



# HOW TO AVOID “THE GRANDPARENT SCAM”

## THE SCAM

In a “grandparent scam,” you get a call or an email from someone who claims to be your grandchild. The scammer says, “**Grandma/Grandpa, can you please help me? But don’t tell Mom or Dad.**” The “grandchild” claims he or she has gotten into some kind of trouble: for example, they have been in an auto accident, have been mugged, need money for bail or must pay customs fees to get back into the United States from another country.

**BEWARE**—there’s a good chance this is an imposter trying to take your money!

## THE SCHEME

### Typical Conversation

**Scammer:** “Hi Grandma”

**You:** “Hi.”

**Scammer:** “Do you know who this is?”

**You:** “Jeremy?”

**Scammer:** “Yes, Grandma, this is Jeremy!”

Without knowing it, you supplied the scammer with the name of a grandchild. The scammer proceeds to impersonate your grandchild and asks you not to tell other family members until it’s too late. **Scammers will often use artificial intelligence technology, commonly known as AI, to clone the voices of family members, tricking you into sharing information or money.**

# THE SOLUTION

If someone calls, emails or sends a text message claiming to be a family member or a friend desperate for money, take the following steps.

## STOP: Verify the emergency! Don't keep it a secret!



Resist the urge to act immediately, no matter how dramatic the story.



Verify the person's identity by asking questions that a stranger couldn't possibly answer.



Call the family member at a phone number that you know to be genuine.



Check the story out with someone else in your family or circle of friends, even if you've been told to keep it a secret.



Don't wire money or send a check or money order by overnight delivery or courier.

Report this type of call or any strange unsolicited calls asking you to send or wire money to the **Illinois Attorney General's Senior Citizen Consumer Fraud Helpline** at **1-800-243-5377** or email [seniorhelpline@ilag.gov](mailto:seniorhelpline@ilag.gov).

### Office of the Attorney General Consumer Fraud Hotlines

Chicago  
1-800-386-5438

Springfield  
1-800-243-0618

Carbondale  
1-800-243-060

Línea Gratuita en Español  
1-866-310-8398

[www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov)

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.

