



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Numerical Identification (NUMIDENT) Files Record Group 47

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I. Questions about the Numerical Identification (NUMIDENT) Files

I.1. What are the Numerical Identification (NUMIDENT) Files?

Numerical Identification Files contain records from the Social Security Administration's "Master Files of the Social Security (SSN) Holders and SSN Applications," also known as the "Enumeration System" or the "Numerical Identification System (NUMIDENT)."

The Social Security Administration uses the Enumeration System to maintain records of each individual who has applied for a Social Security Number starting in 1936. The Social Security Administration began maintaining these records in the electronic Numerical Identification System (NUMIDENT) in the 1970s.

I.2. What NUMIDENT Files has the National Archives received?

In 2013, the Social Security Administration transferred the first set of NUMIDENT Files to the National Archives. This first set contained records of individuals with a verified death between 1936 and 2007 or who would have been over 110 years old by December 31, 2007. There are three types of entries in NUMIDENT: application (SS-5), claim, and death entries.

The 2013 transfer for the period of 1936-2007 consisted of:

- 49,459,293 death record entries (available for searching via AAD)
- 72,182,729 application record entries (available for searching via AAD)
- 25,230,486 claim record entries (available for searching via AAD)

I.3. What information is in the NUMIDENT Files?

There are three types of entries in NUMIDENT: death, application (SS-5), and claim records. A NUMIDENT record may contain more than one entry.

The death records contain information related to the applicant's death, including full name, social security number, date of birth, sex, and date of death. The death records do not include any State reported deaths in accordance with the Social Security Act section 205(r). There are 49,459,293 death record entries in the transfer of the 1936-2007 records.

The application (SS-5) records contain information extracted from the SS-5 form "Application for a Social Security Card" or "Application for Social Security Account Number." Information in the NUMIDENT application entries include applicant's full name, father's name, mother's maiden name, sex, race/ethnic description, place of birth, and other information about the application or subsequent changes to the applicant's record. The transfer of the 1936 - 2007 records includes records for individuals with a verified death or who would have been 110 years old by December 31, 2007. There are a total of 72,182,729 application records for 40,873,455 social security numbers. For some social security numbers, there are multiple application records.

The claim records include information on whether it is a life or death claim, full name, date of birth, sex, father's name, mother's maiden name, and place of birth. The transfer of the 1936 - 2007 records includes records for individuals with a verified death or who would have been 110 years old by December 31, 2007. There are a total of 25,230,486 claim records for 25,140,847 social security numbers. For some social security numbers, there are multiple claim records.

I.4. Why were these records created?

The Social Security Administration created and maintained these records for the purpose of tracking the earnings of U.S. workers, and determining benefit entitlements as established under the Social Security Act of 1935.

I.5. What version of the NUMIDENT application records are accessible via AAD?

The agency transferred the NUMIDENT application records in 20 separate files. NARA also discovered that a relatively small number of records were of potentially living individuals. To provide access to the records via AAD, NARA created reference versions. For the reference versions, NARA:

- Merged the 20 preserved files in order to sort the records alphabetically by last name and then create new files arranged by last name.

- Added the Source File field to serve as a cross-reference to the record in the preserved NUMIDENT Application Files.
- Split the Cycle Date, Date of Birth, and Prior Date of Birth fields into separate day, month, and year fields to support date range searching since some dates may have Xs instead of valid numbers.
- Masked the records of potentially living individuals. NARA masked those application records that did not have a corresponding death record for that individual and the individual was born in or after 1908. NARA did not mask records of individuals born over 110 years ago (born prior to 1908), regardless if there was a corresponding Death record or not. NARA masked the records of potentially living individuals by replacing the contents of the records with Z. A total of 60,213 records are masked.

In the masked records, all fields are populated with Z, except for the two fields. In the Notify Field Office Code field (NUMI-NOTIFY), there is only a single Z so to differentiate it from the coded value ZZ. In the Filler 5 field (FILLER05), there is only a single Z. All of the masked records are included in the Application Last Names U through Z and non-alphabetic file.

