Seniors Vs. Crime | Lottery And Sweepstakes Scams

We hear this or similar stories more often than you may realize here at Seniors Vs. Crime: You get a card, call, or email telling you that you won! Maybe it’s a lottery, sweepstakes, or some other prize. The person calling is excited and can’t wait for you to get your winnings. They are really anxious to help you claim your “prize”.

But here’s what happens next: They tell you there’s a fee, some taxes, or customs duties to pay. They ask for your bank account information, or ask you to send money via a wire transfer or to purchase gift cards and provide the card numbers. Whichever way you send it, you lose money instead of winning it. You don’t get a big prize.

Instead, you get more requests for money, and more promises that you won big. Scammers can be very convincing, and who wouldn’t want to win big!

Lottery and sweepstakes scams are one of the most common consumer frauds operating today. According to Colleen Tressler, a Consumer Education Specialist at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), these scams were the third-most common type of fraud reported to the agency in 2017.

Earlier this year, the FTC took action against an operation they alleged targeted older people with phony sweepstakes offers. The company sent mailers
Lottery And Sweepstakes Scams

that made people think they had won $1 million (or more!), and that the recipient only needed to pay a small fee to claim it.

Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, IT PROBABLY IS! Help us help you and other Villagers by using the FTC's top tips to avoid lottery and sweepstakes scams:

- Keep your money - and your information - to yourself. Never share your financial information with someone who contacts you and claims to need it. And never wire money to or share gift card numbers with anyone who asks you to. Both payment methods are a sure sign of a scam.

- Pass this information on to a friend. You probably throw away these kinds of bogus offers or hang up when you get these calls. But you may know someone who could use a friendly reminder.

- If you spot a scam, report it to the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint. Your report can help FTC investigators identify the scammers and stop them before they steal someone's hard-earned money.

If you need assistance with understanding any aspect of lottery or sweepstakes scams, contact your nearest Seniors Vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Seniors Vs. Crime can be reached at:

- The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages - (352) 674-1882
- The Marion County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages - (352) 753-7775
- The Sumter County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages – (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606
- The Wildwood Police Department Annex at Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 750-1914

Volunteers at all four offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE ‘Seniors vs. Crime Region 4’ on Face Book. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689 4606.