



# BBB® Government Impostor Scam Update

**A 2022 update to the 2020 BBB Government Impostors Scams Study found losses more than doubled, while frequency slowed since its peak in 2021.**

## IN 2021

Losses

**\$445  
MILLION**

**2.5 x more than in 2020**

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)



**1 in 5**

people targeted by impostor scams lost money (FTC)

Median Loss

**\$3,000**

(FTC)

**#2 most-reported scam by businesses**

(BBB Scam Tracker<sup>SM</sup>)

**1,392**

complaints involved cryptocurrency



**Losses \$22 MILLION+**

(January - October, FTC)

**Second most-reported agency to be impersonated: Medicare.** 30,000 reports but only .06% lost money (FTC)

### Social Security impostor scams most reported, highest losses

**2 OUT OF 3** reports by consumers mention Social Security with losses totaling \$500,000 in 2021. (BBB Scam Tracker<sup>SM</sup>)



Fake law enforcement officer claims Social Security number used in crime; threatens arrest. Scammer offers a new Social Security number; tells victim to buy gift cards or cryptocurrency to move money to "safe" account.



Social Security Administration (SSA) is the most impersonated agency for past three years.

### BBB Tips for Staying Safe

- Government agencies don't call people with threats or promises of money and don't take payment with a gift card, wire transfer or cryptocurrency.
- Scammers spoof legitimate phone numbers. Do not trust the phone numbers or click on any links in a text or email message from a purported government agency. Look up the agency's number online.
- Social Security numbers are never "suspended." The Social Security Administration will never threaten to arrest you because of an identity theft problem.
- The IRS generally makes its first contact with people by regular mail - not by phone - about taxes. Never provide your bank account or personal information to anyone who calls you claiming to be associated with the IRS.

**Read 2020 BBB Government Impostors Scams Study: [BBB.org/ScamStudies](https://www.bbb.org/scamstudies)**

### Government Grant 8th riskiest scam in 2021

Source: 2021 BBB Scam Tracker<sup>SM</sup> Risk Report

- Victims receive a social media message describing a large grant offer for a fee.
- The grant is never received but scammers keep the money and personal information.
- **25% of victims lose money** (FTC - 2021)

Report scams on

