

# Social Security Administration

---

1329 S. Division St.  
Traverse City MI 49684

December 16, 2016

## Monthly Information Package

January 2017

### Columns & Features

|   |    |
|---|----|
| HARNESS THE POWER OF OUR TOP TEN BLOG POSTS.....              | 2  |
| SOCIAL SECURITY CONTINUES TO INNOVATE WITH NEW FEATURES ..... | 4  |
| WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU REALIZE YOUR DREAM .....              | 6  |
| SOCIAL SECURITY IS ALWAYS EVOLVING .....                      | 8  |
| A FULFILLING NEW YEARS RESOLUTION: RETIREMENT PLANNING .....  | 10 |

*Produced at U.S. taxpayer expense.*

## Social Security Column

### HARNESS THE POWER OF OUR TOP TEN BLOG POSTS

By **Bob Simpson**

**Social Security District Manager in Traverse City**



At Social Security, we're always looking for ways to improve how we communicate with you. It's been a year-and-a-half since we joined the blogosphere, and we couldn't be happier with the content we've been able to provide! This blog is exactly what we envisioned: an honest conversation with you about our programs, the topics that matter to you, and how our agency can better serve you.

On our blog, *Social Security Matters*, we've told you about our online services, warned you about protecting yourself against fraud, and shared new ways you can start preparing for a secure retirement.

If you haven't read our blog, check it out now. And if you have, here's an opportunity to revisit some of our best posts of the past year and a half. It's never too late to join the conversation by commenting on these blog posts.

**Social Security and Veterans Affairs Partnership Speeds Disability Decisions for Veterans** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/social-security-and-veterans-affairs-partnership-speeds-disability-decisions-for-veterans](https://blog.socialsecurity.gov/social-security-and-veterans-affairs-partnership-speeds-disability-decisions-for-veterans)

**How I Navigated the Social Security Disability Process** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/how-i-navigated-the-social-security-disability-process/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/how-i-navigated-the-social-security-disability-process/)

**Reporting Changes is Your Responsibility** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/reporting-changes-is-your-responsibility/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/reporting-changes-is-your-responsibility/)

**Scammers Fake Social Security email** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/scammers-fake-social-security-email/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/scammers-fake-social-security-email/)

**The Disability Insurance Program — Securing Today and Tomorrow for 60 Years** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/the-disability-insurance-program-securing-today-and-tomorrow-for-60-years/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/the-disability-insurance-program-securing-today-and-tomorrow-for-60-years/)

**Have You Seen Your Social Security Card Lately?** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/have-you-seen-your-social-security-card-lately/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/have-you-seen-your-social-security-card-lately/)

**Your Social Security Statement Is Now at Your Fingertips** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/your-social-security-statement-is-now-at-your-fingertips/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/your-social-security-statement-is-now-at-your-fingertips/)

**A Special Arrival! Top Baby Names in 2015** at [blog.ssa.gov/a-special-arrival/](http://blog.ssa.gov/a-special-arrival/)

**What is Social Security** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/what-is-social-security/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/what-is-social-security/)

**Going Online with Social Security isn't Hard Work** at [blog.socialsecurity.gov/going-online-with-social-security-isnt-hard-work/](http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/going-online-with-social-security-isnt-hard-work/)

And these are only a fraction of the topics we've covered in this busy year. Visit our blog to learn about these and many other topics that may interest you. Stay informed, join the over a quarter million subscribers of Social Security Matters.

With financial benefits, services, and information, Social Security is here to help support you throughout life's journey. Go check out our 10 most popular blogs and learn more about how our agency helps secure today and tomorrow.

###

## Social Security Column

### SOCIAL SECURITY CONTINUES TO INNOVATE WITH NEW FEATURES

By **Bob Simpson**

**Social Security District Manager in Traverse City**



Social Security is always innovating and improving our technology to better serve you. In an effort to meet our goal to deliver innovative, quality services, we are improving how you can check the status of your Social Security benefit application online.

Placing the “Application Status” feature behind our *my Social Security* portal provides a secure service delivery channel that will allow the Agency to provide detailed status information without requiring a confirmation number.

Our first service improvement will include status information for Social Security and SSI benefits initial claims and appeals, but future modifications will allow you to check the status of medical and non-medical redeterminations.

With the new Application Status, you will see:

- the Re-entry number for in-progress online applications;
- detailed information about the current status of the application or appeal;
- the location where your claim is being processed; and
- scheduled hearing information for appeals.

