



Household Workers

Do you plan to pay a housekeeper, cook, gardener, babysitter, or other household worker at least \$3,000 in 2026? This amount includes any cash you pay for your household employee's transportation, meals, and housing. If you will pay at least \$3,000 to one person, you have additional financial responsibilities.

You must meet those responsibilities to ensure your household worker gets credit toward Social Security benefits and Medicare coverage. When you pay at least \$3,000 in wages to a household worker, you must do the following:

- Deduct Social Security and Medicare taxes from those wages
- Pay these taxes to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Report the wages to Social Security

For every \$3,000 in wages, most household employees earn credits toward Social Security benefits and Medicare coverage. To learn more about credits, see **"How your household workers earn credits for Social Security"** below. Generally, people need 10 years of work to be eligible for:

- Retirement benefits (as early as age 62)
- Disability benefits for the worker and the worker's dependents
- Survivors benefits for the worker's family
- Medicare benefits

Are services performed by all household workers covered under Social Security?

Special rules apply in the following situations:

- If you are in charge of a hotel, rooming house, or boarding house, report all wages
- Unless household employment is the worker's primary occupation, do not pay Social Security taxes for babysitters or other workers younger than age 18

- If you pay for housework performed by your children who are 21 or older, pay Social Security taxes on their wages
- If you pay one or more of your parents for housework, their wages may be taxable, and you should check to see if this tax rule applies in their case

Contact your local Social Security office for more information.

Deducting Social Security and Medicare taxes

As an employer, you pay a 6.2% Social Security tax on up to \$184,500 (in 2026) of your employee's earnings and a 1.45% Medicare tax on all earnings. Employees pay the same tax rates. They also pay 0.9% more in Medicare taxes on earnings higher than \$200,000 (\$125,000 if married, filing separately, or \$250,000 if married, filing jointly).

Paying taxes to the IRS

Contact the IRS about reporting requirements or forms. The IRS can tell you how to complete relevant forms, and when and where to file them. Read *Household Employer's Tax Guide* (IRS Publication No. 926) at www.irs.gov/publications for information about what forms you need to file and when.

Things you may want to know:

- **Keep records** — Record the names, addresses, and Social Security numbers of all household workers and the wages you paid them. Copy the Social Security number directly from each person's Social Security card. If any of your employees do not have a card, they should apply for one. The best way for them to start the process is at www.ssa.gov/number-card.
- **File IRS forms and withheld wages** — Use your federal income tax return (IRS Form 1040) to report wages of \$3,000 or more that you paid a household worker. As the employer, pay your share of the Social Security and Medicare taxes. Also, pay the taxes you withheld from the employee's wages.

Report wages to Social Security

Each year, you must send a Copy A of Form W-2 (*Wage and Tax Statement*) to us to report the wages and taxes of your employees for the previous calendar year. In addition, each employee should receive a Form W-2. Send Form W-2 to us along with a Form W-3 (*Transmittal of Income and Tax Statements*). You are required to file a Form W-2 for wages paid to each employee that satisfies one of the options below.

- Income, Social Security, or Medicare taxes were withheld.
- Income tax would have been withheld if the employee had claimed no more than one withholding allowance or had not claimed exemption from withholding on a Form W-4, (*Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate*).

Filing W-2s online using Business Services Online is free, fast, and secure! To get started, register for a User ID and password at the Business Services Online webpage: www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm. For more information, including step-by-step instructions, go to www.ssa.gov/employer/bsohbnew.htm.

If filing on paper, you can send these documents in the year following the wage reporting year. You can get these forms and the instructions for completing them by contacting any IRS office.

How your household worker earns credit for Social Security

Household work is credited somewhat differently than other work. Generally, a person earns one credit for each \$1,890 of reported earnings (in 2026), up to a maximum of four credits for the year. However, a household worker will earn Social Security credit only for earnings of at least \$3,000 from each employer. For example, a household employee who worked for three employers and was paid \$900, \$1,100, and \$2,800 respectively (a total of \$4,800) would receive only one Social Security credit. An amount of \$3,000 would be posted to their Social Security record.

The number of credits workers (including household workers) need to be eligible for Social Security depends on their age and the kind of benefit they might be eligible to receive. Most

people need about 10 years of work (40 credits) to be eligible for benefits. Younger people need fewer credits to be eligible for disability benefits or for their family members to be eligible for survivor benefits when they die.

Remember, if you do not report the wages for your employee, they may not have enough credits to receive Social Security benefits and the amount of the benefit may be less.

Contacting Us

The most convenient way to do business with us is to visit www.ssa.gov to get information and use our online services. There are several things you can do online: apply for benefits; start or complete your request for an original or replacement Social Security card; get useful information; find publications; and get answers to frequently asked questions.

When you open a personal *my Social Security* account, you have more capabilities. You can review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, and get estimates of future benefits. You can also print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information (Social Security beneficiaries only), and get a replacement SSA-1099/1042S. If you live outside the United States, visit www.ssa.gov/foreign to access our online services.

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by phone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so you may not need to speak with a representative.

If you need to speak with someone or if you need to make an appointment to come into an office, call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing. A member of our staff can answer your call from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We provide free interpreter services upon request. For quicker access to a representative, try calling early in the day (between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. local time) or later in the day. **We are less busy later in the week (Wednesday to Friday) and later in the month.**



Securing today
and tomorrow

Social Security Administration

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