



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO



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CONTACT:

BACP Jennifer Lipford

312.744.5365

jennifer.lipford@cityofchicago.org

ORDINANCE ENHANCES CITY'S CONSUMER PROTECTION CAPABILITIES

City will access data from national Consumer Protection organizations to assure effective enforcement against bad actors and to proactively protect Chicago consumers

Today at City Council, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) introduced an ordinance to enhance BACP's access to outside consumer protection data. The ordinance will grant BACP the necessary authority to enter into data-sharing and information access agreements with federal and local consumer and financial fraud agencies. Information sharing would provide BACP access to witnesses and data regarding bad actors in the business community that prey on consumers.

The proposed ordinance would allow BACP to enter into an agreement to access the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) national automated database, the "The Consumer Sentinel." The database contains millions of consumer complaints including: identity theft, immigration services, telemarketing scams, fraudulent business opportunities, credit scams and product complaints. The information in Sentinel would enable BACP to identify larger patterns and trends of consumer fraud to proactively protect against new scams before they take hold in Chicago. The expanded database information also serves to provide additional evidence to bolster fraud cases. BACP can learn of deceptive and unfair practices affecting Chicago consumers that may not be reported on the City level. With access to increased consumer protection data BACP can proactively protect consumers and conduct more effective and targeted prosecutions of bad business practices.

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Consumer Sentinel is the unique investigative cyber tool that provides members of the Consumer Sentinel Network with access to millions of consumer complaints. Consumer Sentinel includes complaints about:

- Identity Theft
- Do-Not-Call Registry violations
- Computers, the Internet, and Online Auctions
- Telemarketing Scams
- Advance-fee Loans and Credit Scams
- Immigration Services
- Sweepstakes, Lotteries, and Prizes
- Business Opportunities and Work-at-Home Schemes
- Health and Weight Loss Products
- Debt Collection, Credit Reports, and Financial Matters

Consumer Sentinel is based on the premise that sharing information can make law enforcement even more effective. To that end, the Consumer Sentinel Network provides law enforcement members with access to complaints provided directly to the Federal Trade Commission by consumers, as well as providing members with access to complaints shared by [data contributors](#).

Consumer Sentinel is free and available to any federal, state or local law enforcement agency. In addition, Consumer Sentinel information is also available to select international law enforcement authorities. Find out more about becoming a Sentinel member.

How Does My Law Enforcement Agency Become A Consumer Sentinel Member?

During the registration process, your application must be completed for your organization or subgroup in a single session. Please review the [checklist](#) and ensure you have all the required materials before beginning the application process.