

News Flash

Sheriff's Office

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Social Security Administration scam targets local residents

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office has received reports of a Social Security Administration scam targeting local residents.

According to one report, a female victim was contacted by someone claiming to be with the Social Security Administration (SSA), the words "Social Security Office" appearing on the victim's caller ID. The scammer told the victim that they were going to cancel her Social Security benefits due to a law enforcement investigation involving her. The scammer told the victim that no law enforcement action would be taken against her if she mailed them cash immediately.

The scammer instructed the victim to wrap cash in foil, package it and then send it to addresses located in Illinois. The victim sent approximately \$185,000 in cash to the scammers.

Several versions of this scam have been circulating the nation this year. According to the Social Security Administration, SSA employees occasionally contact citizens by telephone for customer-service purposes. In only a few limited, special situations, usually already known to the citizen, an SSA employee may request the citizen confirm personal information over the phone. If a person receives a suspicious call from someone alleging to be from SSA, citizens should report that information to the SSA Office of Inspector General (OIG) at 1-800-269-0271 or online via <https://oig.ssa.gov/report>.

If a person has questions about any communication—email, letter, text or phone call—that claims to be from SSA or the OIG, please contact your local Social Security office, or call Social Security's toll-free customer service number at 1-800-772-1213, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to verify its legitimacy. (Those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can call Social Security's TTY number at 1-800-325-0778.)

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office would like to remind the public that law enforcement and other government agencies will never demand payment in exchange for dropping a warrant or stopping an investigation. Additionally, no government agency will ask you to mail large sums of cash or pay with gift cards or pre-paid money cards.

Visit <https://www.usa.gov/stop-scams-frauds#item-35157> to learn how to report scams.