

IDENTITY CHANGES
Practical and Legal Considerations

The following outline contains practice tips for advocates. It was prepared for use in Greater Boston Legal Services' Relocation Counseling Project. This outline is not intended to address all of the issues that may arise in individual identity change cases. Advocates should consult the procedural and substantive name change laws in their jurisdictions.

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A. Name Change

Prior to beginning the process of changing one's name, victims and their advocates should consider the following:

1. *Whether they have civil legal matters pending.* If the victim is in debt collection proceedings, he or she may be unable to change his or her name. A name change for purposes of avoiding creditors is considered fraudulent. Additionally, if the victim is involved in a divorce or custody case, his or her new name may be disclosed during discovery or other points in the proceeding.
2. *Whether they can protect their new name.* Victims and their advocates should carefully consider any means by which the perpetrator could obtain the new name. For example, if they have other matters pending with the perpetrator, such as leases or family law cases, victims may wish to wait until those matters are completed to change their names.
3. *Whether they have older children who might disclose the name change.* It may be difficult for older children to use their new names and they may inadvertently disclose the parent's former name.
4. *Whether they are able to change the name on all of their documents.* This requires significant work, as most agencies "cross reference" old and new names in their records and computer systems. To ensure safety, victims must take steps to prevent cross referencing. They should consider whether they will be able to begin new accounts for all of their bills so that their credit reports will not reference both names, and whether they can obtain new identifications that are not connected to their former names.
5. *Whether there are any outstanding criminal cases.* Courts may check petitioners' criminal records prior to allowing a name change to ensure that they are not seeking to avoid law enforcement. If the victim has outstanding warrants or is on probation, those issues should be dealt with prior to petitioning for a name change. Victims should also consider whether prosecutors plan to subpoena them to testify in prosecutions of their perpetrators. This may impede their ability to relocate and change their identities.
6. If it is determined that a name change is necessary and appropriate, victims should consider filing the following documents in the appropriate court with the name change petitions:
 - a. Motion to Impound and Index as "Jane Doe" or "John Doe."
If the court does not permit the file to be impounded and indexed under the pseudonym "Jane Doe," the file might be public information. Thus, victims may choose to withdraw the Petition at this time. In the alternative, the victim may request that the court impound the file and index the case in court records under her original name, with no reference to her new name. The fact that she filed a name change petition would then be public information, but the victim's new name would be available only to court personnel.

- b. Motion to Waive Publication (or Notice) (if jurisdiction has such a requirement);
- c. Affidavit of Petitioner (reasons for name change, impoundment, and waiver).

7. *Whether a Name Change Certificate Will Be Sufficient and Safe Identification.*

Most jurisdictions provide petitioners with Name Change Certificates, which may be used in conjunction with an original birth certificate to prove identity for purposes such as a new driver's license and a new social security number. They do not provide new birth certificates. *Petitioners who are U.S. citizens may consider obtaining a passport in their new names. This is sufficient identification for purposes such as employers and may be safer than using both birth and name change certificates.*

8. *Disclosure of Name Change to State and Federal Agencies.*

Many agencies have procedures for keeping name changes confidential; however, these procedures are difficult to access because they are unknown even to some workers in the agencies. For example, the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles has a "Confidential Records Department," which will issue a driver's license or identification that is not connected to a person's former name or social security number. If however the victim goes to the general Registry for a new license, that information will be connected on the computer.

9. *Implications of Name Changes.*

Victims should realistically assess the implications of identity changes. They should consider that they will not have employment, credit, housing, education and other histories under their new identities. Thus, if they need references or documentation of histories under their old identities, they risk disclosing their new identities to multiple individuals and organizations. They should arrange for employer, landlord and other references prior to relocating.

