



QUARTERLY SCAM UPDATE

Issue 12

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024

Social Security-Related Scams

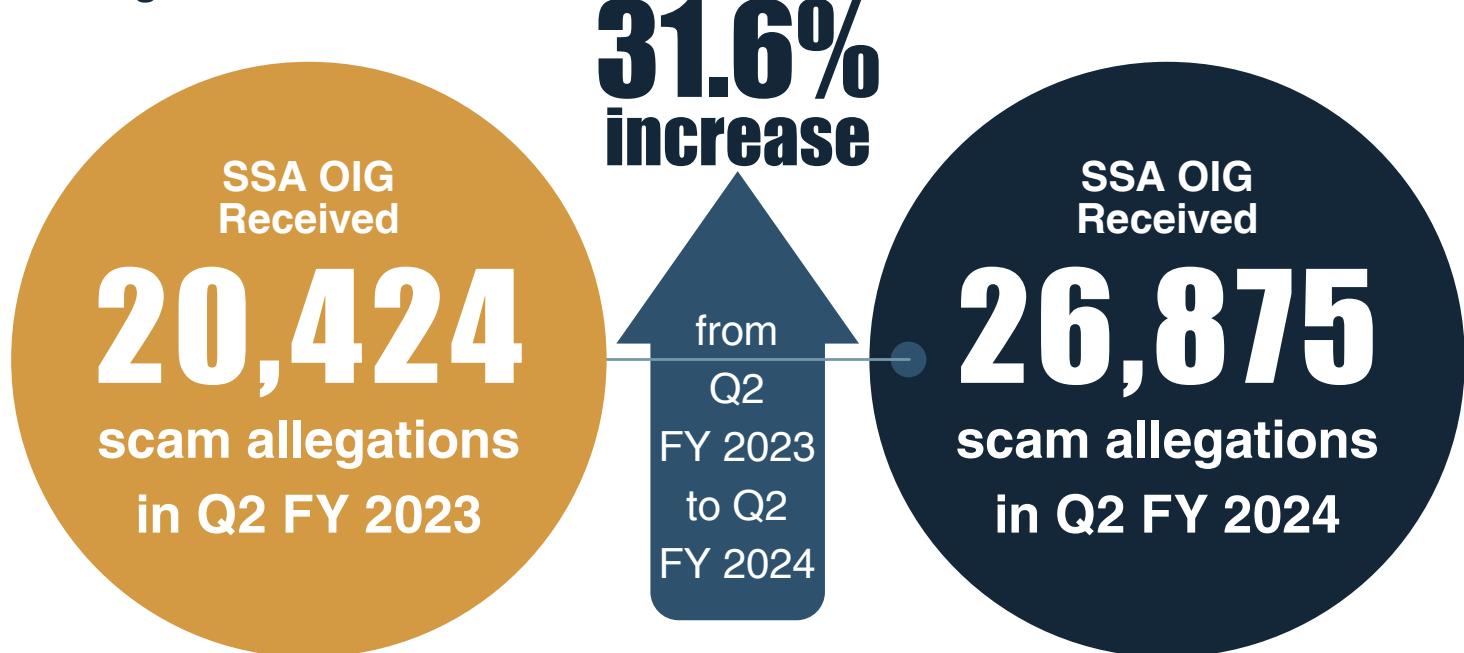
The Social Security Administration (SSA) and SSA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) continue to receive reports of scammers impersonating government employees or alleging a Social Security-related problem to steal money or personal information from victims.

Since October 2019, SSA OIG has shared information on its efforts to combat Social Security-related scams with the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security; U.S. Senate Committee on Finance; and U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging. SSA OIG began publicly releasing the Quarterly Scam Update in the third quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 to provide information about these scams and its efforts to combat them.

This report shares information about Social Security-related and government imposter scam allegation trends in the second quarter (Q2) of FY 2024 (January 1 through March 31, 2024). Examples of SSA and SSA OIG's recent efforts to disrupt and raise awareness of scams are also included.

