

Press Release

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For Immediate Release



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News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security's Business Services Online Portal Key to Accurate Earnings Records for Workers

Accurate earnings records are vital to the Social Security Administration and to every worker in the United States. If Social Security cannot match the name and Social Security number (SSN) reported on a W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, to its records, the agency cannot credit the earnings to that worker's record. When earnings are missing, the worker may not qualify for Social Security benefits or the benefit amount may be wrong.

Historically, approximately 10 percent of the W-2s the agency receives each year from employers initially have mismatched name/SSN combinations. There are a number of reasons why reported names and SSNs on W-2s may not match with Social Security's records, such as typographical errors, unreported name changes, and inaccurate or incomplete employer records. By using more than twenty automated matching routines the agency can identify commonly occurring errors that, when corrected, allow the accurate crediting of reported earnings to the correct worker's earnings record.

Social Security works hard to educate employers—large and small, at the national and local level—about the importance of accurate wage records and the free tools available to them. The agency works closely with the payroll provider community through organizations such as the American Payroll Association and the National Association of Computerized Tax Processors. Agency employees speak at the Internal Revenue Service's Nationwide Tax Forums and participate in quarterly meetings with Reporting Agents (large third-party filers). Social Security's Employer Services Liaison Officers and Public Affairs Specialists educate small business employers throughout the nation through local engagements.

In all of the activities, the agency includes information about its online suite of services, Business Services Online (BSO), at www.ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm. The tools included in BSO provide employers the opportunity to correct errors before, during, and after the development and submission of their wage reports. These tools include:

AccuWage: Software that tests the accuracy of wage reports before submission by identifying common formatting errors.

Social Security Number Verification Service: A free service to verify that all employees' names/SSNs match the Social Security Administration's records before submission.

View Name and Social Security Number Errors: A service for electronic wage reporters to view the processing status and errors (including name and SSN mismatches) after their submission.

"It is extremely important that the Social Security Administration has accurate earnings records for workers throughout the country, and this begins with accurate wage reports from the nation's employers," said Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security. "I encourage all employers, large and small, to use the free tools on our Business Services Online portal. The earnings record of every worker determines their future eligibility and the amount of Social Security benefits they will receive, so accuracy is vital."

Commissioner Saul also made the decision to discontinue mailing employers educational correspondence (EDCOR) notices to focus agency efforts on making it a better, easier, and more convenient experience for employers to report and correct wages electronically. EDCOR notices inform employers that name/SSN combinations on a submitted W-2 cannot be matched to Social Security's records and provides instructions on how to correct the mismatches using tools on BSO. The agency also will continue to seek out new opportunities to educate employers and provide modernized software for electronic wage reporting that informs wage reporters of certain errors in real time as they upload their wage reports.

In addition to Social Security's work with employers, the agency encourages workers to view their personal earnings records, and submit corrections, online by creating a *my* Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

Through their *my* Social Security account, people can check personal information and conduct business with Social Security. If they already receive Social Security benefits, they can start or change direct deposit online, request a replacement SSA-1099, and if they need proof of their benefits, they can print or download a current Benefit Verification Letter from their account.

People not yet receiving benefits can use their online account to get a personalized *Social Security Statement*, which provides earnings information as well as estimates of future benefits. Residents of most states may request a replacement Social Security card online if they meet certain requirements.

The portal also includes links to information about other online services, such as applications for retirement, disability and Medicare benefits.

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Press Release

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For Immediate Release



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News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Statement from Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, about Economic Impact Payments

"I want to provide an important update about the Social Security Administration's (SSA) processing of Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act.

At each turn over the last 12 months, immediate delivery of EIPs has been, and remains, a top priority for this agency. SSA's public service mission is squarely focused on many of those who are most economically-vulnerable in our society and we owe it to our beneficiaries to ensure they receive their EIPs right away. In fact, it was the substantial efforts of SSA that successfully overcame the fact that the IRS did not have a mechanism to automatically identify Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients, some of the most financially insecure people in America. It was SSA that pushed the prior Administration and Congress to allow us to send to IRS a file of those individuals, who do not receive forms SSA-1099, so that IRS could automatically issue EIPs to them.

Since the time that discussions began regarding issuance of EIPs in the ARP Act, weeks before passage, we have worked tirelessly with our counterparts at IRS to provide to them the information they need to issue payments to our beneficiaries. Despite the fact that Congress did not directly provide SSA funding to support our work on EIPs, we have provided countless hours of assistance to IRS consistent with the laws that establish how we may use the Trust Funds that every American counts on us to protect.

SSA discussed with Treasury and IRS, both before passage and after enactment of the ARP Act, that the Social Security Act does not allow the agency to use our administrative appropriation to conduct work on any non-mission provision or program. Accordingly, we were not authorized to substantively engage Treasury or IRS prior to the ARP's passage. Instead, upon passage, we were

required to pursue a reimbursable agreement with IRS because we received no direct appropriation through the ARP Act. From the outset of discussions, we kept congressional staff apprised of the hurdles this approach would create for SSA, and we have continued to update them on our progress with IRS as we completed the required interagency agreements.

Once we were free to move forward, we aggressively worked with Treasury and IRS to issue payments. As a result of our efforts, we successfully signed the reimbursable agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) less than one week after passage, on **March 17**. That process often takes weeks or months to complete, but we got the job done in a matter of days. A few days later, on Monday, **March 22**, SSA sent initial test files to IRS. IRS confirmed testing success on Wednesday, **March 24**. Production files were delivered to IRS before 9 AM on Thursday, **March 25** – more than a week sooner than we were able to provide a similar file to IRS during the first round of EIPs.

While we were working through the agreements with IRS that would fund our efforts to support issuance of EIPs, we were also protecting the integrity of the EIP program by updating the files that IRS will use to issue payments to our beneficiaries. Those updates to our files ensure that payments go to correct bank accounts and addresses, and, that those who are deceased are removed from the files. In short, Social Security employees have literally worked day and night with IRS staff to ensure that the electronic files of Social Security and SSI recipients are complete, accurate, and ready to be used to issue payments. There is no one more committed to serving the public than the employees of this agency, and there should be no doubt whatsoever that they are striving each day to serve the vulnerable populations to whom they have committed their careers. I find any insinuation to the contrary to be unacceptable.

I assure you that we will continue to do all we can to support implementation of the ARP Act."

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