10. *Additional Considerations for Name Changes for Minors.*

- a. *Whether the court will require notice to the other parent.* Some state laws require that one parent notify the other parent of any attempt to change a child's name and that it is in the child's best interests to do so. Thus, if the court believes that it is in the child's best interests to have contact with the other parent, the judge may deny the name change. In cases where the other parent is the perpetrator, notice may be unsafe. Courts have allowed minor's name changes without notice where paternity has never been adjudicated or acknowledged; thus, no parental rights have been established. In addition, in cases where there are compelling facts, such as the perpetrator has had no relationship with the children and is extremely violent, the court may allow name changes without notice.
- b. *Whether the perpetrator has contact with the children.* If the perpetrator and children have contact, either through court-ordered visits or contact initiated by older children, it may be difficult to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, depending upon state law, if the perpetrator is a parent, he may have legal rights to access to school, medical, and other records, which may disclose the children's new names.

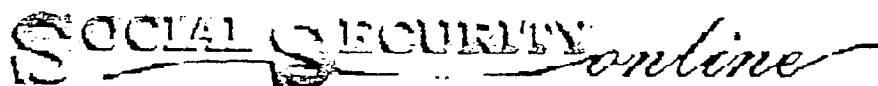
B. Social Security Number Change

Prior to beginning the process of changing one's social security number, victims and their advocates should consider the following:

1. *Whether they have completed a name change.* Victims should change their names prior to changing their social security numbers. If they do not, the new social security number will be attached to their old name. They need a certificate of name change to legally attach a new social security number to a new name.
2. *Whether they have outstanding legal matters pending.* As with a name change, a social security number change for purposes of avoiding prosecution or creditors is considered fraudulent.
3. *Whether they can protect their new number.* Victims and their advocates should carefully consider any means by which the perpetrator could obtain the new number. For example, if they have other matters pending with the perpetrator, such as family law cases, victims should be careful not to allow their new number to be disclosed in discovery.
4. *Whether they are able to change the numbers attached to all of their documents, bills, identification cards so that their former number is not connected to the new name.*
5. *Victims should bring the following original documents to any Social Security Administration Office:*
 - a. Request for New Social Security Number (form available from the SSA)
 - b. Original Birth Certificate
 - c. Original Name Change Certificate
 - d. Affidavit of Victim (should describe in detail the reasons that a new number is needed)
 - e. Documents that verify or support victim's Affidavit. Examples include:
 1. Police reports
 2. Medical/hospital reports
 3. Letters from service providers
 4. Restraining or other court orders
 5. Affidavits of witnesses
6. *Social Security Number Change Procedure.* When all documents are brought to the Social Security Administration Office, the victim will meet with a worker who will copy the documents, return the originals to the victim, and advise the victim whether additional information is needed. No notice by publication or otherwise is required for a SSN change. The worker sends the information to a central office in Baltimore, Maryland, which reviews the request and, generally after 4 to 6 weeks, either issues a new number, denies the request, or asks for more information or verification. The SSA does not call or write to the victim with a decision. Instead, he or she must go to the Office to find out if

a response has been received. The Social Security Administration generally cross-references old with new identities on their system. If this could be dangerous for the victim, he or she must specifically request that the numbers not be connected on their system. If the SSA allows this request, the old and new identities will be connected in a paper file, which should be kept in the office in which the victim applies for the new number.

7. *Additional Considerations.* Most organizations, including employers, creditors, and health insurers, identify individuals using their social security numbers. Thus, social security numbers provide a simple way to locate individuals. Many organizations will permit the use of "dummy numbers," such as on driver's licenses and insurance forms, which provides additional security for victims. This prevents cross-referencing numbers and possible disclosure of newly obtained numbers. Thus, whenever possible, victims should avoid using their prior or current social security numbers as identifiers. Victims should be aware that, if they or potential creditors check their credit history under both old and new numbers, those numbers will become cross-referenced on all of their future credit reports. Thus, victims have to establish new credit histories under their new identities to ensure safety.



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SSA Provides Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence

All people deserve to live with respect and dignity -- free from fear. Yet, family violence plagues the lives of millions of Americans, according to estimates by the Department of Justice. This crime affects people in all walks of life.

The SSA joins with other Federal agencies to provide greater assistance to victims of domestic violence. Some victims seeking to elude their abuser and reduce the risk of further violence choose to establish a new identity. As part of that effort, it may be helpful to obtain a new Social Security number (SSN).