- Converted asterisk (*) coded values to alphabetic characters since in AAD the asterisk (*) is used for wildcard searching.
 - In the fields that indicate a name or place of birth exceeds the field size (the field name has “Overflow”), NARA converted the * to the capital letter O (for overflow).
 - In the Date of Birth Changed Indicator field, NARA converted the * to the capital letter C (for corrected).
 - In the foreign place of birth indicator field, NARA converted the * to the lowercase letter f (for foreign). The lowercase f was used so to distinguish it from the code values used in the state or foreign country place of birth field (NUMI-POB-STATE-COUNTRY).
- Merged the state or foreign country place of birth field (NUMI-POB-STATE-COUNTRY) and the foreign place of birth indicator field (NUMI-POB-FOREIGN-IND) to create the State or Foreign Country of Birth field. In the state or foreign country place of birth field, some of the codes for the states and countries are the same. The meanings for duplicate codes are dependent on the foreign place of birth indicator values. In order to display the meanings of the coded values in AAD and support searching, NARA combined the two fields to create a code list of unique values consisting of the state and countries codes and foreign place of birth indicator.

I.6. What version of the NUMIDENT death records are accessible via AAD?

The agency transferred the NUMIDENT death records in 20 separate files and each record only contained information in about a third of the fields. To provide access to the records via AAD, NARA created reference versions. For the reference versions, NARA:

- Merged the 20 preserved files in order to sort the records alphabetically by last name and then create new files arranged by last name.
- Added the Source File field to serve as a cross-reference to the record in the preserved NUMIDENT Death Files.
- Removed the fields relating to the second death posting (originally columns 187-336) and the third death posting (originally columns 337-486) since these fields are blank in all the records. The Number of Death Postings field shows all records only contain one death posting (originally column 487, now column 187 in AAD).
- Split the Date of Birth and Date of Death fields into separate day, month, and year fields to support date range searching since some dates may have Xs instead of valid numbers.
- Masked the Death Certificate Number field in those records where populated. Only 7% of the records contain information in the Death Certificate Number field. Upon close review, NARA discovered that the Death Certificate Number field contained telephone numbers and other miscellaneous notes. Since some of the records were created in the past 20 years and the telephone numbers may be for private individuals NARA masked the information with an “X” to protect personal privacy.
- Masked selected values in the Other Number field. The Social Security Administration defined the Other Number field as used for claims numbers. However, since it is a nine-digit field that could potentially contain a social security number, NARA masked selected values to protect personal privacy. Specifically, NARA masked with “X’s” the values in this field that did not match a social security number of a deceased individual listed in the NUMIDENT Death Files. NARA masked the field in close to 9% of the records. In a few cases, the Other Number field was already populated with all X’s. For 71% of the records, the Other Number field contains the same value as the Social Security Number field. And 13% of the records are blank or have a null value for this field.

I.7. What version of the NUMIDENT claim records are accessible via AAD?

The agency transferred the NUMIDENT claim records in 20 separate files. NARA found they could not verify that a relatively small number of records were for deceased individuals. To provide access to the records via AAD, NARA created reference versions. For the reference versions, NARA:

- Merged the 20 preserved files in order to sort the records alphabetically by last name and then create new files arranged by last name.
- Added the Source File field to serve as a cross-reference to the record in the preserved NUMIDENT Application Files.

