



QUARTERLY SCAM UPDATE

Issue 5

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

April 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022

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 our efforts to combat Social Security-related scams with the House Committee on Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee; Senate Committee on Finance; and Senate Special Committee on Aging. We began publicly releasing the Quarterly Scam Update in the third quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 to provide information about these scams and our efforts to combat them.

This report addresses trends in Social Security-related and other government imposter allegations, as well as our ongoing efforts to raise public awareness of, and disrupt the scams in the third quarter (Q3) of FY 2022 (April 1 through June 30).



Figure 1

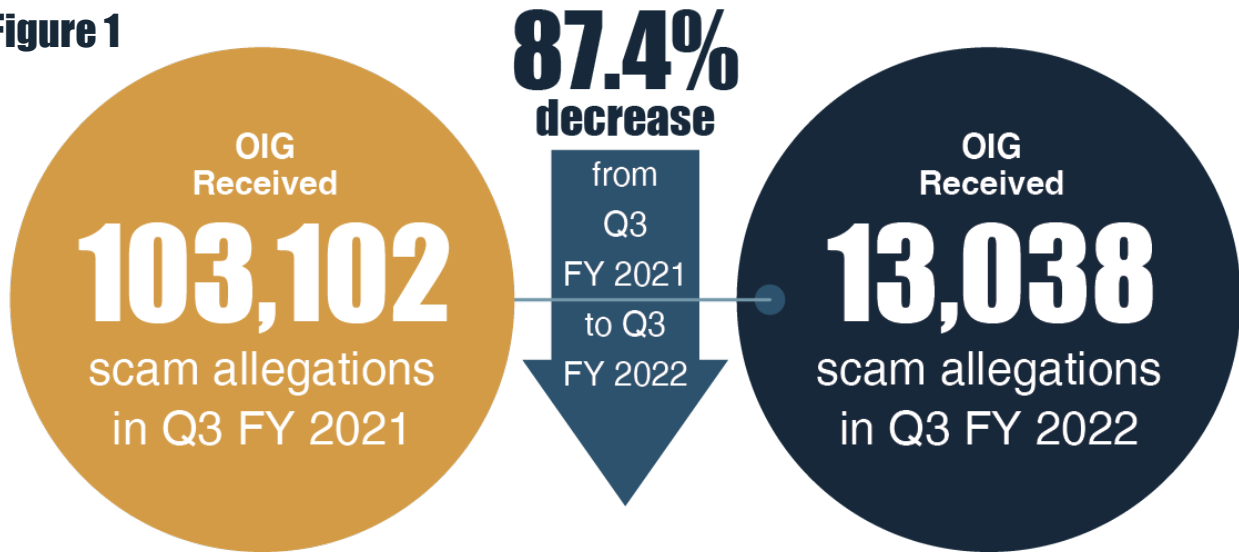
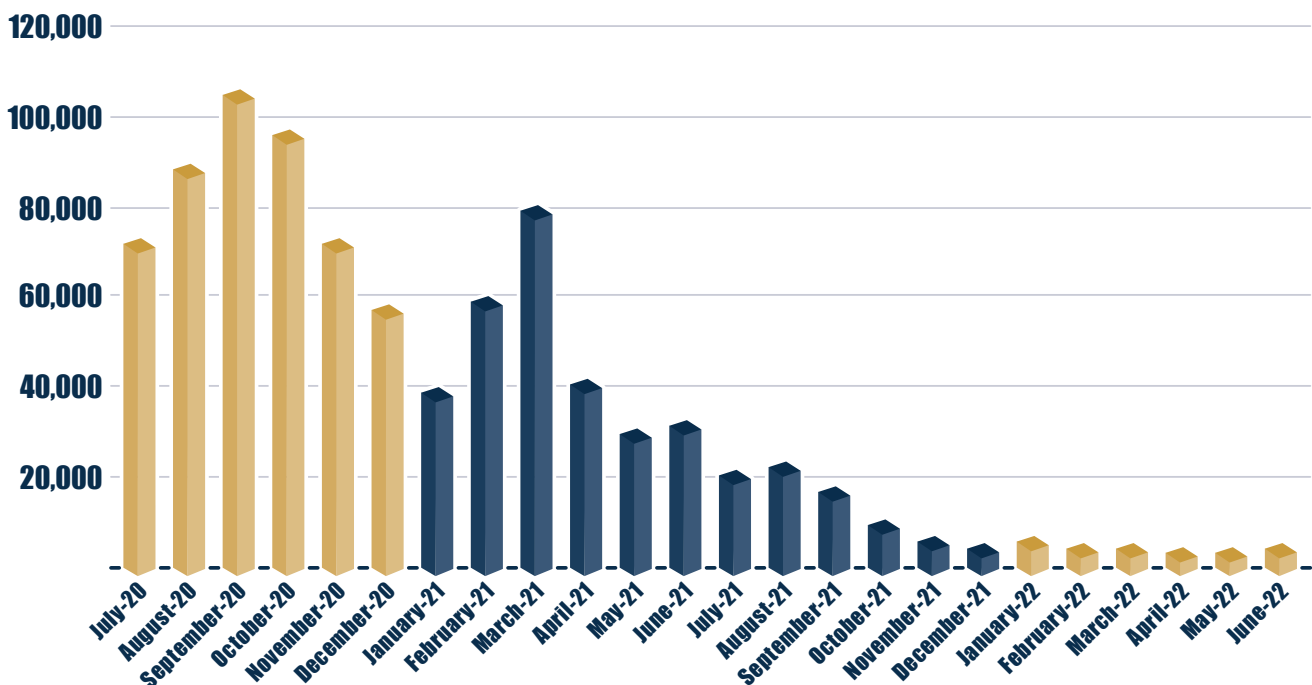