How To Apply For A New Social Security Number

- Apply in person at any Social Security Office;
- Take evidence of your age, identity, and U.S. citizenship or lawful alien status;
- If you have changed your name as the Department of Justice recommends, take evidence identifying you by both your old and new names;
- If new SSNs are being requested for children, take evidence showing you have custody; and
- Take any evidence you may have documenting the harassment or abuse. The Social Security Administration will assist you in obtaining any additional corroborating evidence, if needed. The best evidence comes from third parties, such as police, medical facilities or doctors and describes the nature and extent of the domestic violence. Other evidence might include court restraining orders, letters from shelters, letters from family members, friends, counselors, or others with knowledge of the domestic violence.

Protective Actions Recommended By The Department Of Justice

A new SSN alone cannot protect you, particularly if your original SSN did not play a role in the domestic violence. There are other important steps you need to take for personal protection. In addition to changing your name, you should consider getting an unlisted telephone number, changing jobs, and moving to a new area/state.

Victims of domestic violence also are encouraged to contact the national Domestic Violence Hotline toll-free number, 1-800-799-SAFE.

Protecting Your New SSN

SSA's records are confidential. SSA does not furnish your SSN to third parties. Therefore, you should be careful about sharing your SSN unnecessarily with third parties who may not need it to provide you with a benefit or service.

Questions and Answers Regarding Domestic Violence Policy Change

Question 1: What will SSA do differently in processing requests for a new number?

Answer: Previously SSA required the individual to establish that the abuser had either misused the individual's SSN or could be expected to misuse it to locate the individual. Only in cases of extremely severe abuse or endangerment of the persons life did SSA assume misuse. Now SSA will presume SSN misuse is possible in all abuse cases.

Question 2: Should a person change his/her name before contacting SSA for a new number?

Answer: Changing one's name is one of the important steps a domestic violence victim needs to take for personal protection. Since SSA assigns an SSN based on the name shown on the identity document submitted with the application for a number, it is best that the applicant have a document showing his/her new name.

FILE NO: EM-98190

DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 1998

TO : ALL RC/ARC MOSs/RPAOs/ADs/DOs/ROs/TSCs/ODIO/
OTS/OPIR/OCRO/OIP/OPBP/PSCs

FROM : SSA, ODISP, OPB

SUBJECT: Policy Change--Evidence Required to Assign a New
SSN in Harassment/Abuse/Life Endangerment Cases

On Wednesday, November 4, 1998, Vice President Gore announced a change in SSA's policy for assigning new SSNs to victims of domestic violence.

Effective immediately, SSA will no longer require an individual requesting a new SSN based on harassment/abuse/life endangerment to prove the harasser/abuser is misusing (or has misused) the SSN to carry out the harassment/abuse or cause the individual harm, or absent evidence of SSN misuse, that the harassment/abuse is of an extremely severe nature and extent. The individual requesting a new SSN based on harassment/abuse or life endangerment must still provide evidence that he/she is being harassed/abused/endangered based on the definitions in RM 00205.001B. POMS RM 00205.045B. will be revised to reflect this policy change.

FO employees should assist these individuals in obtaining the documentation needed to assign a new SSN in order to expedite the processing of these requests. SSA employees should work closely with third parties that can often provide the supporting documentation. These third parties include local shelters, police, courts, treating physicians, medical facilities or psychologists.

Below is a reminder of what is still required to support the request for a new SSN in these situations:

- the mandatory in-person interview if the applicant is age 18 or older
- the applicant's signed statement on Form SSA-795 thoroughly explaining the reasons for needing the new SSN and what steps he/she has taken to escape/avoid the abuser
- current credible third party evidence documenting the harassment/abuse/life endangerment

- evidence needed for an original SSN (i.e., age, identity, and U.S. citizenship or lawful alien status)
- evidence documenting the individual's old and new identities, if the individual has changed his/her name
- evidence showing that he/she has custody of minor children if new SSNs are requested on their behalf
- the FO's report of contact documenting the interview and describing the interviewer's observations
- the applicant's completed and signed SS-5, which has been coded and certified by the appropriate FO employees

The decision to approve or deny the individual's request for a new SSN in these cases will still be made in central office to ensure consistency in the decision making process. All completed and documented requests should be sent to:

Social Security Administration
Office of Disability and International Operations
P.O. Box 17299
Baltimore, Maryland 21241

FOs should ensure that their resource files regarding programs and referral services for victims of domestic violence are complete and current. (GN 00903.330)

POMS RM 00205.045 will be revised to reflect this change in policy.

