What is a Social Security Number?
A Social Security Number (SSN) is a nine-digit number given to US citizens, residents and certain categories of exchange visitors and temporary residents. It is used as an identification number for many administrative procedures.

Why might I need a Social Security Number?
As a J-1 visitor, you are not required to apply for a SSN. However, it may be useful or required in some cases for certain administrative procedures, such as:
- Signing a lease for an apartment
- Receiving your monthly stipend from your company
- Applying for a driver’s license
- Opening a U.S. bank account
- Completing tax forms

How do I apply for a Social Security Number?
1. Within 5 days of your arrival in the U.S. send your arrival documents to the FACC-NY for validation.
2. Wait for the FACC-NY to send email confirmation that your record has been validated in SEVIS, the government system.
3. Once you have been in the U.S. for at least two weeks, and once you have waited 2 days after receiving the validation confirmation email from the FACC you may apply for your SSN. If you apply sooner, your application will be rejected by the Social Security Administration
4. Contact your local Social Security office for specific application instructions.

What do I need to apply for a Social Security Number?
The required documents for a SSN vary by location. Exchange visitors will often be asked to provide:
- Documents proving your legal immigration status (such as your stamp of admission, visa, or I-94 Record of Admission)
- Your foreign passport
- Your DS-2019

Some offices also require a Letter of Good Standing from your sponsor. If this is the case for your local Social Security office, please contact us at coordinator@faccnyc.org to request a Letter of Good Standing - please include your SEVIS number in the email. We will send you a scanned letter that is signed by the FACC.

Where can I find more information about Social Security?
You may refer to the Social Security homepage, as well as the page for non-citizen Social Security information.

IMPORTANT: never share your SSN by phone or email with unknown parties and do not carry your social security card with you on a daily basis. For more information on how to protect your identity while in the U.S. visit the USA.gov website. If you have any concerns or have been impacted by a scam, please contact the FACC-NY immediately.