Figure 2







Imposter Scam Complaints Received by SSA OIG July 2020 to June 2022



We receive the majority of Social Security-related scam allegations from OIG's dedicated online scam reporting form.¹ 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 the SSA.

Figure 3

Q2 and Q3 FY 2022 Complaint Trends – Percentage of Total Imposter Allegations from the Scam Reporting Form²

Complaint Characteristics	Q2 1/1/22–3/31/22	Q3 4/1/22–6/30/22
 The imposter mentioned a problem with your Social Security number	43.8%	42.8%
 The imposter mentioned a problem with your Social Security benefits	16.3%	14.8%
 The imposter used documents or images (such as a federal logo) when communicating with you	10.3%	14.9%
 The scam involved the impersonation of officials from federal, state, or local government agencies other than the Social Security Administration	39.4%	36.9%
 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	3.6%	2.7%
 None of the Above	27.5%	28.8%

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.

1. We also receive allegations from other sources, including OIG's Hotline and directly from SSA employees.

2. We have been tracking Social Security-related scam allegations since April 2018. We launched the dedicated online reporting form in November 2019, which increased our ability to track scam reports. We also receive allegations from other sources, including OIG's Hotline and directly from SSA employees.

Loss Frequency Amount by Age Reported to the Office of the Inspector General

In several earlier quarters, we reported that more individuals under 50 years of age reported financial losses to government imposter scams than those 50 and older. We also reported that individuals 50 and older reported losses that were higher than losses reported by those under 50. Figure 4, below, shows that this quarter, reports of financial losses were almost evenly split among these two age groups: 558 individuals under 50 years of age reported losses, compared with 542 individuals 50 and older. Figure 5, below, shows that individuals 30 to 49 years old reported higher average losses than individuals 50 to 69 years old and individuals 85 and older. Individuals between 70 and 84 years old reported an average loss of \$10,959, which was the highest amount reported this quarter.