FOs should address any questions regarding this message to their regional office support staffs. ROs may call Lynn Kuban on 410-965-7908 or Sharon Nardone on 410-965-8785 with any questions regarding the above.

Retention Date: November 1999

INTRODUCTION

Individuals who are being harassed/abused or whose lives are endangered by others request new SSNs because they believe that a new SSN will offer protection by preventing the harasser/abuser from locating them through their SSN. In many cases the NH has taken actions on his/her own to escape the harassment/abuse or life endangerment, such as a change of name and/or address. In other cases the NH has not taken such actions and is relying on a new SSN alone to protect him/her.

B. POLICY -- HARASSMENT/ABUSE OR LIFE ENDANGERMENT

An individual requesting a new SSN based on harassment/abuse or life endangerment must prove either:

- o that the harasser/abuser is misusing (or has misused) the SSN to pursue the individual to carry out the harassment/abuse or otherwise cause the individual harm.

AND

that he/she is being harassed/abused/endangered based on the definitions in RM 00205.001B.; i.e., there is a present threat or danger.

OR

- o absent evidence of demonstrated current or prior SSN misuse, that because of the extremely severe nature and extent of the harassment/abuse/endangerment, SSA can reasonably presume the harasser/abuser will do anything, including misusing the NH's SSN, to locate him/her to carry out the harassment/abuse/endangerment.

NOTE: Misuse of the SSN to carry out harassment/abuse/endangerment, includes using the SSN to track the individual i.e., through employment records, driver's license records, health insurance, or any process which uses the SSN as an identifier. See the definition of "misuse" in RM 00205.001B.

C. POLICY -- DOCUMENTATION

Applicants requesting new SSNs based on harassment, abuse or life endangerment must submit third-party documentation of SSN misuse and harassment/abuse or life endangerment per B. above. The evidence must clearly demonstrate that there is a basis for the applicant's belief that he/she is **currently** at risk. If the applicant cannot submit third party evidence that the SSN was misused to locate him/her, the FO must include that information in the Report of Contact or the applicant must include it in his/her signed statement.

All family members living in the same household are probably affected if the evidence shows that either the parent or child(ren) are being harassed/abused or endangered. Thus, if one family member meets the requirements for a new SSN and new SSNs are requested for other family members in the same household, it is not necessary to establish harassment/abuse or life endangerment for each member of the household. However, custody development per RM 00205.045I. is always required if a new SSN is requested for a child.

The applicant must also submit evidence of age, identity, and citizenship/alien status.

If the applicant has changed his/her name, one or more documents identifying the applicant by both the old and new names is required. See RM 00203.200.

If the applicant is age 18 or over, the mandatory in-person interview is required. See RM 00205.010.

The FO should always fully document the nature and severity of the harassment /abuse/life endangerment, even if the FO believes the applicant

has established SSN misuse for this purpose.

D. POLICY -- CO REVIEW AND APPROVAL REQUIRED

CO must review all requests for new SSNs based on harassment/abuse. CO will make a determination based on the merits of each individual case and the policy in RM 00205.045B.

If CO approves the request, CO will take the necessary action with OCRO to have a new SSN assigned. The old and the new SSNs will be cross-referred on the system.

If CO does not approve the request, they will send the applicant a letter explaining why the request was not approved.

