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### Stimulus money stimulates online schemes, experts warn

06:09 PM EST on Thursday, March 5, 2009



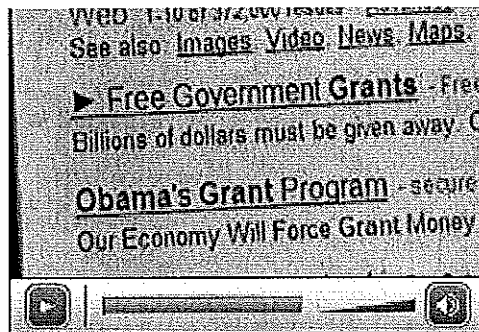
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by: Janet  
Roach

CHESAPEAKE -- The president's \$787 billion stimulus plan has created a big opportunity for con artists to get your money.

The Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center has joined several national groups to warn consumers about the promise of free money that really isn't.

A Google search turns up numerous Websites linking the President's stimulus plan to government grants. In most cases, the sites ask for a small shipping fee, but that's just the beginning.

James Carroll, the center's director, says the sites claim to offer a free grant kit, but it could cost you \$95.00 because the first site connects to a second one, and then a third and fourth and so on. Each site asks for a monthly fee, he states.



Video: Stimulus money stimulates online schemes, experts warn

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As an example, the Center cites [jasongetgrants.com](#), which shows a man claiming to be fireman Jason Dodd. Under his picture is his testimony -- "I want everyone to know how I went from being broke to completely paying off debt in 30 days by spending a few minutes filling out a form online that qualified me for a free \$12,000 financial aid check from the US Government." There's also a picture of a check issued by the US Treasury for \$12,759.

The site asks for \$1.99 shipping fee to send your free grant kit, but the site is really offering a CD that you pay for by giving a credit card number, Carroll notes.

"They prey on the weak. They prey on the unsuspecting and they prey on the vulnerable and it's unacceptable," says Carroll.

Also Online

He's written an article warning consumers to be on the lookout for these ads.

[Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center Website](#)

The sites use eye catching phrases such as "get your share now," "never have to be repaid" and "bail me out." But when it comes to a government grant, Carroll says, individuals do not qualify for such money. He explains, "Usually, when there's government money involved, there's a requirement for the entity that's receiving the money to generate local cash, non-federal dollars to qualify for it."

[Read James Carroll's article](#)