



Crime Watch

Work-At-Home Scams Just Don't Pay

(NAPS)—Experts say offers to work at home that seem too good to be true probably are.

According to the 2000 Census, over four million people in the U.S. work at home every day and the numbers are increasing.

From stay-at-home moms to college students to retirees, work-at-home opportunities are an attractive option. So it should come as no surprise that scams offering work-at-home jobs that pay “big financial rewards” have also grown in popularity.

Proceed with caution, warn U.S. Postal Inspectors, because many “offers” don't deliver on their promises. Most “opportunities” will not guarantee regular salaried employment and many omit the fact you may have to work many hours without pay.

Others require you to spend your own money for products or instructions before revealing how a plan works. And the “work” promised often continues the fraud by getting other victims involved.

Some of the classic work-at-home scams include:

- envelope stuffing;
- product assembly/craft work;
- medical billing; and,
- reshipping.

Reshipping—one of the newer scams—involves receiving items ordered by the scam artist often using stolen credit card information. The scam victim then repackages the merchandise for shipment to a foreign country.

Whether they're old or new, these scams have cost their vic-



Although there are genuine jobs working at home, many “offers” don't deliver on their promises.

tims thousands of dollars. Check out any offer before responding. Legitimate companies should provide information in writing about the program they are offering.

Postal Inspectors offer these protection tips:

- Don't give out personal information to a person or company you don't know.
- Be suspicious of any offer that doesn't pay a regular salary or involves working for an overseas company.
- Check out the company with the FTC, Better Business Bureau, or state Attorney General.

There is no easy way to wealth. Operating a home-based business is just like any other business—it requires hard work, skill, good products or services, and it takes time to make a profit.

For more information on work-at-home scams or to order a free DVD, visit the Web site at www.usps.com/postalinspectors.