

Registering for the Selective Service

What is the Selective Service and do I need to register?

The Selective Service System (SSS) allows the federal government to keep a list of all men or people assigned male at birth (AMAB) who would be available to serve as soldiers in the U.S. Armed Forces in the event that a mandatory draft became necessary. According to federal law, **all men permanently living in the U.S., regardless of immigration status, between the ages of 18 and 26, must register for the Selective Service and should register within 30 days of their 18th birthday.** A Social Security Number is not required to register.

It is important to register for the Selective Service even if you are undocumented because it could impact your future application for citizenship. To learn more about how and why failure to register could negatively impact your citizenship application, [see this ILRC practice advisory](#).

Are there any risks in registering for Selective Service?

Registering for the SS does provide the federal government with your name and address, so the government can contact you in the event of a mandatory draft. However, there has not been any type of mandatory draft since the 1970s. This means that the SSS has never used those names to force people to fight with the U.S. Armed Forces. Nevertheless, all men or AMAB people within that age range are still required to register.

In regards to sharing someone's immigration status, the SSS states:

They have not now, nor in the past collected or shared any information which would indicate a man's immigration status, either documented or undocumented. The selective service system has no authority to collect such information, has no use for it, and it is irrelevant to the registration requirement. Consequently, there is no immigration data to share with anyone.

How do I register?

As an undocumented male or AMAB person, you must register for Selective Service by mail. You should **not** try to register online at the sss.gov website. Follow these steps instead:

Print and fill out [this printable postcard](#) and mail it to the SSS. This postcard is available at your local U.S. Post Offices and at sss.gov. Be sure to attach appropriate postage. When you mail the postcard, get a "proof of mailing" from the Post Office. That way, even if your card gets lost or not properly added to the SSS, you can prove in a future citizenship application that you complied with the registration requirement. This will serve as proof that you sent in your Selective Service registration.

How long does the process take?

Selective Service registration processing takes 1 to 2 months. It's important to begin the process as soon as possible after turning 18. Once you have been successfully registered, the government will mail you a Selective Service Registration Card. If you do not receive a card within that time frame, contact the SSS. Be sure to keep a copy of this card because you might be required to show it later on.

How do I provide proof that I registered for Selective Service?

You can verify that you successfully registered for the Selective Service by providing a copy of your Selective Service Registration Card.

If I register for Selective Service, does that mean I'm eligible to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces?

The SSS does not determine whether a person is eligible to become a U.S. Armed Forces service member. See: usa.gov/join-military for details. Generally, only U.S. Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (people with green cards) are allowed to serve in the U.S. military. There have been limited exceptions to this rule, such as the [MAVNI program](#) which is **not currently active**. So even if there were a future draft from the SSS, there would have to be another change in law or policy to allow undocumented people to serve.

Registrants 26 and Older

The SSS cannot accept a registration from anyone who has already reached their 26th birthday. Therefore, if you are a male or AMAB person who is 26 or older but did not register for the Selective Service, you are considered a "non-registrant." For more information, go to sss.gov, select "Registration," then select "Men 26 and Older."

Registrants Under 18

The SSS cannot accept a registration from anyone who is under 18 years old. Therefore, students can wait until 30 days before their 18th birthday and mail in the Selective Service Registration Card.