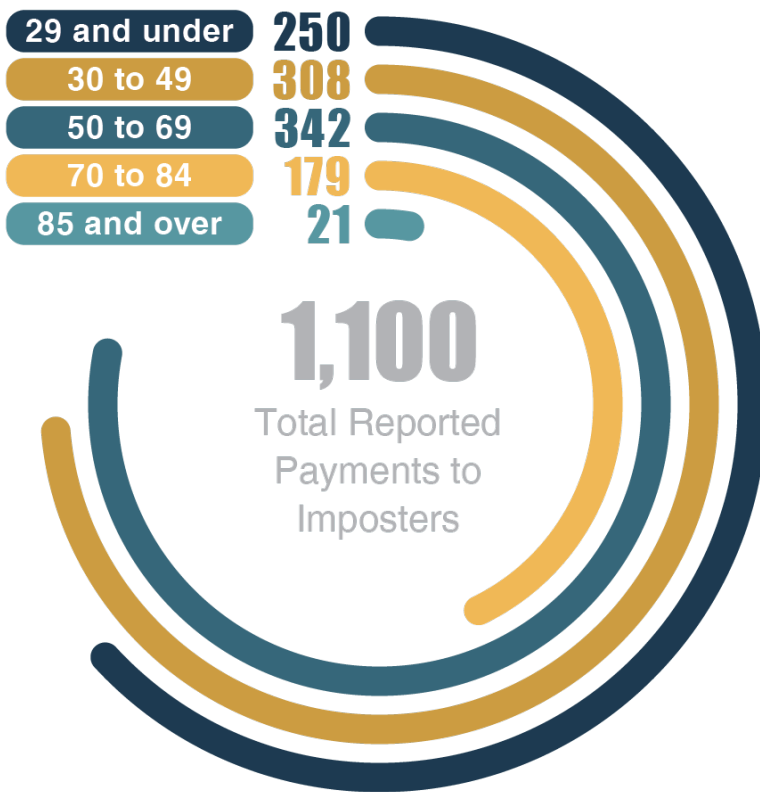
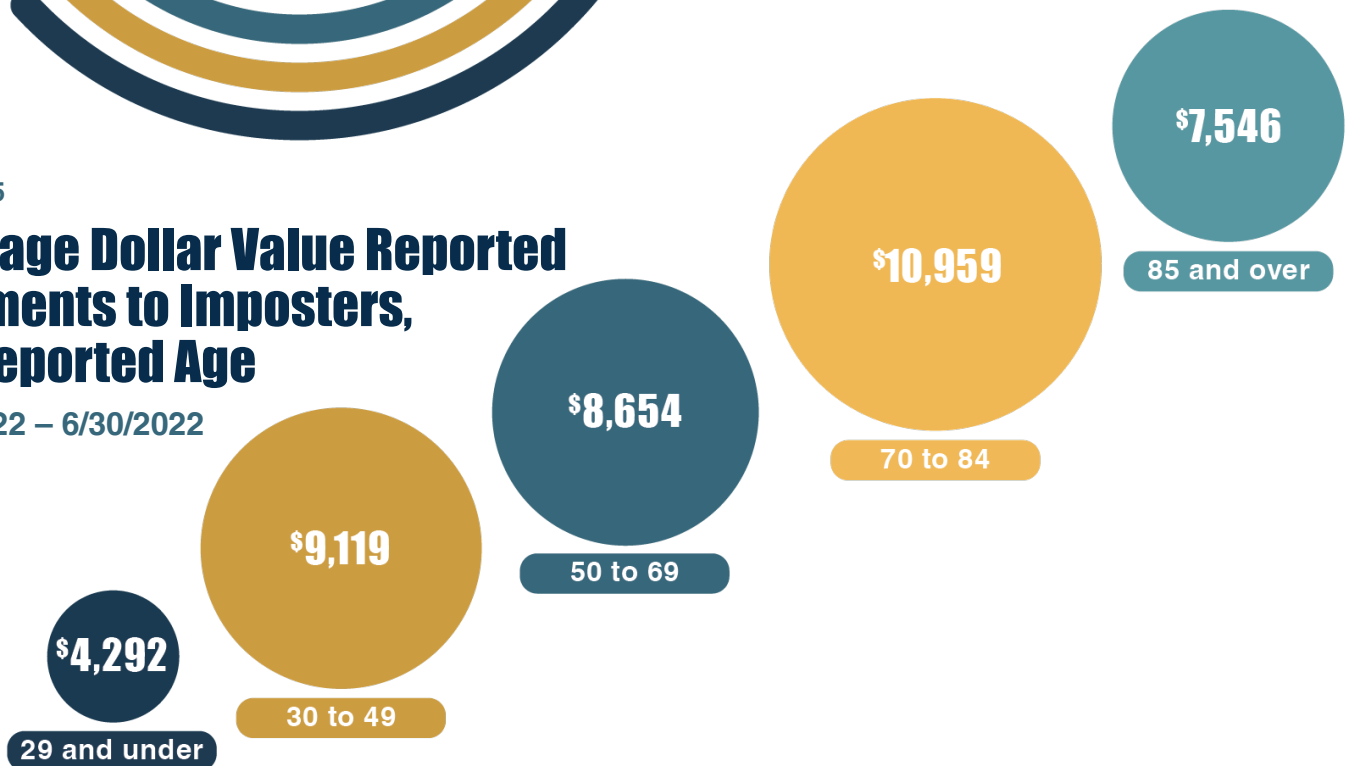


Figure 4
Number of Reported Payments to Imposters, by Reported Age
4/1/2022 – 6/30/2022

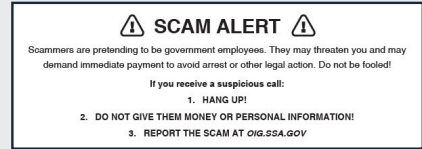
Figure 5 **Average Dollar Value Reported Payments to Imposters, by Reported Age**

