



GMS Flash Alert



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United States – Social Security Administration Announces Office Closings in Response to COVID-19 Emergency

On March 17, 2020, the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that all of its local offices will be closed to the public for in-person service with immediate effect.¹ The SSA will continue to provide phone service and its online services (e.g., the SSA’s on-line Certificate of Coverage Service) remain available. Going forward, SSA local offices will focus on specific critical issues such as dire need payments and eligibility decisions for urgent Medicaid approval.

In-person appointments, including applications for new or replacement social security cards, will need to be rescheduled. Applications for social security numbers (SSN) can continue to be made by mail. Original and/or certified documents submitted with such applications by mail will be returned to the applicant.²

WHY THIS MATTERS

The inability to obtain SSNs through in-person appointments may create payroll processing issues for multinational employers with assignees inbound to the United States in that such individuals will temporarily be without SSNs to enter into the payroll system. In addition, some individuals temporarily in the United States may be unable to obtain SSNs before their assignments end.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 See the SSA press release at <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2020/#3-2020-2>
- 2 See the instructions to Form SS-5 at <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>

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