

# CONSUMER PROTECTION



LEARN HOW TO SPOT THE RED FLAGS

## IN 2017



- **14.2 million** credit card numbers were exposed
- **\$905 million** in total consumer-reported fraud losses
- Most common method of financial loss was via **wire transfers**
- Nearly **158 million** Social Security numbers were exposed
- **35%** of all fraud-related complaints impacted individuals 60+ years

## COMMON SCAMS



### Grandparent scam

A scammer contacts you and claims your grandchild is in trouble. They need money to help with an emergency, such as getting out of jail, a hospital bill, or leaving a foreign country. Then, they trick you into wiring money or purchasing prepaid gift cards.



### Lottery/Sweepstakes scam

A scammer contacts you to say you've won a prize or a sum of money. Then they'll require you to pay taxes and/or processing fees in order to receive the money or prize.



### Tech support scam

A scammer contacts you through a pop-up, an email, or a phone call and pretends to be a tech support agent from a well-known company like Apple or Microsoft. They convince you that your computer is infected with a virus, and ask for payment from you in order to fix it.



### Romance scam

Scammers create fake online profiles using pictures of other people - even stolen pictures of military personnel. They profess their love quickly and pull at your heartstrings with fake stories about needing money. An online love interest who asks for money is almost certainly a scammer.

# A SCAMMER'S M.O. HOW DO THEY OPERATE?



## UNTRACEABLE PAYMENTS

Scammers want to take your money quickly, and in a way that's hard to trace and nearly impossible to get back. Be skeptical of anyone asking you to wire money or pay by gift card.



## SECRETS

Scammers want to keep you isolated so you're more likely to buy their lie. If someone is telling you not to talk to your family or friends, that's a red flag.



## URGENCY

Scammers don't want you to think too hard about what they're telling you. They know if you do, they'll be exposed. Be cautious of anyone telling you to act NOW.



## UNPROFESSIONALISM

Be skeptical of sales reps who are mean or threatening. And don't be afraid to disregard any letters or postcards with misspellings and poor grammar.

# PROTECT YOURSELF

- ✓ Don't answer calls from numbers you don't recognize.
- ✓ Don't send money via gift cards or a money wiring service.
- ✓ Hang up on any caller who makes you feel uncomfortable.
- ✓ Check your bank and credit card statements regularly, and contact them if you notice any suspicious activity.
- ✓ Request your free credit report every 4 months from Annual Credit Report.
- ✓ Join the National Do Not Call Registry to cut down on calls from legitimate telemarketers.
- ✓ Talk to trusted friends and family members.
- ✓ Protect others by reporting suspicious activity to your local authorities and other government agencies.

# REPORT

- NYS Division of Consumer Protection - (800) 697-1220**  
The DCP is New York's top consumer watchdog, and is committed to advocating for and empowering all New Yorkers. They accept complaints about consumer scams, ID theft, faulty products, and more.
- NY Attorney General's Office - (800) 771-7755**  
The AG's Office protects consumers and investors, charitable donors, the public health and environment, civil rights, and the rights of wage-earners and businesses across the State. They accept complaints about consumer scams, healthcare fraud or abuse, investment scams, and many more.
- Federal Trade Commission - (877) 382-4357**  
The FTC has a unique dual mission to protect consumers and promote competition. They collect complaints about data security, deceptive advertising, ID theft, Do Not Call violations, and many more.

