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**BACP CELEBRATES NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK**

*Educational campaign aims to ensure consumers are informed and protected in the marketplace*

**CHICAGO** – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced outreach and education efforts aligned with National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), a time to help people understand their consumer rights and avoid fraud and scams. This year, NCPW is observed March 6-12 and is designed to inform consumers of how to safely navigate the marketplace.

“It is our goal to inform consumers of their rights so they can make well-informed decisions,” said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. “Through outreach efforts, BACP provides consumers access to information and resources while protecting consumers from unfair and deceptive practices in the marketplace.”

NCPW, sponsored by the [Federal Trade Commission](#), brings together public and private sector organizations that work to educate and protect people from frauds, scams, and other threats. The week is an opportunity to increase knowledge of consumer laws and protections.

“We are committed to helping businesses and consumers foster a marketplace of trust,” said Steve Bernas, President and CEO of the Chicago Better Business Bureau. “Ensuring trust, integrity and fairness in the marketplace is critical to the mission of the BBB and I thank BACP for their ongoing work ensuring consumers are informed and protected.”

In recognition of NCPW, BACP will hold educational webinars on pertinent consumer safety topics. On Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m., the Better Business Bureau (BBB) will present a webinar titled *Avoid the Top Business and Consumer Scams Occurring in Northern Illinois*. On Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m., BACP will present a webinar titled *Fighting Fraud*. This webinar will focus on how to be an informed consumer, including common fraud tactics and the process of filing a complaint. Learn more and register at [Chicago.gov/BusinessEducation](http://Chicago.gov/BusinessEducation).

As a resource for consumers, BACP's comprehensive [Be Informed. Be Protected. consumer protection campaign](#) provides Chicagoans with simplified tips and resources across a wide array of topics most relevant to consumers, including [home repair](#), [online shopping](#), using a [towing service](#) and [small business loans](#). This campaign helps BACP carry out its mission to ensure a safe and vibrant marketplace for consumers.

To ensure consumers are protected from fraudulent practices, BACP recommends the following tips:

- Avoid paying in cash; credit cards are preferable because they offer fraud protection.
- Always obtain a receipt or invoice.
- Before signing a contract, read through all the terms. A rush for signature should be a red flag.
- Shop around for the best prices, but beware of those that are well below other quotes- if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Throughout the week, BACP will share consumer protection tips on its social media platforms. Use #ConsumerProtectionWeek to join the conversation.

In addition to outreach these outreach efforts, BACP enforces Chicago's consumer protection laws. In 2021, BACP responded to over 1,000 complaints, the most common of which was home repair fraud, followed by motor vehicle repair fraud. In 2021, BACP retrieved over \$85,000 in restitution to complainants.

BACP calls on all Chicagoans to report consumer fraud by submitting a complaint via the City's 311 system, which is the primary and most expeditious way that residents can request services from City departments and agencies. The launch of the modernized CHI 311 has made it easier for residents to access city services with an updated system that is more accessible, transparent and user-friendly. Consumers are encouraged to use the CHI 311 system (call 3-1-1, use the CHI311 mobile app, or visit [311.chicago.gov](http://311.chicago.gov)) to report fraud or other possible illegal practices by businesses or contractors located in Chicago.

BACP is tasked with protecting Chicagoans from acts of consumer fraud, unfair methods of competition and deceptive practices. This includes any conduct that violates the Municipal Code sections related to business operations or consumer protection, as well as anything that is an unlawful practice under the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. Learn more about Chicago's Consumer Protection resources at [Chicago.gov/BACP](http://Chicago.gov/BACP) or [Chicago.gov/ConsumerProtection](http://Chicago.gov/ConsumerProtection).

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