

BENEFITS APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Minors with HHS Interim Assistance/Eligibility Letters are eligible for public benefits to the same extent as a refugee.

VISIT A PUBLIC BENEFITS OFFICE FIRST

A client **MUST** first apply for public benefits before requesting a non-work Social Security Number (SSN). The Social Security Administration (SSA) only assigns non-work SSNs if the client meets **ALL** the requirements for public benefits (such as SNAP or TANF) except having an SSN. The client must obtain a formal letter explaining the need for a non-work SSN to qualify for benefits. This letter must:

- Be dated and on letterhead stationery;
- Specifically identify the client, the nonwork reason an SSN is required, and the relevant statute or regulations requiring the SSN as a condition to receive the benefit or service; and
- Include the name and phone number of an official to contact so that the information provided may be verified.

SSA only accepts formal letters that meet all the above criteria. The letter may include a wet signature, no signature, or a signature other than wet. If necessary, **ask a supervisor at the benefits agency to provide this letter.**



Take the letter to the SSA office along with the HHS Eligibility/Interim Assistance Letter. Both should be sufficient for a non-work SSN to be issued.

GENERAL TIPS

We recommend that a caregiver accompany a client who is under the age of 18. The HHS Interim Assistance/Eligibility letter is sufficient identification. However if the client has an ID (such as an ORR Verification of Release, State issued ID, State issued driver's license), bring it.

To assist with advocacy, it is recommended that a case manager accompany the client to the SSA office or benefits issuing agency office, or be available by phone to answer client questions as needed.

Bring the original HHS Interim Assistance/Eligibility Letter. If you need a replacement, email childtrafficking@acf.hhs.gov.

STEPS FOR TROUBLESHOOTING

If a minor is denied for public benefits and/or a non-work SSN, advocate up the chain and educate office staff on the minor's eligibility.

1. Ask to speak to a supervisor
2. Cite specific policies (at right), if applicable
3. Maintain documentation of steps taken with the client, including:
 - Which office you and the client are visiting, including address, city, state.
 - Name of employee assisting you, and if you needed to speak to a supervisor, include their name as well. If you aren't able to record the employee's name, the date and time are helpful.
 - Exact issues the employee described with the client's application and/or documentation the office is requesting.
4. Reach out to your [Social Security Administration's Regional Director](#)
5. Reach out to USCRI at aspire@uscrimail.org or 1-800-307-4712

[RM 10210.020](#) Policy for Number of Documents Required for an SSN Card

[RM 10211.600](#) Requests for an SSN from a Noncitizen without Work Authorization

[RM 10211.610](#) Valid Reasons to Assign an SSN for Non-work Purposes

[RM 10211.075H](#) SSA can accept the HHS Eligibility Letter as evidence of alien status for victims of severe forms of trafficking when the applicant has no DHS-issued immigration document and applies for a non-work SSN.