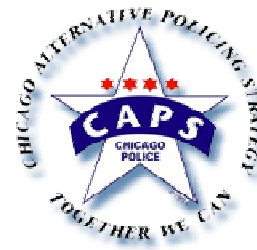




## Bureau of Detectives – Financial Crimes

# Community Alert



Alert #606-17-01  
Sep 28, 2017

## Financial scams targeting Seniors City Wide

### **About the Crime:**

Financial fraud targeting senior citizens exists in many forms. Offenders are creative in their approaches and can leave our most vulnerable citizens with little or no money. Fraudsters target the elderly because most are willing to listen and are very trusting. Many of these scams are committed over the phone. Scammers use internet technology to disguise their area code so it looks like the call is local or from within the country, when in fact many of these calls are coming from overseas. Some common frauds are listed below.

**Sweepstakes Fraud:** Caller states you won money or something of value in a sweepstakes but you have to pay taxes or insurance or shipping and handling fees to collect. Legitimate sweepstakes don't require you to pay **anything**.

This occurred on September 26, 2017 in the 6000 block of North Sheridan. A female victim, age 89 years old, was contacted via phone call claiming she won a 3 million dollar sweepstakes. The victim was instructed to withdraw money from her bank and wire it to Indiana. The offender called the victim multiple times a day over a year long period. The victim wired money to the offender on at least 5 separate occasions since May 2017, defrauding her of a large sum of money. This incident was reported under JA447442

**Lottery Fraud:** Scammer approaches and shows you what looks like a winning lottery ticket. They will ask for your help in cashing the ticket. They may state that they don't have a bank account or that they are not in the country legally. They will offer to split the winnings but they need earnest money. They will offer to take you to your bank.

This occurred on August 21, 2017 at 3:30pm in the 1700 block of West 47<sup>th</sup> St. A male Hispanic victim, 51 years old, was approached by two male Hispanic offenders, one approx. 55-65 years old, one approx. 65-75 years old, using a black SUV. Offenders approached the victim and claimed to have a winning Lottery ticket they were unable to cash. The victim gave the offenders a large sum of money; the offenders made up an excuse to flee the scene, leaving the victim unaware of what just occurred. This incident was reported under JA400636.

(Continued)

**Grandparent Scam:** This scam plays on the victims emotions and takes multiple forms. A caller may pose as a grandchild or family member. They may say they need money because they were in an accident or need help paying bills. In another form the caller may say your grandchild or family member was arrested and needs bond money or that the child was in an accident and needs money for the hospital. They will ask you to send the money through Western Union or Money Gram.

This occurred on September 12, 2017 in the 5000 block of West Newport. A female victim, 77 years old, was contacted via phone stating her son was in jail. The victim agreed to meet the offender to provide a large sum of money for bail. The offender was a female, white, 20-25 years old. The offender later re-contacted the victim claiming bond had increased. The victim met the offender a second time with more money. The offender then attempted to contact the victim a third time requesting more money but the victim did not have any more to give. After being unable to provide any more money the offender did not re-contact the victim.

**Computer Virus Scam:** Caller will state that they are with a legitimate company like Apple or Microsoft and your account or computer was hacked. The caller states that for a fee they will remotely fix your computer. The caller will ask for credit card or bank information. Never give out credit card or bank information.

This occurred on September 05, 2017 at 3:00pm in the 100 block of East Bellevue. A male, 82 year old, victim received a phone call from an unknown offender claiming to represent a cell service/internet provider. The offender instructed the victim to purchase gift cards then call back with the gift card number and pin to prevent further hacking, ultimately defrauding the victim. This incident was reported under JA428475.

**What you can do:**

- If you are a senior and believe you might have been scammed contact a family member or trusted friend.
- Call 911 immediately and report as much information as possible.
- Do not agree to meet with anyone in these scams.
- Never give out credit card or bank information to anyone you do not know.
- Contact your bank or credit card company immediately to cancel payments or freeze accounts.

**If you have any information contact the Financial Crimes Unit at  
(312) 746-9661**

**Reference RD#: JA-400636, JA-428475, JA-428655, JA-447442**