



Business Bureau Senior Awareness Initiative

Coronavirus Scams Still Targeted Area Seniors

BBB is receiving several reports from seniors reporting that they are receiving [text messages from scammers](#) posing as the U.S. Department of Health, about taking a mandatory online COVID-19 test in order to receive the recently approved stimulus payment. Others are receiving emails stating they qualify for a payment and to [click on a link to claim a check](#). During this time of uncertainty, it is the ideal time for a scammer to prey on fear. The bottom-line is don't respond to a text, email or phone call from a sender that is unfamiliar, even if it looks official or from a respected agency.

These schemes often manifest as someone impersonating a respected agency or government entity, like the Social Security Administration or police, insisting a potential victim act immediately or face consequences. In fact, a [research report](#) released by the Better Business Bureau, FINRA Investor Education Foundation, and the Stanford Center on Longevity found that the top reason people said they lose money was because the scammer "seemed official."

With the current coronavirus pandemic, scammers will constantly change their tactics to catch people off guard. Here are some tips for seniors to protect against scams:

- **Don't be afraid to contact someone.** Reach out to a family member, neighbor, or a company or organization you trust for advice. Research shows that individuals that are living alone, widowed, or those feeling isolated from others are more likely to engage with and lose money to scammers. If a scammer tries to keep you on the phone or rush you to a decision, hang up and ask someone for advice.
- **Think the link may be real? Double check the URL.** Scammers often buy official-looking URLs to use in their cons. Be careful that the link is really what it pretends to be. If the message alleges to come from the local government, make sure the URL ends in .gov (for the United States) or .ca (for Canada). When in doubt, perform a separate internet search for the website.
- **Be wary of offers sounding too good to be true.** They won't help you get ahead. Scammers look for individuals looking to "catch up" or "get ahead" financially, and if your retirement was affected by the market's ups and downs – don't panic. Periods of high emotion are rarely the right time to re-evaluate your financial future. Instead, take a deep breath and contact a trustworthy broker or [financial advisor](#).
- **Be smart and aware.** Knowing about the scams out there significantly reduces the likelihood of financial loss. When someone contacts you about an "amazing opportunity," it's easier to separate fact from fiction.

Learn more about COVID-19 scams at [BBB.org/coronavirus](https://www.bbb.org/coronavirus)