E. POLICY -- NH WANTS A THIRD SSN

When a person who already has two SSNs wants a third SSN, the NH must submit evidence to prove that subsequent to the date the second SSN was assigned, the NH continued to be harassed or abused and the harasser/abuser has found out the NH's new SSN (and name, if the name was changed). SSA will not assign a third SSN just because the NH changed his/her name after being assigned the second SSN. SSA also will not delete a name from the second SSN record if the NH later changes his/her name.

F. POLICY -- SECOND SSN FOR A MINOR CHILD

1. Requirements for Assigning a New SSN

In assigning a new SSN, in addition to meeting the evidence requirements for harassment/abuse or life endangerment, the FO must determine parental custody. A new SSN will be assigned to the child only if the requesting parent states he/she has sole legal custody and there is not a court ruling showing otherwise or the court records are unavailable. The requesting parent will pay any fees necessary to obtain copies of court records.

2. Disclosing New SSN to Other Parent

SSA's Privacy Officer must review requests from the other parent to provide him/her with the child's new name (when there is one) and SSN should the other parent later provide evidence that a court awarded him/her legal custody of the child. The Privacy Officer must respond directly to the request. See GN 03350.015 and GN 03350.999.

G. PROCEDURE -- FO RESPONSIBILITY

When sending the case to CO for review, the FO must include complete documentation to support the NH's allegation of SSN misuse and/or evidence of the harassment/abuse including the severity and extent, for himself/herself and/or child as appropriate.

If the new SSN is requested for a child, include a copy of the current court ruling concerning custody of the child or a statement from the appropriate local court that none exists.

Also include:

- o Copies of the documents submitted to establish age, identity, citizenship/ alien status and Numident.
- o A properly completed, signed, coded and certified SS-5.
- o The applicant's signed statement on Form SSA-795, explaining why he/she is requesting a new SSN, what he/she has done to protect himself/herself.
- o The Report of Contact (SSA-5002) (See RM 00205.030).
- o The applicant's signed statement on Form SSA-795 indicating whether or not he/she has sole legal custody of the child(ren), whether the other parent has joint custody or visitation rights and whether he/she will honor those rights. See RM 00205.045I.

REMINDER: Incomplete development by the FO causes delays and possible

hardship/life endangerment for the applicant.

H. PROCEDURE -- FO ACTIONS

Develop harassment/abuse/life endangerment cases as follows:

- | STEP | ACTION |
|------|--|
| 1 | <p>Conduct the mandatory in-person interview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Have the applicant provide the following information and document it on Form SSA-795:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o the reason for wanting a new SSN; .o how his/her SSN is being misused;o the nature and the severity of the harassment/abuse or possible life endangermento what he/she has done to escape/avoid the harassment/abuse; and,o why he/she believes a new SSN will protect him/her. <p>NOTE: If he/she has not taken any precautionary measures to ensure his/her safety, it is likely that a new SSN will not solve the problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b. If the request involves a minor child, document custody per F.1. above. Inform the parent that if the other parent subsequently contacts SSA and proves legal custody of the child or the right to information about the child, SSA may release the child's new identity and SSN to that parent. |
| 2 | <p>Have the applicant complete an SS-5 and submit evidence for an original SSN per C. above.</p> <p>NOTE: If the individual is contemplating a name change, suggest that he/she obtain the name change before applying for a second SSN to be sure that there is no record of the old name on the new SSN. Advise the applicant that we will neither assign a third SSN just because he/she later changes his /her name, nor delete the old name from the Numident record for the new SSN.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Obtain and review any existing third party corroborating evidence of SSN misuse and harassment/abuse/life endangerment as defined in A. and B. above. Evidence can include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Police reports/records, which include the result of the police investigation of the alleged harassment/abuseo Medical recordso Official court documents <p>NOTE: Sealed name change documents have the same probative value as an unsealed name change document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Restraining orders based on harassment/abuse or violence against the individual.o Signed and dated letters from prosecuting attorneys, social workers, battered women's or homeless shelters, other government agencies, State or local government witness protection agencies or the penal system, if the abuser was incarcerated. <p>CAUTION: The letters and reports should specifically include the applicant's name, show the official letterhead of the agency the third party represents, include sufficient information for the reviewing office to determine the severe nature and extent of the harassment/abuse/life endangerment (RM 00205.045B.) and provide the basis for the third party's knowledge.</p> <p>Letters or statements of verification and support from the individual's family members and friends should be considered in view of their objectivity, the basis for the writer's knowledge, and other supporting documentation. Such a statement is not considered an official document but can be submitted if the FO exhausts all other sources for obtaining evidence.</p> <p>In order to connect the actual event of harassment/abuse with the victim of that harassment/abuse, photographs/pictures purporting to show the results of an act of harassment/abuse such as personal injury or property damage, must be accompanied by a narrative from the official source.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Prepare a Report of Contact (Form SSA-5002) to document the interview. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o The information provided during the interview;o FO observations concerning the individual's allegations;o FO's recommendation. See RM 00205.030B. |

