



# QUARTERLY SCAM UPDATE

## Issue 6

### OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

July 1, 2022 – September 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, 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. 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 fourth quarter (Q4) of FY 2022 (July 1 through September 30). Examples of SSA and OIG's recent efforts to disrupt and raise awareness of scams are also included.



Figure 1

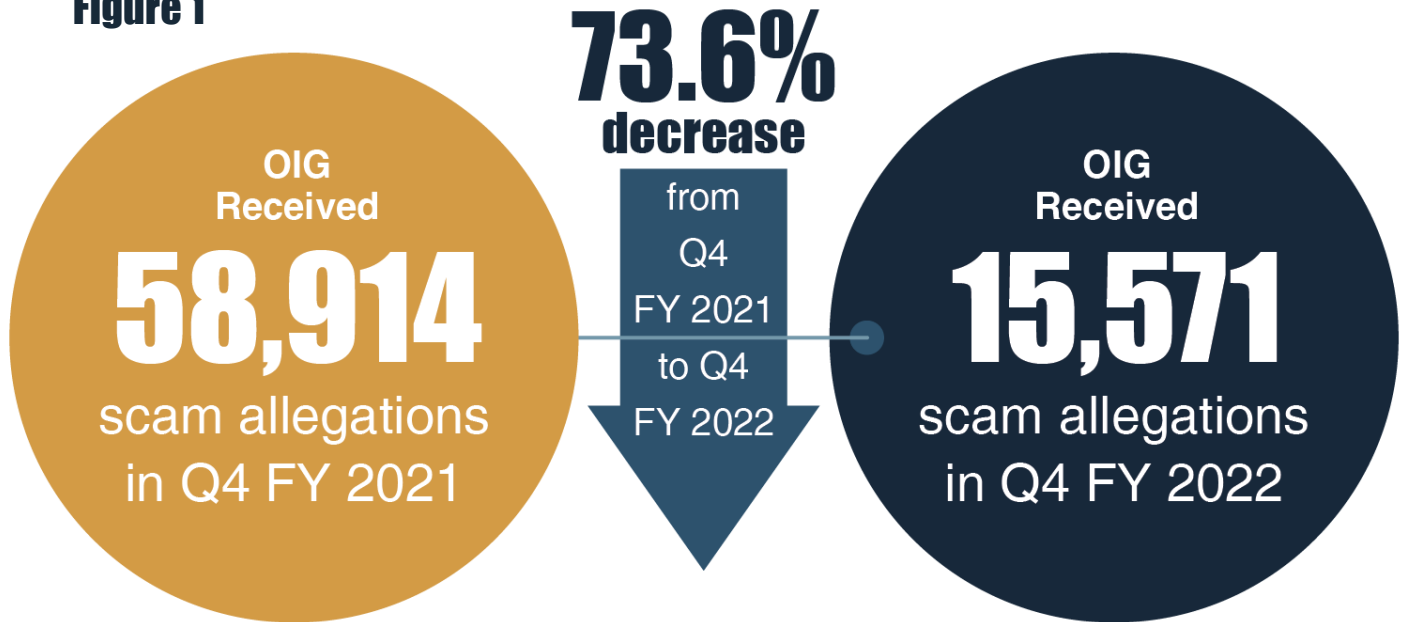
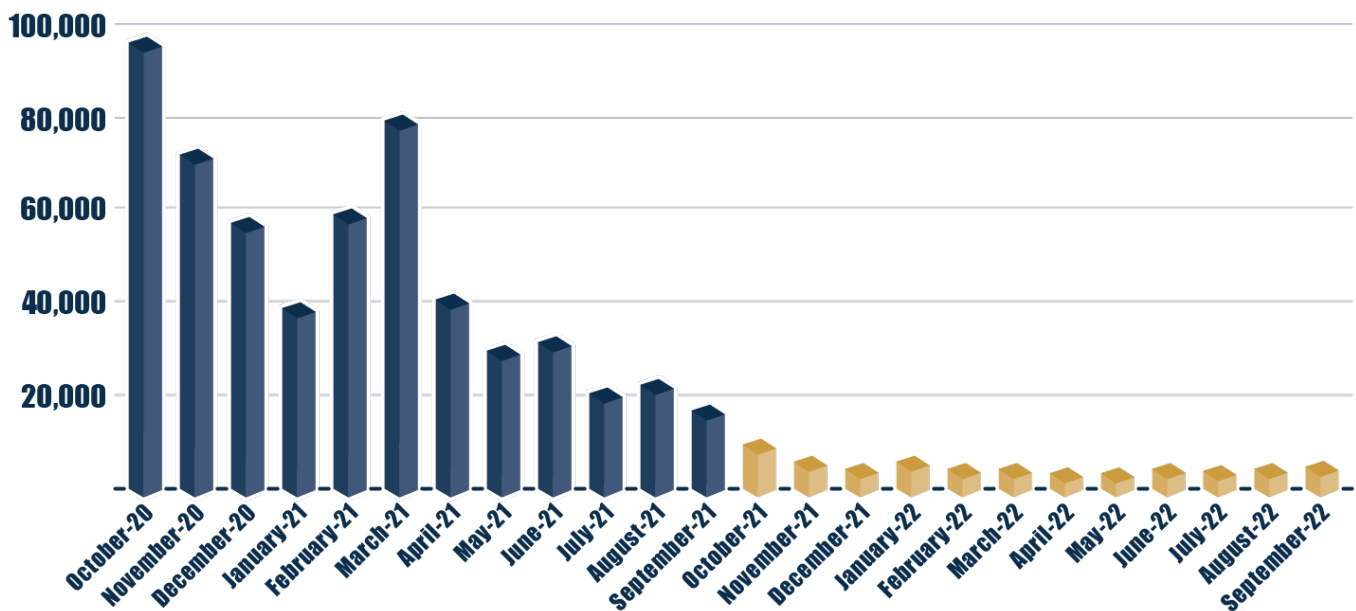


