

Social Security Column

THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY THAT CAN HELP YOU PLAN YOUR RETIREMENT



Social Security benefits are part of the retirement plan of many American workers. If you're among the many people paying Social Security taxes, you should get an estimate of what your future benefit may be. Our retirement webpage at www.ssa.gov/retirement is a great place to start mapping out your retirement plan. These three questions will help to guide your planning:

- What factors may affect your retirement benefits?
- When is the right time to start receiving your retirement benefits?
- What documents do you need to provide when you apply for retirement?

We encourage you to use your personal *my Social Security* account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to get an instant estimate of your future retirement benefits. You can also compare the effects of starting your retirement benefits at different ages.

We base your benefit on how much you earned during your working career. Higher lifetime earnings result in higher benefits. If there were some years you didn't work or had low earnings, your benefit amount may be lower than if you had worked steadily. If you never worked and did not pay Social Security taxes, and have a spouse who worked, you may be eligible for spouse's benefits. You must be at least 62 years old, and your spouse must already be receiving retirement

or disability benefits. If you are a younger spouse, you may be eligible for benefits if you have a qualifying child in your care. By a qualifying child, we mean a child who is under age 16 or who receives Social Security disability benefits.

You can learn more at www.ssa.gov/retirement. Please share this information with family and friends to help them prepare for their financial future.

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