



Social Security Administration Responses to Additional Questions from IACC Members, 1-19-2022

What is the scale and impact of fraud on Social Security Administration (SSA) programs and what SSA is doing to combat it?

SSA takes fraud very seriously. We report our anti-fraud activities annually, as required by Section 845(a) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. The report includes broad information on spending, investigations, prosecutions, and other program integrity activities, which in recent years has had a budget dedicated to it by Congress. The most recent report can be found here: [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 Section 845\(a\) Report - Fiscal Year 2019 \(ssa.gov\)](#). Additionally, the Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report to Congress provides overviews of various types of fraud. The most recent OIG report can be found here: [Semiannual Report to Congress - April 1, 2021-September 30, 2021 \(ssa.gov\)](#)

Combatting fraud is an agency priority. SSA works diligently at national, regional, and local levels to combat fraud that undermines our mission to serve the American public. We work closely with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) which investigates allegations of fraud and seeks to bring offenders to justice. They refer cases to Assistant U.S. Attorneys within the Department of Justice, or to State and local prosecuting authorities, for prosecution. Visit OIG's [Investigations](#) page to view a list of recent fraud investigations. We recognize the inherent risks associated with offering our services online, such as filing for benefits. Therefore, we have strengthened our policies and procedures in the areas of data analytics, systems controls, and special claims handling processes to prevent and detect fraud. Additionally, we offer the public the option of adding extra security measures to their online account. To learn more about these extra security features, visit the agency's [Fraud Prevention and Reporting](#) webpage. In accordance with [Executive Order 14058 Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#), we are streamlining our business processes to allow our customers to interact with us through the service channel that best suits their needs. We are revising our policies to include additional identity proofing options to reduce the burden on the public while ensuring accurate and efficient delivery of benefit payments.



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What is the Social Security Administration (SSA) making the process for applying for and receiving disability benefits more accessible and disability-friendly?

SSA is working hard to meet the demands of beneficiaries (current and potential). Our plans to serve the public can be found in our [budget proposals](#) and [strategic plans](#). Additionally, as SSA addresses the recent [Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#), you will see increased efforts to improve the customer experience.

In early April, we will add more in-person appointments and offer in-person service for people without an appointment. For people who can access our services online or by phone, we ask that they continue to do business with us online or by phone and schedule an appointment, when possible, which will better allow us to timely serve people who cannot use those options. We are constantly expanding our [online services](#) (and see here for [Spanish](#)). Click [here](#) for the latest on our reentry plans (as of March 14, 2022).

Your comment relating to staff training on autism (and, more generally, on disability awareness) and ensuring inclusion in the process is important, and we will forward that to the appropriate office.



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What are the application and award counts for Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits?

In December 2020, the last month for which statistics are readily available, 405,280 individuals received SSI benefits and had a primary diagnosis of autism. ([source](#)) In that month there were 102,258 DI beneficiaries with a primary diagnosis of autism. ([source](#)) As noted in the presentation, SSA collects a limited number of defined disability diagnosis data elements, so this should be considered a lower bound on the total number who have an autism diagnosis. Note that there are many concurrent beneficiaries; that is beneficiaries who receive both SSI and DI. In December 2020, about 7,974 individuals received both DI Worker benefits and SSI, while 24,276 individuals received both DI Disabled Adult Child benefits and SSI. ([source](#))

In 2019, roughly 33 percent of SSI applications were allowed. ([source](#)) For DI, roughly 29 percent of applicants are awarded benefits. ([source](#)) For SSI denials, the most common reason for denial is the ability to work. About a quarter of applicants are denied because the impairment(s) does not meet the statutory requirements of duration, severity, or functional limitation. ([source](#)) DI denial reasons are broadly similar. ([source](#))

You may find the following references to be of interest:

[Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2020 \(ssa.gov\)](#)

[SSI Annual Statistical Report, 2020 \(ssa.gov\)](#)

[2021 Report to Congress | IACC \(hhs.gov\)](#)