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Mail to CO all of the following:

- o The original, signed SS-5 which is properly completed, coded and certified by the appropriate employees;
- o Copies of the documents submitted to establish age, identity, citizenship/alien status;
- o Copies of the third party evidence of harassment/abuse, in accordance with the definitions above;
- o Copies of third party evidence of SSN misuse if it was supplied.
- o A copy of the child custody ruling, if appropriate to the request.
- o The applicant's signed statement per F. above.
- o The Report of Contact.
- o All other evidence

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Annotate the envelope in red in the bottom right: "Second SSN Request".

The mailing address is:

Social Security Administration
 Office of Disability and International Operations
 P.O. Box 17299
 Baltimore, MD 21241

NOTE: Upon approval and assignment of the new SSN, CO will contact the FO if requested. Include the FO telephone number in the file. The FO is responsible for any earnings transfers necessary. See: RM 03870.095 - RM 03870.098.

I. PROCEDURE -- CUSTODY DEVELOPMENT WHEN NEW SSN REQUEST IS FOR A MINOR CHILD

Custody development is always required when the applicant is requesting a new SSN for a minor child. In most cases the applicant is a parent.

Development regarding custody is always required to confirm that the other parent as shown on the child's birth certificate (or prior Numident record if the age document does not show the parent's names) does not have custody. The FO must **always**:

- o Obtain the applicant's statement as to whether custody has been granted and by what court and whether the applicant has sole custody (the applicant may not have sought a custody ruling);
- o Ask the applicant to submit custody papers, if he/she has them. If not, obtain as much information as possible (e.g., the location of the court, the name of the judge, date) to help locate the court documents;
- o Always check with the appropriate court to corroborate whether there is an existing court ruling concerning custody and/or check for subsequent modifications. The appropriate court will be either the court having jurisdiction over the applicant's and other parent's current or previous residences. If necessary, request the assistance of the parallel FO. Advise the requesting parent that he/she must pay any fees necessary to obtain the court records.
- o Include a copy of the court ruling if one is found or a statement from the appropriate court official or FO employee if none is found.
- o Advise the parent that, if the other parent later provides evidence that a court awarded him/her legal custody, or visitation, SSA may provide the child's new name (if there is one) and SSN to the other parent.

SSA will not participate in giving a new SSN to deny the other parent's court allowed visitation privileges. If the applicant submitted custody papers or if the FO locates papers that show the applicant has custody, check to see if the other parent was granted visitation. If the custody document indicates that the other parent has court ordered visitation privileges, **always** ask the requesting parent if he/she will allow the other parent to continue with visitation and have the parent include that information on his/her signed statement.

J. PROCEDURE -- DISCLOSURE OF CHILD'S NEW SSN TO OTHER PARENT

If the other parent later requests the child's new name (if applicable) and SSN, refer the request to the SSA Privacy Officer.