Recent Trends in Social Security-related Scams Reported to SSA OIG

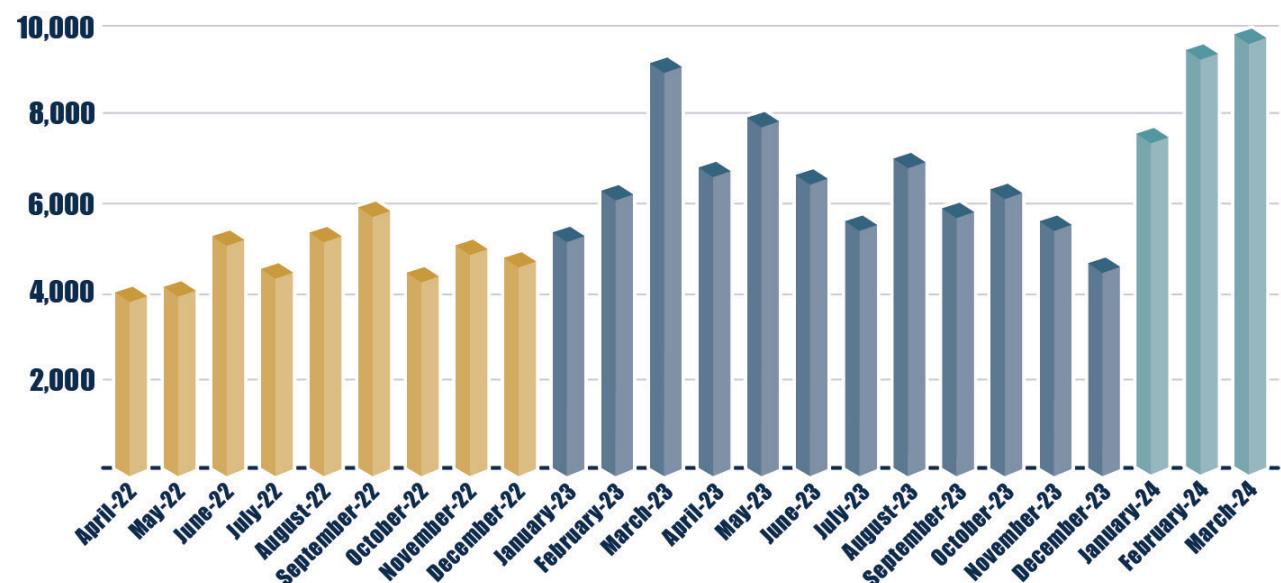
Figure 1



While scam allegations increased from Q2 FY 2023 to Q2 FY 2024, scams reported to SSA OIG are still down significantly from Q2 during the scam's peak in FYs 2019 through 2021. For example, SSA OIG received 99,640 in Q2 FY 2019, 223,958 in Q2 FY 2020, and 176,679 in Q2 FY 2021. As noted in Figure 2 below, SSA OIG has received fewer than 10,000 Social Security-related scam allegations per month from April 2022 to the present. See Figure 6 for the long-term trend in SSA imposter scam complaints.

Figure 2

Imposter Scam Complaints Received by SSA OIG April 2022 to March 2024



Recent Trends in Social Security-related Scams Reported to SSA OIG

SSA OIG receives the majority of Social Security-related scam allegations from its dedicated online scam reporting form and its hotline. While the form states it is for those who “believe [they] have been a victim of a Social Security Administration Scam,” the form also allows individuals to report whether the scam involved the impersonation of officials from federal, state, or local government agencies other than SSA.

