

August 2021 Issue

Community News

As Pandemic Continues, Scams Do Too

The number of online scams and money lost from them grew significantly from 2019 to 2020. Here are some ways fraudsters have been tricking people during the pandemic and what you can do to avoid being scammed:

Charity Scams

Fraudsters have increasingly used Covid-19 to solicit donations from the public by impersonating organizations such as the World Health Organization or legitimate charities. They use the official logos of the organization they are impersonating on their emails or websites to solicit donations.

The only way to avoid becoming a victim of such scams is to do your homework. If you're interested in donating to an organization, go to an independent government registry to verify that the organization is indeed an approved or registered charity. Then find the organization's official website and contact details and make a donation directly via one of these channels. Never blindly follow the instructions or information contained in emails received or websites encountered as they can be faked to look like authentic ones.

Text Scams

During lockdowns early in the pandemic, fraudsters targeted homebound people with the attractive offer of a free Netflix subscription for the entire lockdown period. All people had to do was click on the link provided in the text to complete a survey and then forward the link to 10 WhatsApp users. The purpose was for scammers to steal their victims' personal information. **To verify any offers, call or email a company directly.**

Online Sales Scams

There has been an increase in fake online sites set up by scammers to take advantage of Covid-19 anxiety. These sites purport to sell emergency-related supplies including those that were formerly in high demand like masks and hand sanitizer, as well as provide access to vaccines from pharmaceutical firms such as Pfizer or Moderna. After making payment for them, no supplies or vaccines will be shipped. These sites are just a front

for fraudsters to steal the payment and personal information of their victims.

To avoid such scams, purchase emergency supplies only from reputable sites, and for vaccines, visit a trusted healthcare provider or other authorized vaccination provider.

Advanced Fee Scam

Earlier this year, AARP warned about fraudsters targeting Americans by instructing them to pay a fee (or provide their personal information) to secure their stimulus check. Small businesses have also been targeted with fraudsters offering fake promises to help business owners secure Covid-19 relief loans.

To confirm the requirements for any government aid, go directly to the applicable government site and learn how such aid is being administered.

Government Agent Scams

Be aware that such fraudsters often create a sense of urgency and take advantage of people's fear by demanding money immediately.

To avoid being a victim, stay logical and calm. Remember that very often, if something sounds or looks too good to be true, it probably is. Do your homework before making a payment or sharing your personal information with anyone. Last but not least, **stay vigilant and up-to-date on the latest news and check the details before committing anything to anyone.**

Following these basic principles will help you avoid falling victim to scams. **If you've spotted a scam, report it at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.**

To learn more about safeguarding your finances and personal data visit westerlyccu.com/fraud-protection.

Article adapted from 'As Pandemic Continues, Scams Do Too'. 5.17.2021 Frans Wiwanto, Forbes.com.



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What's New at WCCU!

WCCU Expands Teacher Grant Program

WCCU Cares: Great news - the WCCU Teacher Grant Program is now available in the Coventry school district!

This program, which awards \$8,500 in grants, in values up to \$500 is now available to local Teachers, Administrators, or Staff from the following school districts: Chariho, Coventry, Exeter-West Greenwich, Narragansett, North Stonington, South Kingstown, Stonington and Westerly for the 2021/2022 school year.

Applications are available at westerlyccu.com/teacher-grant and must be submitted by October 31st, 2021.



WCCU Receives SRI Chamber Choice Award

WCCU Cares: WCCU recently received the 2021 Southern Rhode Island Chamber Choice "Community Hero" Award. This award recognizes a local business for their hands-on commitment to the community through donations or volunteerism.

Visit westerlyccu.com/community-hero to read the complete article.

Wayne's Cooking Hotdogs

Visit us and enjoy a delicious hotdog, chips, and a cold drink compliments of Wayne Lagasse, Vice President, Wealth Management, MEMBERS Financial Services and WCCU.

Date: Friday, August 27, 2021

Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Location: WCCU
122 Granite St.,
Westerly, RI**



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Dates to Remember

Monday, August 9: Closed in observance of Victory Day
Friday, August 13: Relay for Life of Southern Rhode Island
Friday, August 27: Hot Dog Day
Monday, September 6: Closed in observance of Labor Day

Visit westerlyccu.com/events for details!



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