- Split the Cycle Date, Date of Birth, Claim Date, Date of Onset, and Date of Death From Title II Claim fields into separate day, month, and year fields to support date range searching since some dates may have Xs instead of valid numbers.
- Truncated the Filler 6 field (originally columns 306-497) from 192 characters to 1 character since this field is blank in all the records or populated with a single Z in the masked records.
- Masked the records where NARA could not verify if the individual was deceased. NARA masked the claim records that did not have a corresponding SSN in the Death or released Application records and had a date of birth in or after 1908 or no birth year. NARA did not mask records of individuals born over 110 years ago (born prior to 1908), regardless if there was a corresponding Death or released Application record. NARA masked the records of potentially living individuals by replacing the contents of the records with Z. NARA masked a total of 2,229 records. All of the masked records are included in the Claim Last Names U through Z file.
- Converted asterisk (*) coded values to alphabetic characters since in AAD the asterisk (*) is used for wildcard searching.
 - In the fields that indicate a name or place of birth exceeds the field size (the field name has “Overflow”), NARA converted the * to the capital letter O (for overflow).
 - In the foreign place of birth indicator field, NARA converted the * to the lowercase letter f (for foreign). The lowercase f was used so to distinguish it from the code values used in the state or foreign country place of birth field (NUMI-POB-STATE-COUNTRY).
- Merged the state or foreign country place of birth field (NUMI-POB-STATE-COUNTRY) and the foreign place of birth indicator field (NUMI-POB-FOREIGN-IND) to create the State or Foreign Country of Birth field. In the state or foreign country place of birth field, some of the codes for the states and countries are the same. The meanings for duplicate codes are dependent on the foreign place of birth indicator values. In order to display the meanings of the coded values in AAD and support searching, NARA combined the two fields to create a code list of unique values consisting of the state and countries codes and foreign place of birth indicator.

I.8. What are some of the limitations of the NUMIDENT Records?

- The Application (SS-5) Files do not include records of all social security applications between 1936 and 2007.
 - Between 1973 and 1979, the Social Security Administration converted legacy SS-5 records to the NUMIDENT electronic database. Information on applications prior to 1973 may be incomplete.
 - There are only Application (SS-5) records for verified deceased individuals or those born prior to 1908.
- The Death Files do not include records of all deaths between 1936 and 2007.

- In particular, the files do not include any state reported deaths in accordance with the Social Security Act section 205(r). An estimated 10% - 30% of reported deaths to the Social Security Administration are state reported deaths.
- The absence of a record for a person is not proof that the person is alive.
- The files do not include deaths for individuals who never received a social security number.
- The Social Security Administration began maintaining death information using automated (computer processing) methods in 1962. Information on deaths prior to 1962 may be incomplete or missing.
- The Claim Files do not include records of all claims between 1936 and 2007.
 - The Social Security Administration stopped creating the claim records by 1984.
- There may be a record for an individual in one set of the files, but not in the others. For example, there may be a Death record, but no corresponding record in the Application and Claim Files.
 - There are nearly 6 million social security numbers in the Application (SS-5) Files that do not appear in the Death Files.
 - There are nearly 23 million social security numbers in the Claim Files that do not appear in the Application records.
- The records may contain misspellings, typos, or incorrect values. For example:
 - If the agency did not have the day, month, or year for a date of birth or date of death, they filled in the values with Xs or 0s.
 - There are death records with a year of birth occurring after the year of death. For example, the record lists a birth year of 1950, but a death year of 1905.
 - There are some death records with a year of birth and year of death that are over 115 years apart.
 - Names may only contain initials, not the full name.
 - Names may be misspelled or truncated.

I.9. Are there plans to correct inaccuracies in the NUMIDENT Records?

No. As an archives, NARA's role is to preserve the integrity of the records that Federal agencies transfer for archival preservation, even if the records include objective inaccuracies or missing information. For that reason, NARA does not correct or revise accessioned records.

I.10. How do these records differ from those in the Social Security Death Index (SSDI)?

The NUMIDENT records available on AAD are output from the Master Files of the Social Security (SSN) Holders and SSN Applications, also known as “The Enumeration System.”

The Social Security Death Index contains records derived from the Social Security Administration’s Death Master File, which is an extract of the death information in NUMIDENT.

The NUMIDENT records available on AAD contain some of the information that is used to create the Social Security Death Index.

I.11. Why has the National Archives (NARA) released the social security numbers in these records?

We released the social security numbers of deceased individuals or who would have been over 110 years old by December 31, 2007. NARA regularly releases social security numbers of deceased individuals in other records. When the Social Security Administration transferred the NUMIDENT records, we worked with them to ensure we only received records of individuals with a verified death or who would have been over 110 years old by December 31, 2007. NARA conducted additional reviews and masked the records of potentially living individuals in full, including the name and social security number; see FAQs I.5 and I.7.

Furthermore, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has regularly released similar data on deceased individuals since 1983. The judgment in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the SSA in 1980 required SSA make available the social security number, surname, and date of death of deceased number holders.