Figure 3

Q1 and Q2 FY 2024 Complaint Trends – Percentage of Total Imposter Allegations from the Scam Reporting Form

Complaint Characteristics	Q1 10/1/23–12/31/23	Q2 1/1/24–3/31/24
 The imposter mentioned a problem with your Social Security number	38.2%	44.2%
 The imposter mentioned a problem with your Social Security benefits	16.5%	16.9%
 The imposter used documents or images (such as a federal logo) when communicating with you	26.8%	32.7%
 The scam involved the impersonation of officials from federal, state, or local government agencies other than the Social Security Administration	35.3%	37.0%
 The imposter mentioned a coronavirus or COVID-19 related issue, or referred to a coronavirus or COVID-19 stimulus check, stimulus payment, or economic impact payment	2.5%	2.0%
 None of the Above	30.8%	26.8%

Note: The percentages were calculated based on the total number of allegations each quarter. The percentages do not add to 100 percent because individual allegations may include more than one complaint characteristic.

In [Q1 FY 2024](#), slightly more individuals 50 years of age or older reported financial losses than those under 50 years of age. Figure 4 (below) shows that in Q2 FY 2024, this trend continued. In Q2 FY 2024, 820 individuals under 50 years of age reported losses, compared with 882 individuals 50 years of age and older.



Figure 4
Number of Reported Payments to Imposters, by Reported Age

1/1/2024 – 3/31/2024

In [Q1 FY 2024](#), individuals 50 years of age and over reported higher average losses than those under 50 years of age. Additionally, during Q1 FY 2024, the highest average losses were reported by individuals 70 to 84 years of age. Figure 5 (below) shows that in Q2 FY 2024, these trends continued.