Figure 2







## Imposter Scam Complaints Received by SSA OIG October 2020 to September 2022



OIG receives the majority of Social Security-related scam allegations from OIG's dedicated online scam reporting form.<sup>1</sup> 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**

### Q3 and Q4 FY 2022 Complaint Trends – Percentage of Total Imposter Allegations from the Scam Reporting Form<sup>1</sup>

Complaint Characteristics	Q3 4/1/22–6/30/22	Q4 7/1/22–9/30/22
 The imposter mentioned a problem with your Social Security number	<b>42.8%</b>	<b>43.8%</b>
 The imposter mentioned a problem with your Social Security benefits	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>
 The imposter used documents or images (such as a federal logo) when communicating with you	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
 The scam involved the impersonation of officials from federal, state, or local government agencies other than the Social Security Administration	<b>36.9%</b>	<b>37.9%</b>
 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	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
 None of the Above	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>28.1%</b>

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

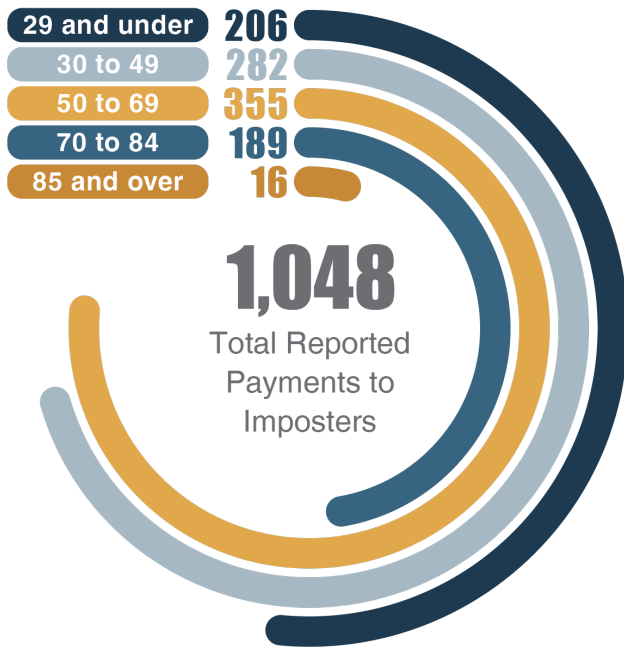
# Loss Frequency Amount by Age Reported to the Office of the Inspector General

In Q3 FY 2022, OIG reported that financial losses were almost evenly split among individuals under 50 years of age and those 50 years of age and older: 558 individuals under 50 years of age reported losses, compared with 542 individuals 50 years of age and older. Figure 4 (below) shows that in Q4 FY 2022, reports of financial losses were higher for individuals 50 years of age and older than those under 50 years of age: 488 individuals under 50 years of age reported losses, compared with 560 individuals 50 years of age and older.

