You are likely talking to a scammer if:

1. **They contact you first**: Unexpected calls, texts, or emails from someone you don't know.

2. **There is an emergency**: They pressure you to act immediately without thinking.

3. **Payment method is specific**: They insist on payment via gift cards, wire transfer, or cryptocurrency.

4. **It's too good to be true**: Guaranteed high returns, free money, or prizes for contests you didn't enter.

Scammers are always using new technologies and coming up with increasingly convincing scams, and it's often hard to tell if you are being scammed. Be on high alert if you get an unexpected message, especially if you're being pressured to act quickly or being asked for personal or financial information.

Text Scams

Scammers often try to get you to click links sent through text, or to reply to text messages so that they can get your personal or financial information. They may try to sell you something, like debt relief services, or they may say you won a gift card or other prize. They may also impersonate your bank, another well-known company, or a government agency. Scammers can spoof phone numbers, so be wary even if a text seems to come from a familiar number.

Here are some tips to help:

Do not click on links that you get by text, and do not give out any personal or financial information

- **Don't trust caller ID:** Phone numbers can be "spoofed" to look like a familiar number, so don't assume that caller ID is accurate. Voices can also be faked from audio clips. If you get a call and something seems unusual, or if the caller asks for personal or financial information, hang up. The longer you stay on the line, the higher your chances of becoming a victim.
- **Find and use the accurate contact information:** If someone claims to be a government official, your bank or other company, or a family member asking for personal or financial information, or if anything else seems unusual, hang up and don't reply. Don't click on any links, since scammers often try to get you to click on fake links that are sent to you in texts,

emails, or social media. Call the person or entity using their real phone number or go to the entity's real website from your own internet browser – don't rely on contact information provided in a text message, email, social media, or mail.

Take some time and talk with trusted friends and family: Scammers often create false urgency to get you to act quickly. If you feel pressured to act, stop and take some time before paying any money or giving out any information, and seek a second opinion from your family and friends. And don't forget: Real government agencies will never threaten you with legal action or arrest in exchange for immediate payment, promise to increase your benefits or resolve an issue in exchange for a fee or fund transfer, ask you to send cash by mail, or ask for payment in the form of gift cards, prepaid debit cards, wire transfer, or cryptocurrency.

Please report fraud to the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office by calling (707) 445-7251 or by filing a report online at https://humboldtgov.org/1380/Online-Reporting and by reporting it to the Federal Trade Commision at https://www.ftc.gov