Social Security Number & F-1 Visa Students

Social Security numbers are generally assigned to people who are authorized to work in the United States. Social Security numbers are used to report your wages to the government and to determine eligibility for Social Security benefits. Social Security will not assign you a number just to enroll in a college or school.

Due to changes in DHS & SSA regulations, F-1 student will usually receive a SSN card in the mail between 2 to 4 weeks upon submitting an SSN application.

SSN application can be filed at the following office:

Social Security Administration Office
280 South First Street
San Jose, CA 95113
Room 244 2nd Floor
Phone Number (600) 772-1213
Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM

SSN & Employment
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
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.