Figure 5
Average Dollar Value Reported Payments to Imposters, by Reported Age

1/1/2024 – 3/31/2024

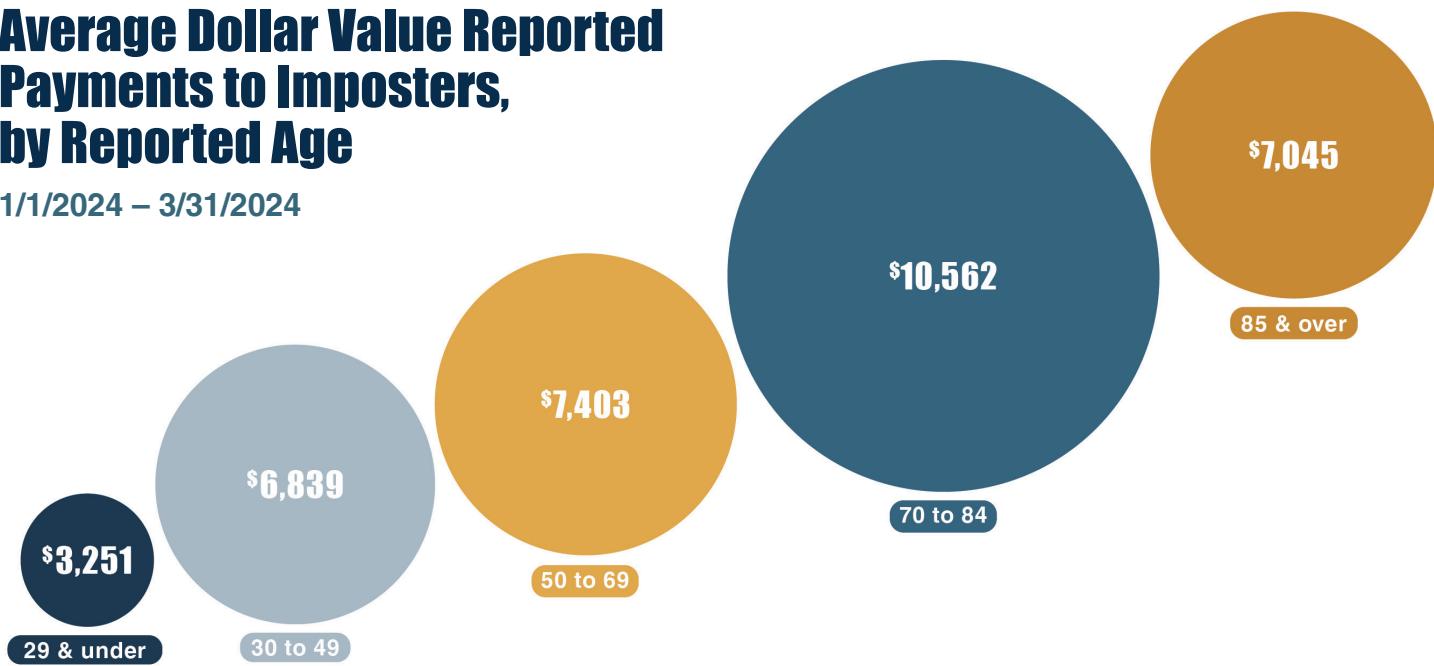
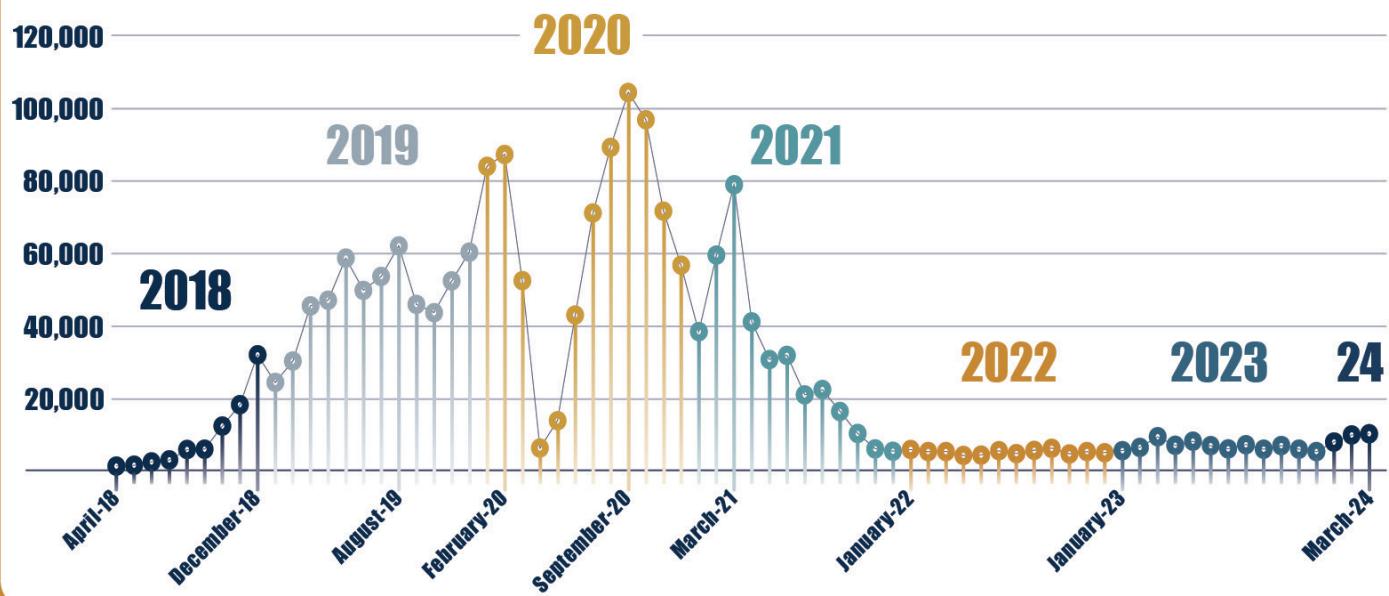


Figure 6

Long-term SSA-related Imposter Scam Allegations April 2018 to March 2024



Annually, Social Security-related scam reports have decreased significantly since FY 2021, and according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), imposter scam complaints across the government have declined since 2021. However, Social Security-related scams remain the top government imposter type reported to the FTC.¹ Therefore, while the decline is promising, SSA OIG and SSA continue to fight these scams.