II. Questions about obtaining vital records and social security records

II.1. How can I obtain a copy of a birth or death certificate?

In general, birth and death certificates are created by local authorities where the individual was born or died. With some exceptions, birth and death certificates are not considered Federal records and they are not at the National Archives. Instead, birth and death records are usually held by state agencies. You will need to contact the appropriate state agency for copies of birth and death certificates.

Records relating to births and deaths overseas or while in military service may be included in records held at the National Archives.

Information on locating birth and death certificates is available at:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/vital-records/>.

II.2. How can I get a copy of the original Social Security application form (SS-5)?

You can request a copy of a deceased individual’s Social Security record from the Social Security Administration. You can make the request online at: <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps9/eFOIA-FEWeb/internet/main.jsp> using form SSA-711. For more details, please visit the Social Security

Administration's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) page at:
<https://www.ssa.gov/foia/request.html>.

III. Questions about searching the NUMIDENT Files and search results via the Access to Archival Databases (AAD) resource

III.1. How do I find records in the Application (SS-5), Death, and Claim Files?

Searching these records is similar to searching other files in AAD. Like other files, wildcard characters (% or *) are useful when searching. In addition, you may need to use a combination of other fields in your search as a way to help identify records. But when searching keep in mind that some fields may be blank and the information in the records may contain misspellings or other inaccuracies. You may need to use less search criteria to retrieve all possible matches.

The Death files are organized into nine files alphabetically by last name (see table of files in the [Appendix](#)).

The Application files are also organized into nine files alphabetically by last name (see table of files in the [Appendix](#)).

The Claim files are also organized into six files alphabetically by last name (see table of files in the [Appendix](#)).

For the most efficient searching, if you know the last name of the individual for whose record you seek, select the file potentially containing that last name and search that file by the Last Name and other fields.

Since individuals may have changed names, once you locate a record use that social security number to search the entire series to retrieve all other records associated with that number.

III.2. How do I search by name?

There are four name fields to cover all possible parts of a name: First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, and Suffix Name. The application and claim records also have fields for mother's name, father's name, other name, and/or signature name. Although these additional name fields are not always populated.

Start a name search by entering the first name and last name in the appropriate fields. If you are unable to find a match, try searching only by the first name, only by last name, or the beginning of a name (at least three characters) followed by a wildcard character (* or %). Also try searching using various spellings of the name.

Married women are likely listed under their married last name in the Death Files. However, in the Application Files, there may be a record of a woman under her maiden name and a second record reflecting her married last name.

Some of the names contain misspellings and obvious typos such as numerical characters and punctuation. For example: 3RAIN, 6USH, {URGESS, *AYWOOD, A\ESSES, HOLDEN, PA&KER, W2TSON, and NINEZ. In the Death Files, there are 63 records with last names that begin with a number or punctuation and they are in the file “Last names U through Z and non-alphabetic.”

Name fields, especially middle name, may be populated only with initials and not the full name. Names that exceed the field length may be truncated or cut-off. The Application and Claim Files include an indicator when the name exceeded the field length.

For names that contain a suffix such as SR, JR, III, the suffix may be in the Suffix Name field. Or the suffix may appear in the last name field with a space or hyphen after the last name. For example: COFFEY-JR, WALL-III, ASPER IV, and DODD SR.

III.3. How do I search by names containing punctuation or spaces?

Names that contain a prefix such as “Mac,” “Mc” “Le,” “Van,” “O,” etc., may or may not contain the appropriate space, apostrophe (’), or hyphen (-). Some names may contain a different character (space or hyphen) instead of the appropriate character. For example:

- D’ANGELO, D ANGELO, and D-ANGELO
- LA FLEUR, LA-FLEUR, and LAFLEUR
- MC DONALD, MC-DONALD, and MCDONALD
- MAC ARTHUR, MAC-ARTHUR, and MACARTHUR
- O’BRIEN, O-BRIEN, OBRIEN, O/BRIEN, and O BRIEN
- ST JOHN, STJOHN, and ST-JOHN
- VAN ACKER, VAN-ACKER, and VANACKER
- VAN DEN BERG, VAN-DEN-BERG, VANDE-BERG, and VANDEBERG
- MARY LOU, MARY-LOU, and MARYLOU
- DELGADO-DIAZ and DELGADO DIAZ
- LABOY-RIVERA and LABOY RIVERA

