



SOCIAL SECURITY

The Commissioner

January 31, 2022

The Honorable John Larson
Chair, Social Security Subcommittee
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Subcommittee Chair Larson:

Thank you for your December 22, 2021 letter regarding services at Social Security field offices during the COVID-19 pandemic. I share your concerns and want you to know we are taking action to improve our customer service.

You asked for information about how and when we will improve services, including in-person services. We have worked hard to streamline our processes and expand in-office service for those people who need it.

- To reduce the need for our customers to mail sensitive documents that should be kept in their possession, we are:
 - Directing individuals who are not seeking a change to our records to use our online Social Security Number (SSN) replacement card option because it is the easiest and fastest way to obtain a replacement SSN card.
 - Expanding in-person service delivery by appointment for original and replacement SSN cards for individuals who are ineligible for online service. We offer Express Appointments for individuals to submit evidence, and for those who meet certain limited, critical situations.
 - Temporarily expanding our policy to accept secondary proof of identity for replacement cards when applicants choose to mail their applications and evidence. This temporary flexibility allows individuals to retain their important original documents, such as drivers' licenses.
 - Expanding both the number of offices with drop boxes and the hours those drop boxes are available to align with the local office's hours.
 - Expanding our use of online forms and electronic signatures.
- We increased onsite staffing and the availability of in-office appointments and express interviews for certain limited, critical situations.
- We have conducted extensive outreach efforts for people who face barriers. See our [Outreach Materials for People Facing Barriers](#) web page and related [Coronavirus Updates](#) web page for more information.

You also asked about our reentry plans. We have already begun our reentry process. I, along with my senior staff, returned to our offices in December 2021. We recently reached reentry agreements with all three of our unions, and subject to the course of the pandemic, we are planning agency-wide reentry and the implementation of new telework schedules for most employees on March 30, 2022. This date allows us to ensure that necessary measures are in place to keep our employees and the public safe, is consistent with our union agreements, and gives us time to provide notice to our employees. We are planning to restore in-person field office service to the public in early April.

We will continue to prioritize service and safety in coordination with Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance.

We hope this information is helpful. We will continue to update you as we near our reentry date. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Tom Klouda, our Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs, at (202) 358-6030.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kilolo Kijakazi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kilolo Kijakazi
Acting Commissioner