Welcome to the November 2015 edition of Solutions, Strategies, Answers, a newsletter produced by the 18 Social Security Administration Offices in southeastern Pennsylvania.

We aim to provide solutions to your Social Security issues, suggest strategies that lead to a good outcome, and of course give answers to your questions!

It's important to...

Save for retirement

Saving Money for Retirement

Social Security was never meant to be the only source of income for people when they retire. Social Security replaces about 40 percent of an average wage earner’s income after retiring, and most financial advisors say retirees will need 70 percent or more of pre-retirement earnings to live comfortably.

Use our online Retirement Estimator to start figuring out how much you will need for retirement. If you've worked 10 or more years, the Estimator offers an instant and personalized estimate of your future Social Security retirement benefits, based on your earnings record.

In addition, whether you are looking for information about buying a home, balancing your checkbook, or investing in your 401(k) plan, you can go to www.mymoney.gov, the official U.S. government website dedicated to teaching Americans the basics of finances.

The Employee Benefit Research Institute’s Ballpark Estimator is another excellent online tool. It makes complicated issues like projected Social Security benefits and earnings assumptions on saving, easy to understand.

Almost 140,000 people applied ONLINE for Social Security retirement benefits in October 2015.

Retire Online

Using our online application has a number of benefits:

Avoid trips to your Social Security office.

Answer questions on your schedule. You do not have to complete the application the same day that you started it. You can start and stop the application without losing any of the information you entered.

Correct mistakes. You can go back and make changes until you finish the application. You will also be given a chance to review your answers and make corrections before you submit the application.

No need to mail your application. When you're finished, just click "Submit Now" to send your application to Social Security.

Print a receipt for your online application. Keep for your records.

Check the status of your online application. Your receipt includes a confirmation number you can use to check the status of your application. However, if you choose to apply for benefits more than two months in the future, you will not be able to check the status of your application until one month before you start receiving benefits.

https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/rib
People Experiencing Homelessness and Their Service Providers

Monday, December 21st, was National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. It takes place on the longest night of the year to bring attention to the plight of the homeless.

Social Security provides many services to the homeless. Those who are homeless can apply for benefits and, if they are eligible, their benefits can be deposited directly into a personal banking account, a Direct Express debit bank card, or another electronic account. They can also have benefits mailed to a third party, or if necessary, a representative payee can receive their funds.

Social Security also collaborates with other agencies to help the homeless. Social Security, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs developed Key Strategies for Connecting People Experiencing Homelessness to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Benefits, a document outlining the strategies shown to help people experiencing homelessness apply for and receive SSI/SSDI benefits.

Read more in Key Strategies for Connecting People Experiencing Homelessness to SSI and SSDI Benefits

Go to https://www.socialsecurity.gov/homelessness/ to learn more.

Want to Subscribe to Solutions, Strategies, Answers?

Send a message to edward.lafferty@ssa.gov or richard.gaudiosi@ssa.gov

SSA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Agency Financial Report (AFR) is now available online.

Our FY 2015 AFR provides information enabling Congress, the President, and the public to assess our stewardship over the financial resources entrusted to us, our performance as an organization, our achievements, and our initiatives and challenges. The AFR includes the annual audited financial statements required under the Chief Financial Officers Act.

The report also provides a discussion of our programs, organization, and how we benefit the public; a high-level summary of our accomplishments during the year; a discussion of the challenges we face going forward; and an analysis of our financial position.

FY 2015 marks the 29th year that we have published audited financial statements and the 22nd year that we have received an unmodified opinion on our financial statements.

In addition, you can find Agency Financial Reports for prior years and information on our program integrity efforts, as well as the Inspector General’s Statement on SSA’s Major Management and Performance Challenges.

https://www.socialsecurity.gov/finance/