Log into *my Social Security* to see what other personalized features are available to you at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

# # #

## Social Security Column

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU REALIZE YOUR DREAM

By **Bob Simpson**

**Social Security District Manager in Traverse City**



January 16 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day — a national holiday and a day of remembrance. Martin Luther King Jr. dedicated his life to creating and fostering equal rights for African Americans, and he died during his efforts to make his dream a reality.

Many people commemorate this holiday by serving their community and giving to others who may be less fortunate. In many ways, this is what Social Security does every day, all year long.

A great way to be of service to others is to help someone you know who may need assistance applying for Social Security, Medicare, or *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug costs. This is easy to do at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

Some people who need these benefits may not be comfortable with computers or may not even know applying online is an option. But now, it's easier than ever to apply for such benefits from the convenience of a home computer at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

For example, it's easy to apply for retirement benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline). It can take as little as 15 minutes from start to finish. Once the application is electronically submitted, in most cases, there is nothing more to do.

It's even easier to apply for Medicare, for people who do not plan to begin their Social Security retirement payments yet but who do want Medicare coverage. The application takes about 10 minutes and you can find it at [www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly).

People who already have Medicare coverage, but who need help meeting prescription drug costs, can apply for *Extra Help* online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp).

This holiday, you may want to make a trip to see the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington D.C. or read or listen to a recording of his legendary *I Have a Dream* speech. You can also make your Martin Luther King Day a day of service to someone who can use your help. Lead them to [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). It may be easy for you, but it may help someone you love realize their own dreams.

# # #

## **Social Security Column**

### **SOCIAL SECURITY IS ALWAYS EVOLVING**

**By Bob Simpson**

#### **Social Security District Manager in Traverse City**



Social Security is always evolving to meet the needs of the American public. We're optimistic about the future and the limitless possibilities for progress.

Much of the progress we've made together, as a nation, is through the shared responsibility of paying Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) tax. This federal payroll tax funds Social Security— programs that provide benefits for retirees, the disabled, and children of deceased workers. You help us keep millions of hard working Americans out of poverty.

Without your contribution, wounded warriors wouldn't receive the benefits they deserve. Children who have lost parents would have no social safety net. Millions of elderly people would be destitute. In the same way that we take great pride in helping people who need it, you should take pride in making this country stronger. You can see the many ways our retirement benefits help your loved ones and neighbors at [www.socialsecurity.gov/retire](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire).

The strength of our nation relies on cooperation and the empathy to understand each other's unique struggles. Similarly, Social Security has an obligation to provide benefits quickly to

applicants whose medical conditions are so serious that their conditions obviously meet disability standards.

Compassionate Allowances offer a way of quickly identifying diseases and other medical conditions that invariably qualify under the Listing of Impairments based on minimal objective medical information. This also lets Social Security target the most obviously disabled individuals for allowances based on objective medical information that we can obtain quickly.

You can view the list of Compassionate Allowances at [www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances).

Our diversity is an asset that can bring us together, making us stronger as a nation. Visit [www.socialSecurity.gov](http://www.socialSecurity.gov) to empower your future, for today and tomorrow.

###

## Social Security Column

### A FULFILLING NEW YEARS RESOLUTION: RETIREMENT PLANNING

By **Bob Simpson**

**Social Security District Manager in Traverse City**



It's 2017, and that means you might be one more year closer to retirement. Whether you're at your very first job or wrapping up a successful career, there are always new things to learn about when it comes to saving for the future. So why not make retirement planning part of your New Year's resolution!

Putting money in a high yield savings account (if you can find one) is always smart, but you can do even more. The U.S. Department of the Treasury now offers a retirement savings option called *myRA*. There's no minimum to open the account, you can contribute what you can afford, and you can withdraw funds with ease. To learn more about *myRA*, visit [www.myra.gov/](http://www.myra.gov/).

Hopefully your employer chips in a little. An employer-sponsored retirement plan or 401(k) can be a useful way to set aside funds for retirement, especially if your employer offers matching funds on what you invest. If you don't work for an employer that offers this type of plan, there are many other plans designed to help you save for retirement.

From solo 401(k)s to traditional and Roth IRAs, there are programs designed to fit a multitude of budgets. The earlier you start to save, the more funds you'll have ready for retirement.

And, as always, there is Social Security, which is funded by taxes you pay while you work. To get estimates of future benefits and check your earnings record for accuracy, you can create a my Social Security account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

Along with giving up bad habits, this New Year start a good habit that can make a lasting, positive change.

# # #