

Social Security Administration

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Traverse City MI 49684

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Monthly Information Package

June 2022

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Social Security Column

SOCIAL SECURITY'S COMMITMENT TO THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

By Bob Simpson

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



June is Pride Month. It's a time to acknowledge the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community, and also celebrate diversity, love, and respect. On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, holding that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry in all states.

We recognize same-sex couples' marriages in all states, and some non-marital legal relationships (such as some civil unions and domestic partnerships). This recognition is important to determine entitlement to benefits.

Here are five things you should know about our benefits for same-sex couples:

- **Marital status is important** — A member of a same-sex couple may be entitled to Social Security benefits when a working spouse retires, becomes disabled, or dies. We

also consider marital status when we determine eligibility and payment amount for Supplemental Security Income.

- **What type of benefits you can receive** — Social Security taxes pay for three kinds of benefits: retirement, disability, and survivors. If you're entitled to benefits, your spouse and eligible family members might receive benefits, too.
- **Children may receive benefits** — Your children or stepchildren could also be entitled to benefits.
- **When you apply for benefits is important** — If you're married or have entered a non-marital legal relationship, we encourage you to apply right away, even if you're not sure you're eligible. Applying now may protect you against the loss of any potential benefits.
- **Report life changes right away** — You should let us know immediately if you move, marry, separate, divorce, or become the parent of a child. Don't wait until we review your benefits to tell us about any changes. You should report changes right away so benefits are paid correctly.

For more information, please visit our website for same-sex couples at www.ssa.gov/people/same-sexcouple. You can also read our publication *What Same-Sex Couples Need to Know* at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10014.pdf.

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Social Security Column

FACT SHEETS ADDED TO YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY STATEMENT

By Bob Simpson

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



Your *Social Security Statement (Statement)* tells you how much you or your family can expect to receive in disability, survivors, and retirement benefits. It also provides a record of your most recent earnings history and other valuable information.

We also give you fact sheets with your online *Statement*. The fact sheets provide clear and useful information, based on your age group and earnings situation. They can help you better understand Social Security programs and benefits.

The *Statement* fact sheets cover the following topics:

- Retirement readiness for workers in four age groups.
- Workers with non-covered earnings who may be subject to the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset.
- Social Security basics for new workers.

- How people become eligible for benefits (for people who have not earned enough work credits).
- How additional work can increase your future benefits.
- Medicare readiness for workers aged 62 and up.

We recently released a new fact sheet specifically for people with limited earnings. The new fact sheet covers how they and their family members may qualify for benefits, including:

- Supplemental Security Income.
- Social Security retirement benefits.
- Children's benefits.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Help with health care costs – including Medicare, Medicare Savings Programs, *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug costs, and Medicaid.

The best way to get access to your *Statement* and the new fact sheets is by using your personal *my Social Security* account. If you don't have a personal *my Social Security* account, be sure to create one at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. You can even view your full earnings history there.

To learn more, visit our *Social Security Statement* webpage at www.ssa.gov/myaccount/statement.html. Please share these resources with your friends and family.

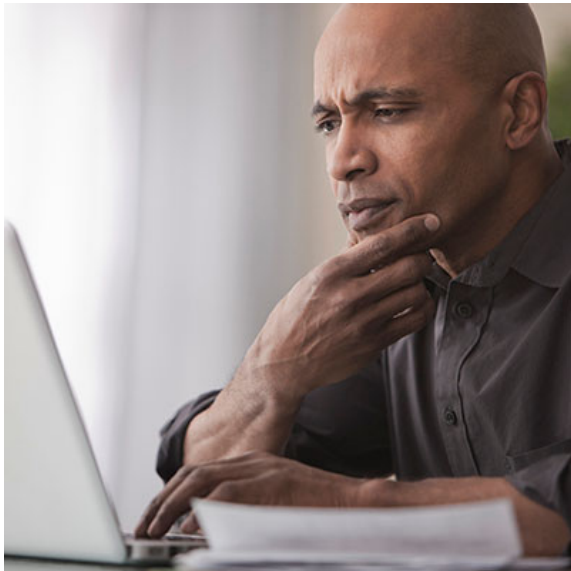
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Social Security Column

FASTER PROCESSING OF DISABILITY CLAIMS FOR PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

By Bob Simpson

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



Currently, more than five million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Since the onset of Alzheimer's can occur in people before they retire, it may strike during an individual's working years, preventing gainful employment as the disease progresses.

As a result, people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers must figure out how they'll pay for care. Our benefits and services are vital to people with early-onset Alzheimer's who are unable to work and have no other source of income.

For more than a decade, Social Security has included early-onset Alzheimer's disease in our list of Compassionate Allowances program. The program identifies debilitating diseases and medical conditions so severe they meet our disability standards. Compassionate Allowances allow for faster processing of disability claims for individuals with early-onset Alzheimer's disease and several other neurodegenerative disorders.

You can read more about our Compassionate Allowances program at www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances. To learn more about how Social Security disability insurance works and to apply for benefits, visit our disability page at www.ssa.gov/disability. Please share these resources with friends and family.

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Social Security Column

FIVE SOCIAL SECURITY RESOURCES THAT CAN PROTECT ELDERS FROM SCAMS

By Bob Simpson

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is on June 15. On this day, communities, seniors, caregivers, governments, organizations, and the private sector unite to prevent the mistreatment of and violence against older people.

Social Security scams are widespread across the United States. Scammers use sophisticated tactics to deceive you into providing sensitive information or money. They target everyone – especially the elderly – and their tactics continue to evolve.

Here are five easy-to-use resources to prevent Social Security fraud:

- Check out our Fraud Prevention and Reporting page to learn about Social Security fraud – and how we fight scammers at www.ssa.gov/fraud.

- Read our *Scam Alert* fact sheet to learn what tactics scammers use and how to protect yourself at www.ssa.gov/fraud/assets/materials/EN-05-10597.pdf.
- Create your own personal *my Social Security* account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to stay one step ahead of scammers. Please read our blog post at blog.ssa.gov/my-social-security-what-to-know-about-signing-up-or-signing-in for more information about creating or signing in to your personal *my Social Security* account.
- Learn about other types of fraud on our Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) Scam Awareness page at oig.ssa.gov/scam-awareness/scam-alert. You'll also see how to report these scams to our OIG and other government agencies.
- Read our blog post to learn how to guard your Social Security card – and protect your personal information at blog.ssa.gov/guard-your-card-protect-whats-important-to-you/.

Please share this information with your friends and family to help spread awareness about Social Security imposter scams.

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Social Security Column

USE MY SOCIAL SECURITY TO INSTANTLY CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR BENEFITS CLAIM

By Bob Simpson

Social Security District Manager in Traverse City



If you applied for Social Security benefits, or have a pending reconsideration or hearing request, you can instantly check the status online using your personal **my Social Security** account. If you don't have an account, you can create one at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to see the following information about your claim:

- Date of filing.
- Re-entry numbers for incomplete applications.
- Current claim location.
- Servicing office location.
- Scheduled hearing date and time, if applicable.
- Publications of interest, depending on the claim and current step in the process.

Use your personal *my* Social Security account to instantly check the status of your application or appeal at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

If you have questions about retirement, disability, Medicare, or survivors benefits, as well as Supplemental Security Income, visit our webpage at www.ssa.gov/benefits.

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