

“We have listened to our customers, Congress, advocates and others, and we are updating our policy to provide better customer service to the country’s most vulnerable populations,” Social Security Commissioner Lee Dudek said in a March 27 news release.

Dudek added that “Medicare, Disability, and SSI applications will be exempt from in-person identity proofing because multiple opportunities exist during the decision process to verify a person’s identity.”

Anti-fraud checks started on April 14 for all claims made over the phone, and claims are being flagged that have fraud risk indicators.

“We will continue to conduct 100% ID proofing for all in-person claims,” Social Security said. About 70,000 of the 4.5 million yearly telephone claims may be flagged. Social Security avers that “telephone remains a viable option to the public.”

People who fall into one of the following categories must visit a local Social Security office to verify their identity:

- Anyone applying for Retirement, Survivors or Auxiliary (Spouse or Child) benefits.
- Anyone changing direct deposit information for any type of benefit.
- Anyone receiving payment by paper check (to change/update their mailing address)

Applicants or beneficiaries can make changes or request online, including:

- Application for benefits
- Getting or replacing a Social Security card
- Updating contact information
- Changing names
- Checking application status
- Updating direct deposit information.

Some tasks start online but need to be finished in an office, though starting the process online beforehand saves time, Social Security said.

“We’ll help you schedule an appointment to visit when it’s needed. If you don’t start online, call to make an appointment before visiting,” the agency said.

Any Social Security beneficiary or applicant can call **1-800-772-1213** to schedule or use the online Social Security Office Locator to find the nearest offices to them.