



# Sweepstakes Scams

## Never pay money to claim a prize.

Since BBB's 2018 in-depth investigative study, **Sweepstakes, Lottery and Prize Scams: A Better Business Bureau Study of How "Winners" Lose Millions Through an Evolving Fraud:**

- 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.



Average loss for ages **18-54: \$259**

Average loss for ages **55+: \$978**

### 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?

# WIN! \$

### How scammers reach out



Cold Calls



Emails



Social Media



Mail Notices



Text Messages

### 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.

Report scams on

