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# Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA)

## Your Access To Social Security Administration Information

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### Guide To The FOIA

The FOIA allows members of the public to request records from Federal agencies. At the Social Security Administration (SSA), we are committed to promoting transparency and openness in government while balancing the need to protect certain information from release.

From the left-side menu, learn more about how the FOIA is processed at SSA at our "The FOIA at SSA" page and our FOIA data on our "Reports" page. To make a FOIA request for agency records and learn about the fees, go to our "Make a FOIA Request" page. To learn about the agency's Privacy Program, go to our "Protecting Your Privacy" page. Click the arrows below for information on our most popular topics.

### Search SSA's Available Records

The FOIA does not require SSA to provide records in response to a FOIA request when the information requested is already publicly available. Please review information the agency provides throughout [ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov), such as:

- Electronic FOIA Reading Room
  - Proactive Disclosures
  - SSA Statistics
  - Social Security Laws, Regulations, and Policies
- Leaflets about our benefits programs
- Press Office:
  - Press releases
  - Reports
- Answers to frequently asked questions.

Visit our Open Government portal for datasets and information to help answer your questions about our programs and operations.

### Need your own record or the record of another living person?

Please see the following pages: Submit a Privacy Act Request for Your or Another Person's Records and Electronic Request for Consent to Disclose.

## Searching for a deceased person's records?

Earnings Records - If you are seeking a deceased person's earnings records, please follow the instructions to complete Form SSA-7050-F4 available at: <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-7050.pdf> and mail it to the address on the form along with the applicable fee and other evidentiary documents, as required.

Original Application for a Social Security Card (SS-5) and/or Numident – Please view the instructions available at "Request a copy of Deceased Person's Original Application for a Social Security Card (SS-5) or Numident Record"

Claim File - To request a copy of a deceased person's claim file, please visit your local office. Please be aware that we ordinarily destroy claim files several years after the final decision on the claim. Sometimes we can recall a claim file from our program service center or a Federal Records Center. Documents in a claim file may include applications for benefits, military records, marriage records, and birth and death records. However, information about living individuals found in the claim file will be deleted. The field office will determine the applicable fees.

## What records are generally not released?

The FOIA does not require agencies to disclose all records. Some examples of records we may not disclose are:

- Classified records;
- Information that is confidential by law;
- Internal personnel rules;
- Personal information about living people;
- Records of investigations; or
- Trade secrets or confidential financial information.