AAD ignores punctuation in search criteria. Punctuation in the records and in search terms is treated like a space for searching purposes. For example, a search for the first name MARY-LOU returns matches on MARY-LOU and MARY LOU. A search for MARY LOU returns matches on MARY LOU and MARY-LOU, but a search for MARYLOU only returns matches on MARYLOU and not matches containing a space or punctuation.

To search for a name that may contain punctuation or spaces, enter the name as originally spelled. If you are unable to find a match, try searching on variations of the name replacing punctuation with spaces or excluding any spaces or punctuation.

III.4. How do I search by birth or death date?

You can search for a specific date or a range of dates per file. There are separate month, day (day of the month), and year fields for birth and death dates. To search by month, day, and/or year you

need to enter search criteria in all the appropriate fields. You do not need to enter search criteria in all three fields or in all of the birth and/or death dates.

Since some records are missing date information, you may wish to start by searching only by year or by year and month. See also FAQ# [III.5. Why do some dates have an XX, 00, or XXXX for the value and “Not captured or reported” or “Invalid Number” for the meaning?](#)

You can search the month and day fields by selecting criteria from the “Select from Code List” on the Fielded Search page. You can select multiple days or months to search for a range of dates. For example, if you know the birth or death occurred in the summer, you might select the codes for June, July, and August. Or if you know the birth or death occurred in the beginning of the month, you might select the codes for the first (1) through the fifteenth (15). If you do not know the month and/or day, it is best to leave those fields blank.

You can search for a specific year or change the search operator to search before, between, or after certain years. Search by year using the four-digit year, such as 1890, 1953, or 2004.

For example:

- To search for records with a birth that occurred on January 1, 1940:
 - For the Date of Birth (Month) field, select the code for January
 - For the Date of Birth (Day) field, select the code for 1
 - For the Date of Birth (Year) field, enter 1940
 - Since it is possible the Date of Birth (Day) information was not captured the records, alternative searches include:
 - Revise the search criteria for Date of Birth (Day) field to select the code 00 or XX for “Not captured or reported” in addition to or instead of the day selected
 - Revise the search to just by month and year and do not include search criteria for the Date of Birth (Day) field
- To search for records with a birth that occurred in or before 1940:
 - For the Date of Birth (Year) field, change the search operator to “less than or equal” and enter 1940 for the search value
- To search for records with a birth that occurred in the summer of 1939, 1940, or 1941:
 - For the Date of Birth (Month) field, select the codes June, July, and August
 - For the Date of Birth (Year) field, change the search operator to “between” and enter the 1939 for the first search value and 1941 for the second search value

III.5. Why do some dates have an XX, 00, or XXXX for the value and “not captured or reported” or “Invalid Number” for the meaning?

It appears that the Social Security Administration used Xs or 0s when the month, day of the month, and/or year for a birth date and/or death date was missing. In order to enable searching on these fields, NARA included the meaning “not captured or reported” or “invalid number” for X’s or 0’s in these fields.

III.6. How do I search by Social Security Number?

Enter the nine-digit social security number in the Social Security Number field. Include any leading zeros, but do not include spaces or dashes.

Prior to 2007, the first three digits are the area number and were assigned by geographic region. To search based on an area number, enter the first three digits and use a wildcard to retrieve all numbers in a file for that geographic region. For SSN assigned after 2007, first three digits no longer have geographic significance. See “The Story of the Social Security Number” in the Technical Information for more details on the evolution and meaning of the social security number.

III.7. How do I retrieve all records for an individual?

Since individuals may have changed names or there may be typos or spelling variations in the name, you need to search by social security number to retrieve all records. To retrieve all possible records for an individual in the Application, Death, and Claim Files, once you locate a record use that social security number to conduct a search of the entire series to retrieve all other records associated with that number. You can search the entire series on the Series Description page on AAD, which is accessible using the breadcrumbs at the top of the page.

