

UNCLASSIFIED

BRIC COVID-19 Online Fraud Awareness

March 5, 2021

BRIC



BOSTON REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE CENTER

Remain Vigilant Against Online COVID-19 Fraud

Criminals continue to engage in online fraud campaigns related to the COVID-19 vaccine in an attempt to extort payments from unknowing Massachusetts residents or steal personally identifiable information (PII). Additionally, misinformation can spread quickly online. The BRIC encourages the public to take the following precautions while searching for information related to COVID-19 online:

- ✓ Utilize only authoritative, verified sources of information regarding COVID-19.
 - [Boston Public Health's Website](#)
 - [Massachusetts Public Health's Website](#)
 - [Massachusetts' COVID-19 Vaccine Page](#)
- ✓ Carefully spell the URL or "website address" while navigating your browser. Criminals deliberately create imposter websites with similar spelling to legitimate pages designed to lure unsuspecting users.
- ✓ Never respond to, open attachments from, or click links in an unsolicited email. Look for suspicious indicators of fraud or scam, such as poor grammar or spelling.
- ✓ Do not trust unknown sources of medical goods or equipment.
- ✓ Never buy gift cards or provide gift card access numbers to purported businesses or government entities as payment.
- ✓ Never share your PII, including banking or credit account information, with unknown sources. If you receive a call or email from an individual claiming to be your financial institution, hang up or do not respond, and login to your banking site directly.
- ✓ **Boston and Massachusetts government agencies will never solicit personal information from you via email, text message, or by calling you. Massachusetts contact tracers may ask for your name and recent contacts when they call.**

If you believe you have been a victim of COVID-19 fraud, please reach out to local law enforcement. Additionally, you can report it to:

- Health and Human Services – Office of Inspector General: 1-800-HHS-TIPS | tips.hhs.gov
- FBI Hotline: 1-800-CALL-FBI | ic3.gov

BOSTON REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE CENTER

UNCLASSIFIED