

## Social Security Numbers & F-1 Visa Students

Social security numbers are primarily intended to identify participants in the federal government's Social Security Program, which provides retirement and disability benefits to workers and their families. However, they are now widely used for administrative and identification purposes, and as an international student, you will need one for just about any type of employment. A valid SSN is required in order to obtain a *California Identification Card or Driver's License*. **However, due to changes in SSA regulations, you will generally receive your SSN card within 2 to 4 weeks if you are qualify for one.**

**Application for a social security number can be made at either one of these offices:**

Social Security Administration Office  
280 South First Street  
San Jose, CA 95113  
Room 244 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Phone Number (800) 772-1213  
Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

### SSN & Employment

**Effective October 13, 2004**, if you have found a job, you will be required to obtain a US Social Security Number. You must first obtain a letter of job offer from employer. Then request a work authorization or recommendation letter from ISP in order to apply for Social Security Number.

### SSN & Obtaining a California Identification Card/Driver's License

**Effective October 27, 2003** the Social Security Administration does not assign an SSN when the only reason for needing a number is to comply with a state statute requiring an SSN for the issuance of a California Identification and/or a Driver's License.

### SSN & Opening a U.S. Bank Account

You are not required to have a US Social Security Number in order to open a U.S. bank account or for most other financial transactions. Simply explain to the 'New Accounts Representatives' at your local bank that you are a non-immigrant on a F-1 student Visa and ask to complete IRS **Form W-8: "Certificate of Foreign Status."**

*NOTE: Students on F-1 visas and whose income is earned in support of the objectives for which they were admitted to the U.S. should not have social security (FICA) taxes withheld from their pay, as they are exempt from FICA taxes as long as they have received employment authorization.*