4/1/2022 – 6/30/2022



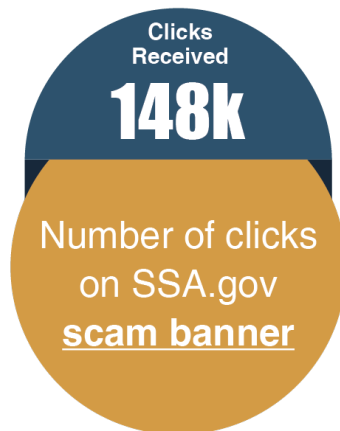
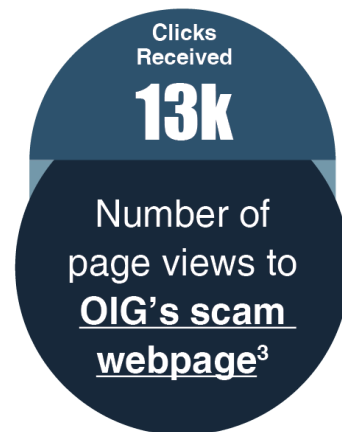
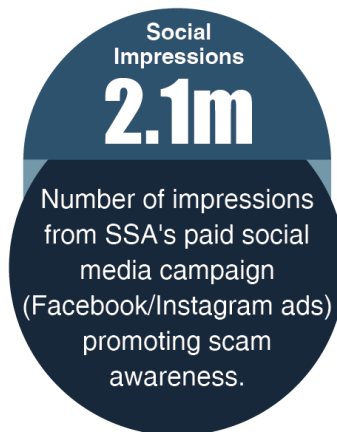
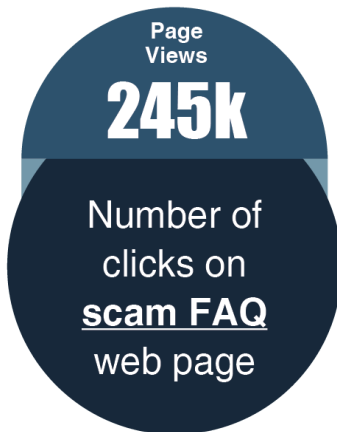
According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), government imposter scam complaints have declined since 2018, yet Social Security-related scams [remain](#) the top government imposter type reported to the FTC. Therefore, while the decline is promising, we continue to develop initiatives to fight these scams.

In Q3 FY 2022, SSA mailed **23.8 million** letters to the public with a scam message printed on the back of envelopes. Through July 15, 2022, the Agency had mailed approximately **568.8 million** of these letters in total.



SSA's latest Scam Awareness Public Service Announcement, which started airing in late October 2021, has generated **30.7 million** impressions in FY 2022 Q3.

Q3 FY 2022 Website Page Views and Social Media Impressions



3. This link takes users to information on our scam alerts. See additional information on [identifying scams](#), [taking action](#), and [reporting the scam](#) on our website.

Two Indian Nationals Admit Receiving over \$1.2 Million in Global Robocall Scam that Defrauded Elderly Victims

In June 2022, two Indian nationals admitted to accepting \$1.2 million in illegal wire transfers from 48 U.S. victims. The two pleaded guilty in New Jersey to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud for their roles in an international fraud scheme. The scheme used India-based call centers to robocall and bait unsuspecting elderly victims into talking to imposters who pressured and deceived them into sending cash. Imposters claimed to be SSA officials, federal law enforcement officers, and even purported to offer computer support to access victims' online bank accounts. Sentencing for both defendants is scheduled for December 13, 2022. The U.S. Attorney credited SSA OIG, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and local law enforcement and prosecutors for supporting the investigation and guilty pleas. You can read more about the case [here](#).

Scam Alert: Federal Law Enforcement Agencies Warn of Impersonation Scam Involving Credentials and Badges

In May 2022, SSA OIG, Department of Labor OIG, NASA OIG, the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation joined forces to issue a scam alert with tips to help the public protect against imposter scams. The alert warned about imposters who email and text pictures of doctored law enforcement credentials and badges to appear legitimate with the intent to scam vulnerable victims. The alert provided five important tips for protecting against these scams and reminded the public that federal law enforcement officers and government officials cannot send photographs of credentials or badges to demand any kind of payment. The message received thousands of social media impressions and significant engagement. You can read the alert [here](#).

OIG Social Media Related to the Fraud Alert



41,000

Impressions

1,436

Engagements

145

Link Clicks

Notable Retweets

SSA, USA.gov, FDIC OIG, NASA OIG, FBI,
DOL OIG, Senior Medicare Patrol



4,500

Impressions

247

Engagements

16

Link Clicks

Notable Shares

Senior Medicare Patrol, Guardianship Services,
Financial Exploitation Prevention Center



OIG.SSA.GOV