In Q2 FY 2024, SSA mailed 87.1 million letters to the public with a scam message printed on the back of envelopes (right). The Agency has mailed more than 1.1 billion of these letters to date.

⚠ SCAM ALERT ⚠

Scammers are pretending to be government employees. They may threaten you and may demand immediate payment to avoid arrest or other legal action. Do not be fooled!

If you receive a suspicious call:

1. HANG UP!
2. DO NOT GIVE THEM MONEY OR PERSONAL INFORMATION!
3. REPORT THE SCAM AT OIG.SSA.GOV



SSA's latest Scam Awareness Public Service Announcement (left), which started airing in late October 2021, generated 3.4 million impressions in Q2 FY 2024.



SSA's November 2023 video, *How to Spot a Scam*, garnered 3,181 views in Q2 FY 2024.

1. This information is based on data reported to the FTC as of May 10, 2024.

Q2 FY 2024 Additional Internal and External Education Efforts

SSA and SSA OIG engaged in additional outreach and education efforts with members of the public, government and non-government organizations, and SSA employees to raise awareness of scams targeting American residents. Some examples of these efforts during Q2 FY 2024 included the activities below.

-  SSA OIG presented on Social Security-related scams to the Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Task Force, part of a [White House initiative](#) to protect veterans and service members from fraud.
-  SSA OIG participated in the [National Elder Justice Law Enforcement Summit](#), sharing information and resources on Social Security-related scams with other law enforcement professionals.
-  SSA OIG met with SSA regional communications directors and public affairs specialists to discuss National Slam the Scam Day and exchange information about Social Security-related scams.
-  SSA OIG investigative staff was interviewed live on KWTV News 9, Oklahoma City, OK, on March 1, 2024, and discussed Social Security-related scams.
-  The fifth annual National Slam the Scam Day was held on March 7, 2024. Media coverage garnered an approximate audience of over 400 million people, including television, radio, and online and print audiences. See page 7 for more information about outreach efforts related to Slam the Scam Day.
-  The U.S. Senate passed a [resolution](#) by Unanimous Consent designating March 7, 2024, as National Slam the Scam Day.
-  SSA OIG's Chief Strategy Officer was interviewed by Federal News Network in a segment [Social Security IG looks to stop fraud revved up by AI](#), which covered SSA OIG efforts to use Artificial Intelligence to combat fraud and Social Security-related scams.
-  SSA posted a blog titled, [Protecting Yourself from Quick Response \(QR\) Code Fraud](#), that highlights the potential risks associated with QR codes and provides useful tips to avoid fraud and scams.
-  SSA published the Spanish version of the [How to Spot a Scam](#) video (see page 5) on its official [YouTube channel](#) and the [SSA.gov](#) webpage.
-  SSA published a broadcast for front line employees to raise awareness of this year's Slam the Scam campaign and provide general anti-scam reminders.
-  SSA released a public-facing promotional video on its [YouTube channel](#) titled, [Protect Yourself from Scams](#), that encourages people to participate in Slam the Scam Day and contains general anti-scam reminders.

On March 7, 2024, SSA OIG partnered with SSA for the fifth annual National Slam the Scam Day. As part of the FTC's National Consumer Protection Week, Slam the Scam Day raises public awareness of the pervasive Social Security-related and other government imposter scams. This year SSA and SSA OIG engaged in outreach with media, Congressional, intragovernmental, and other stakeholders, participated in English and Spanish X (formerly Twitter) chats, developed and disseminated video clips, and spread their message on social media.

