

CHECKLIST: SOCIAL SECURITY

This checklist is part of a larger Manual titled “Protecting Assets and Child Custody in the Face of Deportation,” released by Appleseed in 2017. For more info and to read the full Manual, please visit www.AppleseedNetwork.org/DeportationManual.

This checklist is not legal advice. You can search for a lawyer at <http://www.ailalawyer.org/>.

Even if you aren't a U.S. citizen, you may be able to get paid Social Security benefits. You might be covered if you are an “insured worker,” which is anyone who has a Social Security number (SSN) and contributes to Social Security while working for U.S. companies. You may also be covered if your wife, husband, or children are or were covered. For more info about who is covered by Social Security benefits, please check out Chapter 19 of Appleseed's full Manual.

If you are already getting Social Security benefits, you should continue to send money to the Social Security Administration (usually, money is taken directly out of your paycheck), and check to see if your family members can apply. Even if you choose to leave the U.S., you may still be able to receive Social Security money depending on where you go. Check out Chapter 19 of Appleseed's Manual for more info.

If you don't get Social Security benefits, but you are an insured worker or are the husband, wife, or child of an insured worker, you can apply at the website www.socialsecurity.gov or in person. Make sure to bring:

- Your SSN;
- Your birth certificate;
- Your W-2 forms or self-employment tax return for last year;

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- Your military discharge papers if you had military service;
- Your spouse's birth certificate and SSN if they're applying for benefits;
- Your children's birth certificates and SSN, if you're applying for your children;
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or legal immigration status if you (or a spouse or child applying for benefits) were not born in the U.S.; and
- The name of your bank, the routing number, and your account number for direct deposit. If you don't have an account at a bank, you can sign up to get your benefits on a prepaid card.

Important things to remember

- If you are or were an Insured Worker in the U.S. and received Social Security Benefits, your children and other dependents can continue receiving benefits if they are U.S. citizens.
- You will not be able to receive Social Security Benefits if you are deported. But, if you come back to the U.S. legally as a permanent resident later, you may be able to get benefits paid to you to make up for the time you were out of the country.

Remember: The plan is to have a plan. You are taking the right steps to protect your family. Don't be afraid to ask for help so you get answers you can trust: try your lawyer or caseworker, or ask your child's school or doctor's office.