K. EXAMPLES

**Evidence Does Not Establish SSN Misuse or Severe Nature of Harassment/
Abuse or Life Endangerment**

Peter alleged that an unknown assailant is trying to kill him and believes that the assailant is using his SSN to track him. He wants a new SSN and submits a picture of a car with bullet holes in the side along with several letters from his relatives and former neighbors as evidence of the alleged harassment/abuse and life endangerment. Peter says that he moved from Alabama to Nevada to elude his pursuers and alerted the police departments in both States, but never filed formal police reports. Since he does not know his assailant's identity, he cannot apply for a restraining order. Peter submitted a court document showing he changed his name. He did not provide any other third party evidence corroborating his story or proving use of his SSN to track him.

The picture is insufficient because it does not connect him to the car or to the event which caused the bullet holes. The letters are insufficient because they merely repeat his allegations; none of the parties witnessed any of the alleged attempts to kill him. The picture could have been posed or show someone else's car and does not prove that a violent act was committed against Peter. None of the evidence submitted substantiates SSN misuse or severe harassment/abuse.

Peter was asked to furnish other evidence corroborating SSN misuse and harassment/abuse or life endangerment, such as police reports, medical records, other court documents or letters from any agencies assisting him as a result of the alleged attack. Since he was unable to provide evidence of SSN misuse, the FO includes a statement to that effect.

CO did not approve the request for a new SSN based on insufficient evidence to prove SSN misuse or harassment/abuse.

**Evidence Does Not Establish SSN Misuse Or Severe Nature of Harassment/
Abuse or Life Endangerment**

Rex Blue alleges that members of a cult are harassing his family with annoying phone calls and unwarranted nightly visits to his home. He says he wants a new SSN to evade his harassers because he believes that they are using his number to obtain his personal information. As evidence of actions he has taken, he presents a notarized court document showing his name change from Harold Green based on "embarrassment about the family name, Green." He mentions that the FBI has knowledge of his case and presents a letter from a friend who witnessed the phone calls along with a letter from his attorney stating that Mr. Blue should, in his opinion, be granted a new SSN.

The letter from the friend merely repeats what the applicant alleges and is not objective in nature. The attorney's letter only expresses his personal opinion that Mr. Blue should be given a new SSN and does not corroborate or support Mr. Blue's allegation. There is no evidence showing that the harassers are using his SSN to obtain information about him.

Mr. Blue was asked to provide additional third party evidence corroborating his allegation of harassment/abuse and misuse of his SSN to locate and carry out the act of harassment. The evidence supporting harassment/abuse could include a copy of a police report documenting the visits and phone calls or a letter from the FBI. He was also asked to document the measures he is taking to protect himself and his family, such as obtaining an unlisted phone number, or relocating to a safer place.

Mr. Blue did not furnish any additional evidence. Since there was no evidence of SSN misuse, the FO includes on the Report of Contact that the applicant was asked to submit such evidence and failed to do so.

CO did not approve request for a new SSN based on insufficient evidence to prove SSN misuse and harassment/abuse.

**3. No Evidence of SSN Misuse or Severe Nature of Harassment/Abuse or Life
Endangerment**

Lily Johnson requests a new SSN and alleges her former husband tried to have her killed and is harassing her from prison. She furnished a copy of a newspaper article about her former husband's trial and subsequent conviction for hiring someone to commit a murder for him. The article mentioned that there was a possibility that other individuals were marked for assassination by the same person. Lily is convinced that she is the next victim. She also submits her divorce decree and a letter from her mother stating that Lily is afraid her "ex" will use her SSN to locate her when he gets out of prison. The letter also says that the husband used to batter and threaten Lily during their marriage, causing her to require medical treatment as a result of his abuse.

The newspaper article does not mention Lily by name or tie her to the crime as a victim or potential victim. The letter from her mother merely repeats what Lily has said. Therefore, Lily was asked to submit other third party documentation corroborating her allegation of SSN misuse and harassment/abuse. She was asked for copies of police or medical reports, or letters from the penal system, court or prosecuting attorney verifying that she is being harassed and in danger. She was asked to furnish a statement indicating how her former husband is misusing her SSN to carry out the harassment.

Lily was unable to furnish additional evidence supporting her allegation of harassment/abuse and life endangerment. She was unable to submit evidence from medical professionals to support her mother's allegation that she had required medical treatment based on abuse during the marriage. The FO sent the entire file, including a statement indicating that there was no evidence of SSN misuse to CO.