National Slam the Scam Day March 7, 2024



X (formerly Twitter)
21.3 Million
#SlamtheScam chats



Facebook
4.3 Million
#SlamtheScam followers



Instagram
1.3 Million
reach from Slam the Scam posts

Senate Resolution

Senate passed by
Unanimous Consent
S.Res.584 designating
March 7, 2024 as
National Slam the
Scam Day

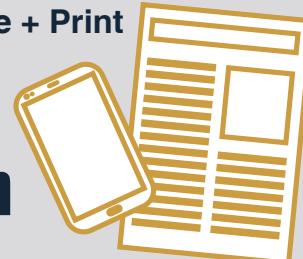


Radio Audience:
3.4 million



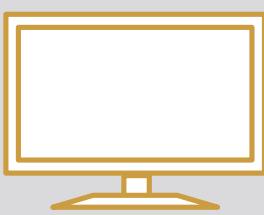
**Total Online + Print
Audience:**

**400
million**



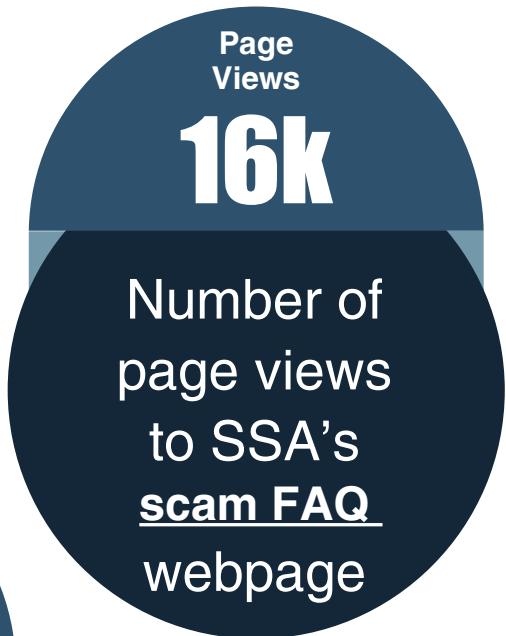
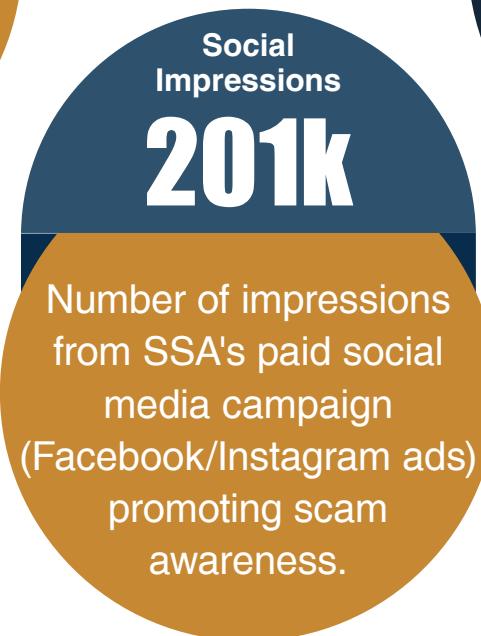
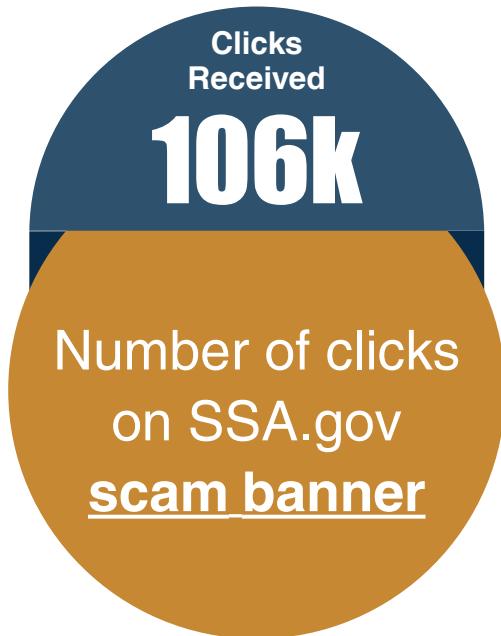
Television Audience:

