns 65	Month person turns 65*
IEP—Fourth month (birthday month)	The month after enrollment	The month after enrollment*
IEP—Fifth month	Two months after enrollment	The month after enrollment
IEP—Six or seventh month	Three months after enrollment	The month after enrollment

\* - No change

## Self-attestation of Sex Marker in Social Security Number Records

Your constituents can now self-select their sex on their Social Security number (SSN) record and will no longer need to provide medical or legal documentation of their sex designation. Individuals who update their sex marker will need to apply for a replacement SSN card and show a current document to prove their identity.

We will accept self-identified sex designation of either male or female, even if it is different from the sex designation shown on their identity documents, such as their passport, state-issued driver's license, or identity card. SSN cards do not include sex markers. Currently, our record systems are unable to include a nonbinary or unspecified sex designation. We are exploring possible future policy and systems updates to support an "X" sex designation for the SSN card application process.

## IT Modernization Update: SSNs and Customer Service

We are pleased to announce that we have recently updated our enumeration systems to allow your constituents to complete additional SSN related business with ease.

- Your constituents who are adopted can now apply for an SSN by mail.
- When your constituents use the Online Social Security Number Application Process (OSSNAP), they will have the option to provide information about their race and ethnicity.
- Your constituents with a marriage certificate issued by the State of Wyoming can use the my Social Security portal to request a name change replacement SSN card. Your constituents with marriage certificates issued by the States of Arkansas, Georgia, Missouri, or South Dakota could already use this functionality. We plan to expand this option to those with marriage certificates from other States in the future.

