



For Immediate Release

**WICHITA, KAN.** – Offers for free government grants are scams whether you are contacted through a telephone call, a mailer, online or an ad in a local paper. A “money for nothing” grant is not legitimate.

If you are informed that you have received a “free government grant” and only a “one time processing fee,” such as \$220.00, must be paid to claim it, do not be fooled. The instructions for paying the “processing fee” can include wiring it via Western Union to a particular person/location or providing a credit card number in order to charge the fee. You could be asked to give a bank account number so the fee can be withdrawn from a bank account or so grant money can be directly deposited.

The caller from the “Federal Grants Administration” may ask questions to determine whether you qualify. This is intended to make the contact seem legitimate. Residents with caller ID report the telephone number is usually from out of state and the person on the phone has an accent. Sometimes, there will be multiple calls, in attempts to convince you they are legitimate.

Other forms of this fraud are direct mail pieces that offer to locate a “government grant,” to start a business or for some other purpose.

**If you are contacted by a person or someone representing an organization or company, and you did not initiate the contact, do not give out personal financial information.**

Additional tips:

- Don’t let a stranger befriend you over the phone or through email, making you believe it is “ok” to give that person your bank account information.
- Don’t pay any money for a “free government grant”. A real government agency does not ask you to pay a processing fee for a grant that you have already been awarded.
- Scammers can fake phone numbers on your caller ID to look like they are calling from Washington, D.C. or within your own area code. The calls usually come from outside the country.

To learn more about Government Grant Scams, click on the following links:

- <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0113-government-grant-scams>
- <http://ftc.gov/opa/2013/05/grantconnect.shtm>

District Attorney Marc Bennett is committed to protecting consumers in Sedgwick County. For additional information, contact the Consumer Fraud and Economic Crimes Division of the District Attorney's Office at 316.660.3653 or go to the District Attorney's website at <http://sedgwickcounty.org/da>.

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