

Social Security Offers Amnesty to Immigrants; Those Eligible Under 1986 Law Urged to Stop Using False Numbers

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Body

The **Social Security** Administration will offer amnesty to illegal **immigrants** who once used false **Social Security** numbers or false documents to get a number but now qualify for citizenship under the 1986 immigration law, officials have announced.

All an **immigrant** needs to do to qualify for amnesty is to stop using the false **Social Security** number by Jan. 3, agency spokesman Phil Gambino said.

"That's the first and most important part," Gambino said. "After that, people can come in and correct their records and put their earnings on the right number."

Gambino said people may correct their records any time, as long as they stop misusing false or fraudulently obtained **Social Security** numbers. Such use is a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$ 250,000 fine. If people do not correct their records, future earnings will not be credited toward higher **Social Security** benefits.

An estimated 3.1 million **immigrants** have applied for citizenship under the amnesty provision of the 1986 Immigration Control and Reform Act. They are eligible to get **Social Security** numbers once they are naturalized.

The amnesty program of the **Social Security** Administration is a little-known provision of immigration legislation passed in October.

As many as 2.5 million **immigrants** may be falsely using **Social Security** cards and would be eligible for amnesty, Gambino said.

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