III.8. Why can't I find a specific record(s)?

There are many reasons why you may not find the record(s) you seek:

- The NUMIDENT Death files do not include records of all deaths between 1936 and 2007. In particular, the files do not include any state reported deaths in accordance with the Social Security Act section 205(r). An estimated 10% - 30% of reported deaths to the Social Security Administration are state reported deaths.
- The NUMIDENT Application (SS-5) Files do not include records of all social security applications between 1936 and 2007. There are only application records for verified deceased individuals or those born prior to 1908.
- The NUMIDENT Claim Files do not include records of all social security claims between 1936 and 2007. There are only claim records for verified deceased individuals or those born prior to 1908.
- The files do not include records for individuals who never had a social security number. It is possible some individuals never applied for nor received a social security number. See “The Story of the Social Security Number” in the Technical Information for more details on the history on the requirements for social security numbers.
- There may be a record for an individual in one set of the files, but not in the others. For example, there may be a Death record, but no corresponding record in the Application and Claim Files. There are nearly 6 million social security numbers in the Application Files that

do not appear in the Death Files. There are also social security numbers in the Death Files that do not appear in the Application Files. There are nearly 23 million social security numbers in the Claim Files that do not appear in the Application Files. And there are nearly 9 million social security numbers in the Claim Files that do not appear in the Death Files.

- The Social Security Administration began maintaining these records in the electronic Numerical Identification System (NUMIDENT) in the 1970s. Information on applications or deaths prior to the 1970s may be incomplete or missing.
- The Social Security Administration stopped creating claim records by 1984.
- The records contain misspellings and other inaccuracies. You may need to search using various spellings of names or broaden your search.
- There NUMIDENT files are organized by record type thereunder alphabetically by last name (see table of files in the [Appendix](#)). Be sure you are searching in the correct file. It is possible that the last name may be spelled with a different first letter (for example a C instead of a S) so you may need to search in more than one file using different spellings.

III.9. Why do some fields say “Undefined Code” or “Invalid Number?”

A meaning of “Undefined Code” may be because that field contains a value whose meaning is unknown or was not included in the agency provided code list.

- In the Death Files, this includes the Program Involvement, Special Date of Birth Exception Indicator, Special Exception Change Indicator, Master Beneficiary Record Exception, and Source of Death Fields.

III.10. Why are some fields not populated?

There are several reasons why some of the fields are not populated:

- Some of the fields were populated on an exception basis. This means the default value for the field is blank and it is only populated to indicate that there is an exception. For these fields, the code list only includes the code that indicates the exception and does not include the default value of blank.
 - In the Death Files, this includes the Special Date of Birth Exception Indicator, Special Exception Change Indicator, and Master Beneficiary Record Exception Fields.
 - In the Application Files, this includes the Form, Print Code, Signature Code, Notify Field Office Code, Card Issued Code, Disability Status, Date of Birth Change Indicator, Different Number Reason Code, Source of the Records with Entry Code G, Flagged for Deletion Indicator, and the various “overflow” indicator fields.
 - In the Claim Files, this includes the various “overflow” indicator fields.

- It appears that the agency created these records with the flexibility to add more information in the future. The “filler” fields are blank fields that the agency could use in the future. These fields are not populated.
- The agency may have not needed to populate a field or lacked the information to do so. The detailed field information in AAD usually indicates what percentage of the records may be blank for a particular field.

III.11. What is the Source File field?

The Source File field is not part of the original NUMIDENT records. In creating a reference version of the records, NARA added this field to serve as a cross-reference to the record in the preserved NUMIDENT files.

IV. Specific questions about the Application Files

IV.1. How do I search by the Place of Birth City field?

