Your Retirement Benefit: How It's Determined

As you make plans for your retirement, you may ask, "How much will I get from Social Security?" and "How is the amount of my benefit determined?" To determine your "basic benefit" or "primary insurance amount," we adjust or "index" your highest 35 years of earnings to account for changes in average wages since the year the earnings were received.

- The basic benefit is how much you would receive if you start receiving benefits at your full retirement age — 65 or older, depending on your date of birth. You can find your full retirement age at ***www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/agereduction.html***.
- You can start your benefits at any time between ages 62 and 70. For each month you wait, your monthly benefit will be higher — for the rest of your life.
- You can get an estimate of your personal retirement benefits for different retirement ages, using your personal *my* Social Security account.
- You're eligible for cost-of-living benefit increases starting with the year you turn age 62. This is true even if you don't get benefits until your full retirement age or even age 70. Benefits are adjusted yearly to reflect the increase, if any, in the cost-of-living as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

You can also learn more about your retirement benefits at ***www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10035.pdf***. Even if you are not near your retirement age, you can start planning at any time. If you are age 18 or older, you can create a personal *my* Social Security account at ***www.ssa.gov/myaccount***, and review your earnings record to ensure it is correct.

Contacting Us

There are several ways to contact us including online, by mail, by phone, and in person (by appointment). If you cannot use our online services, we can help you by phone or make an appointment to come into an office when you call our National toll-free 800 Number.

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. 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. 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.**

GO! DIGITAL

SCAN ME!

SSA.gov/myaccount

SSA.gov

Social Security Administration
Publication No. 05-10070
May 2026 (April 2025 edition may be used)
Your Retirement Benefit: How It's Determined
Produced and published at U.S. taxpayer expense