Figure 4

## Number of Reported Payments to Imposters, by Reported Age

7/1/2022 – 9/30/2022

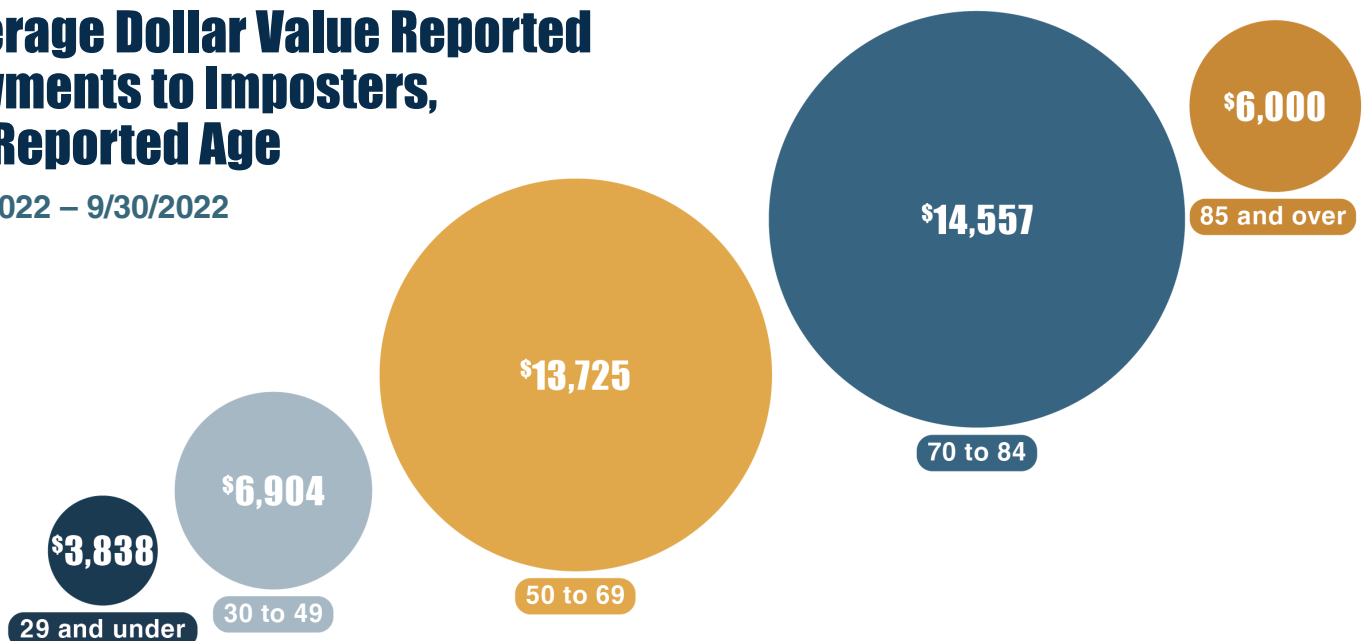


In Q3 FY 2022, individuals 30 to 49 years of age also reported higher average losses than individuals 50 to 69 years of age and individuals 85 years of age and older, while individuals between 70 and 84 years of age reported the highest average loss. Figure 5 (below) shows that in Q4 FY 2022, individuals 50 to 84 years of age reported significantly higher average losses than those under 50 or 85 years of age and over.

Figure 5

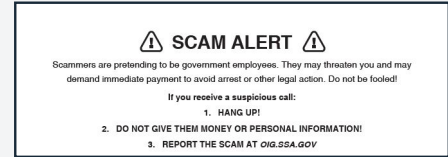
## Average Dollar Value Reported Payments to Imposters, by Reported Age

