

Managing Your Money

Tips To Help You Avoid Financial Exploitation

(NAPSA)—Older Americans should know that while financial abuse is believed to cost seniors an estimated \$3 billion annually, you can help prevent it and protect yourself.

Signs To Watch For

- You, family, friends or your bank notice financial activity you don't recall, that is not consistent with your financial history or that is beyond your means.

- Your caregiver or beneficiary refuses to use your funds for necessary care and treatment or is threatening to place you in a long-term care facility unless you give him or her control of your finances.

- It appears that food or medication has been manipulated or withheld so you become weak and compliant.

Steps You Can Take

- If you feel threatened and believe you are in immediate danger, contact law enforcement.

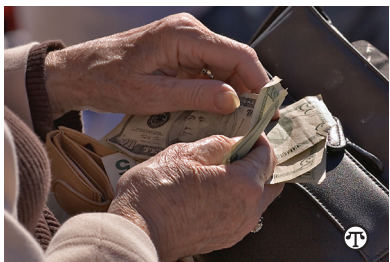
- Talk with family members, friends and trusted professionals to plan your financial future. If managing your daily finances is difficult, consider engaging a money manager.

- Talk with a lawyer about creating a durable power of attorney for asset management, a revocable or living will, trust and health care advance directives.

- Never send anyone personal information to collect a prize or reward.

- Don't be pressured or intimidated into quick decisions by a salesperson or contractor.

- Don't sign any documents you don't completely understand without first talking it over with an attorney or a family member you trust.



To protect yourself from financial abuse, try to keep in touch with family and friends; isolation can make you more vulnerable.

- Never provide personal information (Social Security, credit card, ATM PIN number) over the phone unless you placed the call and know with whom you are speaking.

- Tear up or shred credit card receipts, bank statements, solicitations and financial records before disposing of them.

- If you hire someone to help you in your home, be sure that person has been properly screened, with criminal background checks completed.

- If you suspect you or someone you know is being exploited, call (800) 677-1116 to get connected with the state Adult Protective Services or other appropriate aging resource.

- For more information on financial exploitation, you can request a free brochure from the Eldercare Locator, "Protect Your Pocketbook: Tips to Avoid Financial Exploitation." Call (800) 677-1116; the brochure can also be downloaded at www.eldercare.gov. The Eldercare Locator is a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging and is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a).