**4.2
million**



Q2 FY 2024 Website Page Views and Social Media Impressions

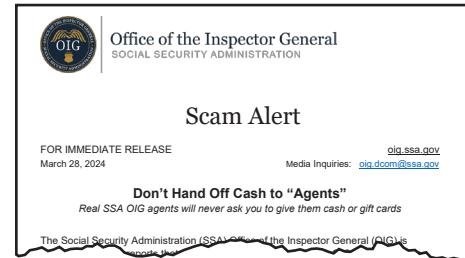
Since the launch of the redesigned SSA and SSA OIG joint scam page on May 19, 2022, there have been **4.4 million page views** including **231,338 clicks** on the Report a Social Security-related Scam button and **116,625 clicks** on the Report a Scam button. Website page views, clicks, and social media impressions for Q2 FY 2024 are shown below.



Scam Alert

On March 28, 2024, SSA OIG issued a Scam Alert entitled *Don't Hand Off Cash to "Agents"* to warn members of the public about criminals impersonating SSA OIG agents and requesting that their targets meet them in person to hand off cash. The Scam Alert reminded members of the public that SSA OIG agents will never pick up money at their door or in any type of exchange. The Scam Alert reached over 400 million people via media, Congressional, and other stakeholder outreach as of May 28, 2024. Read this Scam Alert and others [here](#).

Section of the Scam Alert



Consumer Protection: Telephone and Social Media Scams

Section 1140 of the *Social Security Act*, as amended, protects the public from advertisements, solicitations, and other communications that convey the false impression that SSA approved, endorsed, or authorized the communication.

During Q2 FY 2024, SSA OIG continued efforts to protect consumers from Social Security-related scam calls originating outside of the U.S. and SSA disability-related misleading telephone solicitations originating domestically by continuing to monitor data made available via public and private sector sources and initiating Section 1140 actions when appropriate. SSA OIG's Section 1140 actions and other efforts have helped hold gateway carrier telecommunications companies responsible for allowing calls originating outside of the U.S. into the U.S. telecommunications system. As a result, carriers are increasingly taking proactive steps to prohibit scam calls from entering the U.S. or are discontinuing the gateway carrier segment of their operations or the entirety of their operations. In addition, SSA disability lead generation companies are also beginning to alter their practices to avoid liability under Section 1140.

As part of SSA OIG's Section 1140 outreach efforts during Q2 FY 2024, SSA OIG has contacted and met with multinational telecommunications and data analytics companies about potential collaboration opportunities to combat Social Security-related telephone scams. SSA OIG also continued meeting and collaborating with other federal and state agencies with telecommunications oversight responsibilities. Public/Private sector collaborations present synergistic opportunities to effectively protect the public from such fraudulent and misleading activities. SSA OIG continually seeks to establish positive relationships with the private sector and other federal and local governmental entities as well.

SSA OIG continued with its initiative of developing collaborative relationships with public libraries. The goal of this initiative is to provide public libraries with print and digital Social Security-related scam awareness resources to bolster scam awareness at the community level to help the public avoid falling victim to scams that exploit the critical importance of SSA's programs. SSA OIG has reached out to public library systems in Florida, Maryland, and Ohio and plans to expand its reach to the library community nationwide.

During Q2 FY 2024, SSA OIG initiated a new outreach effort directed towards educating the legal community about Section 1140 prohibitions against misleading solicitation practices. SSA OIG is developing educational materials that will be distributed to state bar associations, law firms, and attorneys nationwide.

In addition to SSA OIG's scam call efforts, SSA OIG continues to stay vigilant in monitoring and responding to Social Security-related imposter social media accounts. During Q2 FY 2024, SSA OIG initiated inquiries regarding 11 Social Security-related imposter accounts, prompting the expedient take down of the identified fraudulent accounts by the social media platform. SSA OIG continues to review each matter for potential civil monetary penalty action.



OIG.SSA.GOV