In this case the evidence was insufficient to show SSN misuse tied to harassment /abuse or severe harassment/abuse warranting assigning a new number. The request was not approved.

**4. Evidence Establishes SSN Misuse and Severe Harassment/
Abuse or Life
Endangerment**

Samantha Glenn alleges her former husband, Ben Brown, physically and mentally abused her throughout their five years of marriage. She requests new SSNs for herself and her two daughters. She says she was forced to flee her home and seek refuge in a battered women's shelter for their safety. She says that her ex-husband vowed to track her down to harm her and take the children. She says he used her SSN to obtain copies of her driver's record and credit report and sent them to her latest address as proof that he could locate her wherever she goes.

As evidence, Ms. Glenn furnishes a signed and dated letter from the shelter along with copies of police reports documenting several violent incidents when he followed her to work and publicly harassed her. She submits a copy of the official court name changes for herself and her daughters and a copy of the notarized court issued restraining order. She also provides a copy of her divorce decree showing she was granted full legal custody of the two children.

In this case the evidence supports assignment of new SSNs because there is evidence of harassment/abuse and misuse of the SSN and evidence she has custody of the children.

5. Evidence Establishes SSN Misuse And Harassment/Abuse or Life Endangerment

Martina alleges she is being abused by her former husband Fred and believes a new SSN will help her evade him. She says she and her children have moved frequently and she is on welfare because the frequent moves keep her from getting a job. She says Fred has threatened to follow her wherever she goes and make her life miserable. Martina says that he has bragged that as long as she gets welfare, he will be able to track her.

Martina submitted a copy of a restraining order that was still in effect. She also submitted a letter from the Michigan Department of Social Services which stated that Fred had presented his marriage certificate showing Martina was his wife and her SSN and convinced a welfare case worker to disclose her whereabouts. Martina has changed her name and moved to another State.

In this case the evidence shows harassment/abuse (the restraining order) and misuse of her SSN (the letter from the Michigan DSS) and a new SSN was assigned to Martina.

Evidence Does Not Establish SSN Misuse But Evidence Does Establish Severe Harassment/Abuse or Life Endangerment

Tyler says he was kidnapped, assaulted and badly injured several years earlier by a man now in prison. The man is scheduled for parole from prison and Tyler is terrified that the parolee will use his SSN to track and harm him because Tyler testified against him in court. Tyler took appropriate measures to protect himself and relocated to another State.

As evidence, Tyler submits copies of the court transcript describing the crime, his testimony and a copy of the official name change clearly stating the reason for the change. He also submits a copy of his medical records describing his physical injuries and ongoing treatment verifying how severely he was traumatized by the experience. A letter from the State Correctional officer supports Tyler's allegation that the parolee would use every means possible to locate Tyler.

The FO gets Tyler's statement that he has no evidence to show the parolee has used Tyler's SSN to track him in the past.

Although Tyler is unable to prove that SSN misuse is involved, the nature of the abuse was so severe that it is reasonable to assume that the parolee would do anything, including using Tyler's SSN to try to locate and harm him. Tyler was assigned a new SSN based on the severe nature of the abuse and life endangerment.

7. Evidence Does Not Establish SSN Misuse/Outdated Evidence of Harassment / Abuse or Life Endangerment

Stephanie applies for a new SSN in 1996 alleging that her former husband was convicted for selling drugs in 1984 and she testified against him. He is out of prison and she is afraid he will try to locate her through her SSN. She has changed her name and moved to another State. She submitted copies of the 1984 trial transcript showing she was a witness for the prosecution and that he had threatened to "get her" when he got out of prison. The only recent document submitted was the name change document.

The FO asked if she has evidence her ex-husband was misusing her SSN to locate her or if the prison could verify that her ex-husband had recently made threatening statements about her, and she said "no." The FO documented this on the Report of Contact. Because Stephanie did not provide evidence of SSN misuse or current evidence of harassment/abuse, CO did not approve her request for a new SSN.