



# SCAM ALERT

JUNE 2020

## Scammers Using Social Security in Coronavirus (COVID-19) Scams

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Scammers may contact you by phone, letter, text, or email impersonating government officials, like Social Security, using the pandemic as a scare tactic to steal your money or personal information (Medicare number, banking information and other personal data). They may tell you Social Security is going to stop your benefits because its offices are closed, or ask you to pay a fee to receive extra benefits due to the pandemic.

Scammers may even pose as COVID-19 contact tracers working to stop the spread of the virus, and ask for payment or your Social Security Number.

Don't be fooled!

### What You Should Know:

Social Security and other government agencies will never:

- ◆ Call you to request information or payment due to coronavirus or office closures.
- ◆ Threaten to arrest you because of an identity theft problem.
- ◆ Require you to put money into a protected account.
- ◆ Ask you for payment by gift card, wire transfer, internet currency, or by mailing cash.
- ◆ Tell you to make up a story to tell your family or bank employees about why you need gift cards or cash.
- ◆ Social Security continues to pay benefits during the pandemic. Social Security has closed offices to the public to follow social distancing guidelines, but its employees are still hard at work.

**TIPS:** If you receive a suspicious call or communication:

- Do not call the number they give you;
- Don't respond in any way - do not give any information, even your name;
- Ignore the message;
- Never click the link;
- Hang up the phone.

### How to Respond:

- ◆ If you have questions about how the coronavirus has affected Social Security services, visit its Coronavirus website: <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>
- ◆ Report a Social Security scam, contact the SS Office of Inspector General at <https://oig.ssa.gov/>
- ◆ Share this information with loved ones to prevent others from becoming victims of the scam.

**REPORT all scams to the Arkansas SMP — 866-726-2916**



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