



Lincoln Investment Wants You to Stay Away from Fake Lottery Scams: If It Sounds Too Good to be True, It Probably Is

Remember “all it takes is a dollar and a dream”? Scammers attempt to exploit that dream by convincing you it is a reality only to steal money from you in the process.

How Lottery Scams are Perpetrated

It is pretty simple. You get a call, email or letter saying you have won a sweepstakes, lottery or prize — like a cash payment, a grant, a new car or something else. There is one catch. You must pay money or give your account information to get the prize. If you don't pay or turn over account information immediately, you'll lose out on your opportunity at your big prize. Eventually, you will learn after giving away your money, that there is no prize. Here are the telltale signs:

- 1. You have to pay to get your prize.** Real prizes are free. If someone tells you to pay a fee for “taxes,” “shipping and handling charges” or “processing fees” to get your lottery prize, you're dealing with a scammer. And if they ask you to pay by wiring money, sending cash or paying with gift cards or cryptocurrency, don't do it. Scammers use these payments because it's difficult to track and almost impossible to get your money back.
- 2. They say paying increases your odds of winning.** Real sweepstakes are free and winning is by chance. It's illegal for someone to ask you to pay to increase your odds of winning. Only a scammer will do that.
- 3. You have to give your financial information.** There's absolutely no reason to ever give your bank account or credit card number to claim any prize or sweepstakes. If they ask for this information, don't give it. It's a scam.

Scammers are experts at what they do and will employ tactics to trick you. To help give a perception of legitimacy, they may represent themselves to be from the government or an organization you recognize or trust as being associated with real lotteries or sweepstakes, such as Publisher's Clearinghouse. If you aren't sure, contact the real company directly. Do not take the scammer at their word.

Scammers will use time against you. This will require you to act now and ask questions later. Don't be rushed — especially if they want you to do something to get your prize. If you're not sure about a contest or the company sending you a prize notification, search online to see if you find anything about them. Type the name with terms like “review,” “complaint” or “scam.”

If You Are a Victim, Report It

If you are a victim, contact your bank right away and try to mitigate any losses. Contact your financial professional to ensure that Lincoln Investment is notified and can help assist in the protection of your Lincoln assets. The FBI requests victims report lottery scams to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov. You can also make reports to the FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov, and/or to local law enforcement. You can and should contact your state attorney general and your local consumer protection office, and if the prize promotion came in the mail, report it to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

If you think you have given your personal information to a scammer, go to IdentityTheft.gov for steps you can take to protect your identity.

Finally, tell your friends and family. Help them avoid getting scammed.

Sources: [Fake Prize, Sweepstakes, and Lottery Scams | Consumer Advice \(ftc.gov\)](https://www.ftc.gov/consumer-advice/fake-prize-sweepstakes-and-lottery-scams)