To search by the Place of Birth City field, enter the name of the city of birth. If you are unable to find records, try searching by the beginning of the city name (at least three characters) followed by a wildcard character (* or %) to retrieve all possible matches. In particular:

- City names longer than 12 characters will be truncated. For example, a search for the city “Colorado Springs” returns no matches because it is longer than 12 characters. However, a search for “Colorado*” returns records with “COLORADOSPNG,” “COLORADOSPRN” “COLORADOSPRG,” “COLORADOSPRI,” etc.
- Sometimes the field is populated with both the city and county or the city and state abbreviation. The county name may be truncated if it exceeds 12 characters. You only need to enter the city name for a search. A search for a city name with the default search operator “with all of the values” will return matches that contain that city name, with or without the county or other geographic identifiers. For example:
 - A search for “Buffalo” using the search operator “with all of the values” or “with any of the values” returns records with “BUFFALO,” “BUFFALO N Y,” “BUFFALO NY,” “BUFFALO ERIE,” “BUFFALO U S,” etc.
 - A search for “Buffalo” using the search operator “with the exact phrase” will only return records with “BUFFALO.”

IV.2. How do I search by the State or Foreign Country of Birth field?

To search by the State or Foreign Country of Birth field, click on “Select from Code List” and select the states and/or countries you wish to search by. Be sure to select all possible relevant codes since country names and boundaries have changed overtime. In particular:

- There may be more than one code for a country/place. For example, Panama is listed under the code PMf and PNf. The Panama Canal Zone is listed under the code PQf with the meaning Canal Zone.
- There may be different codes for when countries merged, split, or changed names. For example, there are five different codes for Germany: GMf = Germany;GCf = Germany Democratic Republic of (East Germany) or Soviet Zone of German;GEf = Germany Federal Republic of (West Germany);BZf = Germany, Berlin; and WBf = Germany, Berlin OR Berlin, West.
- There may be different meanings for a single code, usually reflecting spelling variations or name changes. NARA included both meanings separated by OR. For example, the meaning for the code BHf is “Belize OR British Honduras.”

IV.3. Why are there multiple application records for the same social security number or individual?

Some individuals submitted additional applications when there was a name change, to correct an error on their NUMIDENT record, or for other reasons. Each application is included in the NUMIDENT Application (SS-5) Files, therefore there may be multiple application records for a social security number. In most cases, there are only two to five records for a social security number. But for some social security numbers there are over 30 application records.

IV.4. Why do some records contain all Z's?

Upon closer review, NARA discovered that a relatively small number of records were of potentially living individuals. Specifically, 60,213 application records did not have a corresponding death record and they had a birth date of 1908 or later. Since the files were to only contain application records of deceased individuals, the records of potentially living individuals are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)(b)(6) because of the personal information in the records. NARA masked these 60,213 application records of potentially living individuals by replacing the contents of the records with “Z.” The masked records are included in the Application Last Names U through Z and non-alphabetic file. See [“I.5. What version of the NUMIDENT application records are accessible via AAD?”](#)

V. Specific questions about the Death Files

V.1. What are the ZIP code fields and how do I search by location?

The NUMIDENT Death Files include the Residence Zip Code and Death Payment Zip Code fields.

- It is likely the Residence Zip Code field reflects where the individual last lived. 27% of the records contain no information in this field.
- The Death Payment Zip Code field reflects where the Social Security Administration sent the lump sum death payment. 91% of the records contain no information in this field.

The ZIP code fields may contain the 5 or 9 digit ZIP code. Some of the records include fewer characters than the 5 or 9 digit ZIP code. Some records may contain X instead of numbers.

To search the ZIP code fields, you may want to start by entering the 5-digit ZIP code followed by the wildcard character (* or %). This will return all records beginning with that 5-digit ZIP, with or without the 4-digit extension.

V.2. How do I determine the city and state associated with the ZIP code?

The United States Postal Service provides the means to look up ZIP Codes to see the current city or town for that ZIP code. You can look up ZIP Codes on the United State Postal Service's website at www.usps.com. Please note this is a privately run website and we provide this information without any endorsement.

However, ZIP codes and associated geographic boundaries may change overtime. You may need to refer to other sources to determine the specific city, town, or county associated with a ZIP code listed in the records.

V.3. Why does the Death Certificate Number field contain an X?

Only 7% of the records contain information in the Death Certificate Number field. Upon close review, NARA discovered that the Death Certificate Number field contained telephone numbers and other miscellaneous notes. Since some of the records were created in the past 20 years and the telephone numbers may be for private individuals, the information is exempt from disclosure per the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (b)(6). NARA masked the information with an "X" to protect personal privacy.

