

GET YOUR BENEFIT VERIFICATION BEFORE THE CHILL SETS IN

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It's that time of year again – when people in many parts of the country feel a new chill in the air each morning, and put an extra quilt or blanket on the bed.

It's also the time of year when many states offer energy assistance to people who have low income and resources. Under the energy assistance program, your state may help with the cost of heating your home during the winter. But to get it, in most cases, you'll need to provide proof of your income. If you get Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, you can get proof of the amount of your benefit quickly and easily by going online. Just visit www.socialsecurity.gov.

There are a number of reasons you may need written verification of your benefit amount, besides energy assistance programs. Perhaps you're ready to make a major purchase and you're trying to get a loan from a bank or financial institution. Or maybe you're applying for state benefits or moving into a new apartment or home.

Whatever your reason, Social Security makes it easy for you to get the written verification you need at www.socialsecurity.gov. Just look in the left column under “What you can do online,” expand the “If you get benefits” section, and select the “Request a Proof of Income letter” link.

The letter can be used for any reason that someone requires proof of your income. In addition to offering proof of your income, the letter is an official document that verifies your Medicare coverage, retirement or disability status, and age. The letter does not include your Social Security number.

From the time that you complete the online request, it will take about 10 days for you to receive the proof of income letter in the mail. If you need one sooner, you'll want to call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or visit your local Social Security office.

But for most people, simply requesting the proof of income online is the most convenient way to get what you need. Get your benefit verification by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov.