
- Complaints decreased by 16% to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC).
- Financial losses reported dramatically increased in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- FTC reports show an increase of more than 35% in reported dollar losses.

**Victims**

**PEOPLE OVER 55+** represent 72% of fraud victims received by BBB Scam Tracker during the last three years. **91% of victims lost money**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How scammers reach out</th>
<th>Cold Calls</th>
<th>Emails</th>
<th>Social Media</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mail Notices</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
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</table>

**How the scam works**
Scammers tell “winners” to pay taxes or fees before a prize can be awarded. In reality, the prize does not exist.

**Payment methods**
Wire transfer, bank deposit into a specified account, or even cash sent by mail.

**Money Mules**
Scammers sometimes launder their illegal profits by sending money to a new “winner” who transfers the money back.

**Why it works**
Scammers manipulate victims into believing money requests and other tasks are all that stand in the way of winning big and doing good for others.

**Is it fake?**
- True lotteries or sweepstakes don’t ask for money to cover fees/taxes. Lotteries do COST money to play
- Law enforcement officials do not call and award prizes
- Call the sweepstakes company directly to see if you won
- Do an internet search of the company, name, or phone number of the person who contacted you
- Talk to a trusted family member or your bank
- Ask yourself, did you enter any sweepstakes?

Average loss for ages **18-54**: $259
Average loss for ages **55+**: $978

Is it fake?

Report scams on [BBB Scam Tracker](https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker)