

Seniors: It's Your Money.



Ask questions.

Older Americans are one of the largest target groups for scams. Seniors often have great credit and compiled assets that thieves attempt to steal. Scammers count on older adults being too polite to ask pointed questions or say 'no'. The most common scams seniors encounter are:

Medicare Fraud – scammers ask for social security numbers or other personal information to update Medicare accounts OR try to sell seniors fake supplemental plans.

'Grandparent' Scams- scammers pretend to be relatives asking for a loan.

Affinity Marketing-scammers pretend to be a trusted organization, like AARP asking for personal information or a donation.

Fake Debt Collection – scammers claim that the consumer owes a debt that needs to be repaid, demanding account information and often threatening or harassing them until they pay off the alleged debt.



Recognize the Scams

A scammer may use email, phone or text message to:

- ❖ Contact you out of the blue.
- ❖ Make promises that sound too good to be true.
- ❖ Ask you to pay for something up-front - for example, they'll ask you to pay a fee before you can claim a prize.
- ❖ Ask you to make a quick decision by saying things like 'if you don't act now you'll miss out'. This puts you under pressure and doesn't give you time to think.
- ❖ Be over-familiar and over-friendly with you.
- ❖ Tell you an offer has to be kept secret.
- ❖ Ask for your bank account details. Never give your bank details to people you don't know, especially people you meet online.
- ❖ Give a mobile number or PO Box number as the contact for their company- these are easy to close and difficult to trace. It may be a sign that the company doesn't exist or isn't legitimate. Check out the company's details with the Better Business Bureau.

Don't Become a Victim



Tips for Avoiding Scams

- ❖ If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.
- ❖ If you haven't bought a ticket you can't win it.
- ❖ You shouldn't have to pay anything to get a prize.
- ❖ Just say 'no thanks' to persuasive sales calls.
- ❖ Never give out your bank details unless you are certain you can trust the person contacting you.
- ❖ Take your time – resist pressure to make a decision straight away.
- ❖ Never send money to someone you don't know.
- ❖ Walk away from job ads that ask for money in advance.

**If in doubt, don't reply.
Trash it, delete it or hang up.**

Stop Unwanted Calls

While you cannot keep scammers or debt collectors from calling you, there is the option to take yourself off most telemarketing lists. If you take yourself off and continue to get calls, chances are, these calls are from scammers. **Hang up and report the incident immediately.**

There is only **one** Do Not Call Registry, operated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The Do Not Call Registry accepts registrations from both cell phones and land lines. To register by telephone, call **1-888-382-1222** (TTY: 1-866-290-4236). You must call from the phone number that you want to register. To register online (donotcall.gov), you will have to respond to a confirmation email.

You can also opt **out of pre-screened offers**, such as credit card or insurance offers by mail, to reduce instance of identity theft by going to www.optoutprescreen.com OR by calling **1-888-567-8688**. This service is run by the three credit reporting bureaus and is free of charge.

Freeze Your Credit

Also referred to as a security freeze, this tool lets you restrict access to your credit report. Contact **each** of the nationwide credit reporting companies:

Equifax — 1-800-525-6285 or www.equifax.com

Experian — 1-888-397-3742 or www.experian.com

TransUnion — 1-800-680-7289 or www.transunion.com

You'll need to supply your name, address, date of birth, Social Security number and other personal information.

File a Complaint

If you suspect that you have been the target of a scam or victim of identity theft, you will need to file a formal complaint with at least one of the following agencies:

The Federal Trade Commission
Phone: 1 (877) FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)
Online: <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>

HHS Office of Inspector General (Medicare Fraud)
Phone: 1 (800) 447-8477
Online: www.oig.hhs.gov