

### By Laurie Jones

*Social Security Dist. Manager*

Like any other successful and long-standing program or organization, there are a number of myths surrounding Social Security. Some of them are grounded in truth but just slightly misconstrued. Others are completely out of line with the truth. Let's take a look at a few.

**Myth 1: Social Security is just a retirement program.**

Social Security is more than a retirement program. It provides benefits to retirees, survivors, and people with disabilities who can no longer work. In fact, almost seven million disabled workers and nearly two million of their dependents get Social Security disability benefits. Six and a half million dependents of deceased workers (including two million children) get Social Security survivors benefits. Social Security is more than just retirement.

**Myth 2: I don't need to save because Social Security will take care of me when I'm retired.**

Social Security was never intended to be a person's sole income in retirement; it should be combined with pension income and personal savings and investments. Your Social Security Statement, available at [www.socialsecurity.gov.mystatement](http://www.socialsecurity.gov.mystatement), is a great place to get an idea of what to expect during retirement. You can also visit our Retirement Estimator at [www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator).

**Myth 3: If I work after I retire, I'll be penalized.**

Once you reach your full retirement age, there is no penalty and no limit on the amount you can earn. You can determine your full retirement age by visiting [www.socialsecurity.gov/retirecharted.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retirecharted.htm).

The earnings limit for workers who are younger than "full" retirement age (age 66 for people born in 1943 through 1954) is \$15,120 in 2013. (We deduct \$1 from benefits for each \$2 earned over \$15,120.)

The earnings limit for people turning 66 in 2013 is \$40,080. (We deduct \$1 from benefits for each \$3 earned over \$40,080 until the month the worker turns age 66.)

Keep in mind that if we withhold some of your benefits due to work, we will re-compute your monthly benefit amount when you reach full retirement age to account for those months that we withheld your benefit.

There is no limit on earnings for workers who are full retirement age or older for the entire year.

**Myth 4: To apply for benefits or do business with Social Security, I need to go to an office.**

Not only is this false, but we encourage you to do business with us the most convenient and fastest way: at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)