

## ROMANCE SCAMS

### HOW THE SCAMS WORK:

In romance scams, the scammer uses a fake online identity to gain a victim's affection and trust. The scammer then uses the illusion of a romantic or close relationship to manipulate and/or steal from the victim. The scammer wants to establish a relationship as quickly as possible, endear himself/herself to the victim, and gain trust. Scammers may propose marriage and make plans to meet in person, but that will never happen. Eventually, they will ask for money.

The criminals who carry out romance scams are experts at what they do and will seem genuine, caring, and believable. Con artists are present on most dating and social media sites.

Scammers often say they are in the building and/or construction industry and are engaged in projects outside the U.S. This makes it easier for them to avoid meeting in person and more plausible when they ask for money for a medical emergency or unexpected legal fee.

If someone you meet online needs your bank account information to deposit money, they are most likely using your account to carry out other theft and fraud schemes.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO AVOID BEING VICTIMIZED?

- Be careful what you post and make public online. Scammers can use details shared on social media and dating sites to better understand and target you.
- Research the person's photo and profile using online searches to see if the image, name, or details have been used elsewhere.
- Go slowly and ask lots of questions.
- Beware if the individual seems too perfect or quickly asks you to leave a dating service or social media site to communicate directly using other types of social media/messaging apps.
- Beware if the individual attempts to isolate you from friends and family or requests inappropriate photos or financial information which could later be used to extort or blackmail you.
- Beware if the individual promises to meet in person but then always comes up with an excuse about why he or she cannot meet. If you have not met the person after a few months, for whatever reason, you have good reason to be suspicious.

**\*\*\*Do NOT give money to people you have not met in person or who you have only met online!!!**