VI. Specific questions about the Claims Files

VI.1. Is the individual in the record the one who filed the claim or the account the claim is being filed under?

The name, or number holder name, listed in the record is the account the claim is being filed under. The social security number, date of birth, place of birth, and parents' names are for the number holder.

VI.2. Is the Date of Death From Title II Claim the death date for the individual listed in the claim?

Not necessarily. The Date of Death From Title II Claim may be the death date for the individual listed in the claim or it could potentially be the death date for another individual who may be filing for benefits under that individual's account. You will need locate other death date information to verify the death date for the individual listed in the record.

VI.3. How do I search by the Place of Birth City field?

It is the same as searching that field in the Application Files. See "[IV.1 How do I search by the Place of Birth City field?](#)"

VI.4. How do I search by the State or Foreign Country of Birth field?

It is the same as searching that field in the Application Files. See “[IV.2 How do I search by the State or Foreign County of Birth field?](#)”

VI.5. Why do some records contain all Z's?

NARA could not verify that a small number of records were for deceased individuals. Specifically, NARA found 2,229 records that did not have a corresponding SSN in the Death or released Application records and had a date of birth in or after 1908 or no birth year. Since the files were to only contain application records of deceased individuals, the records of potentially living individuals are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)(b)(6) because of the personal information in the records. NARA masked these 2,229 claim records by replacing the contents of the records with “Z.” The masked records are included in the Claim Last Names Uthrough Z and non-alphabetic file.

VII. Appendix

NUMIDENT Application (SS-5) Records, 1936-2007

Number of records per first letter of the last name and corresponding file on AAD:

A	2,299,735	Last names A through B
B	6,662,325	
C	5,376,889	Last names C through D
D	3,460,475	
E	1,343,043	Last names E through G
F	2,550,894	
G	3,720,597	
H	5,294,957	Last names H through J
I	287,680	
J	2,212,994	
K	2,644,358	Last names K through L
L	3,354,148	
M	6,815,055	Last names M through N
N	1,278,205	
O	1,018,027	Last names O through R
P	3,574,609	
Q	135,570	
R	3,882,180	
S	7,169,485	Last names S through T
T	2,568,938	
U	166,176	Last names U through Z and non-alphabetic *Includes 60,213 masked records populated with all Zs
V	987,113	
W	4,513,916	
X	4,519	
Y	419,993	
Z*	437,915	
Blank/Null	933	

NUMIDENT Death Records, 1936-2007

Number of records per first letter of the last name and corresponding file on AAD:

A	1,556,388	Last names A through B
B	4,594,827	
C	3,634,372	Last names C through D
D	2,358,711	
E	933,497	Last names E through G
F	1,775,614	
G	2,536,994	
H	3,651,062	Last names H through J
I	200,144	
J	1,431,903	
K	1,915,043	Last names K through L
L	2,316,368	
M	4,636,464	Last names M through O
N	892,700	
O	702,754	
P	2,455,432	Last names P through R
Q	90,159	
R	2,628,024	
S	5,004,275	Last names S through T
T	1,732,563	
U	119,065	Last names U through Z and non-alphabetic
V	677,572	
W	3,052,256	
X	2,817	
Y	283,804	
Z	276,422	
Begin with number or punctuation	63	

NUMIDENT Claim Records, 1936-2007

Number of records per first letter of the last name and corresponding file on AAD:

A	764,964	Last names A through C
B	2,370,003	
C	1,805,227	
D	1,201,847	Last names D through G
E	487,068	
F	922,710	
G	1,277,718	
H	1,890,933	Last names H through L
I	99,534	
J	716,666	
K	1,030,702	
L	1,183,834	
M	2,368,243	Last names M through Q
N	457,155	
O	365,982	
P	1,223,067	
Q	43,554	
R	1,314,519	Last names R through T
S	2,600,879	
T	855,417	
U	62,617	Last names U through Z *Includes 2,229 masked records populated with all Zs
V	322,510	
W	1,580,748	
X	776	
Y	137,553	
Z*	146,246	
Blank/Null	14	