7/1/2022 – 9/30/2022



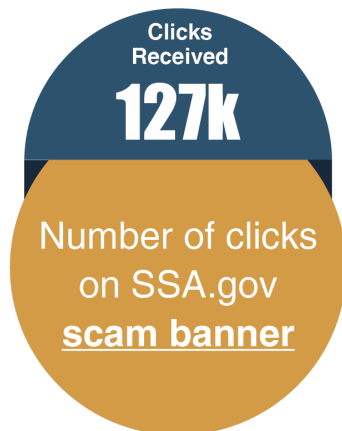
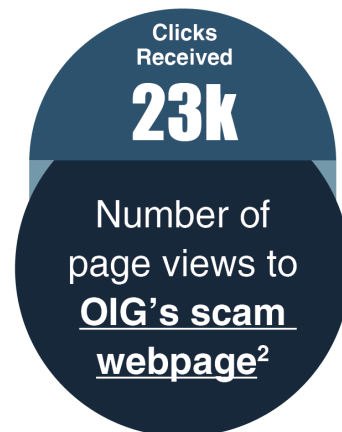
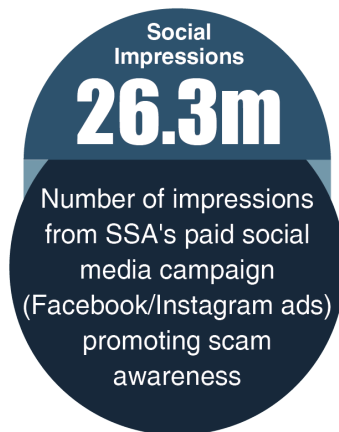
According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), government imposter scam complaints have declined since 2018, however, Social Security-related scams [remain](#) the top government imposter type reported to the FTC. Therefore, while the decline is promising, OIG and SSA continue to fight these scams.

In Q4 FY 2022, SSA mailed 27.2 million letters to the public with a scam message printed on the back of envelopes (right). Through October 12, 2022, the Agency had mailed approximately 596 million of these letters.



SSA's latest Scam Awareness Public Service Announcement (left), which started airing in late October 2021, generated 22.7 million impressions in Q4 FY 2022.

## Q4 FY 2022 Website Page Views and Social Media Impressions



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

## OIG's Streamlined and Improved Public Fraud Reporting Allegation Triage Process and Collaboration with SSA to Fight Fraud

Seeking to innovate the ways investigators identify and investigate fraud, OIG leveraged information technology to modernize its investigative case management system and workloads. OIG streamlined and improved OIG's public fraud reporting allegation triage process by refining intelligent automation functionality.

OIG and SSA have a shared duty to the public to fight fraud in SSA's programs. In September 2022, OIG and SSA jointly held the second annual National Anti-Fraud Summit to understand and address fraud issues facing SSA. This year's Summit featured a speaker from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), who discussed OMB Memorandum M-22-04, [Promoting Accountability through Cooperation among Agencies and Inspectors General](#), issued December 3, 2021. The memorandum reinforces the importance of OIG-Agency collaboration and reaffirms that such collaboration can be accomplished while maintaining OIG independence. This led to improved collaboration through an expanded National Anti-Fraud Committee with members from SSA and OIG.

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## Q4 FY 2022 OIG Social Media Related to Scam Alerts

In addition to SSA and OIG's ongoing web and social media efforts noted on page 5, OIG issued scam alerts on August 22, 2022 and September 28, 2022 using its Facebook and Twitter accounts.



**18,470**  
Impressions

**655**  
Engagements



**9,838**  
Impressions

**1,078**  
Engagements

### Notable Shares

SSA, Senior Medicare Patrol (TN),  
Deaf Connection (LA),  
Village of Salado (TX) Police Department

### Notable Retweets

SSA, Federal Communications Commission,  
FBI Philadelphia (PA),  
Disability Resource Center (MA)

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## New York Man Pleads Guilty to Laundering Proceeds from Government Imposter Robocall Scam

In September 2022, a New York man pleaded guilty in federal court to four counts of money laundering in his role as a telecommunications company owner who facilitated and profited from the introduction of fraudulent robocall traffic into the United States. His company provided telecommunications services that introduced foreign phone traffic into the U.S. telephone system as a "gateway carrier." From approximately 2016 until a search warrant was executed at his home in January 2020, his company was a gateway carrier for an India-based Voice-over-Internet Protocol company that routed millions of fraudulent robocalls to American consumers. Many of these robocalls involved individuals based in India fraudulently impersonating SSA, SSA OIG, and Internal Revenue Service employees. In addition to connecting these foreign callers to American consumers, his company resold and leased direct inward dial and toll-free telephone numbers that made them appear to be based in the United States. As a result of his company's actions, criminals stole money or information from thousands of Americans. The U.S. Attorney credited SSA OIG, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service, and Homeland Security Investigations. Resources from the Department of Justice's Transnational Elder Fraud Strike Force aided in the matter's investigation and prosecution. You can read more about the case [here](#).



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