

May 29, 2026

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## Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

### Attorney General James Uthmeier Returns \$229,000 to Victims of Cryptocurrency Scams

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.**—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced that the Office of Statewide Prosecution's Cyber Fraud Enforcement Unit (CFEU) recovered and returned \$229,096 in cryptocurrency forfeitures to victims of cyber scams over the past week.

"Cyber criminals are often targeting our most vulnerable populations, including seniors," **said Attorney General James Uthmeier.** "My Cyber Fraud Enforcement Unit is setting the standard for cryptocurrency fraud recovery nationwide. We continue to partner with local, state, and federal law enforcement partners to maximize all available resources, recover stolen funds, and return as much as possible to the victims."

#### **Sarasota County Case - \$139,400 in Restitution**

This investigation began in October 2025 when the victim, a 69-year-old male, reported to the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office that he had been the victim of a cryptocurrency scam. By phone, the scammer convinced the victim that he was a knowledgeable cryptocurrency investment advisor.

The scammer persuaded the victim to send over \$970,000 to a fake investment app that falsely displayed gains of over \$3.2 million. When the victim attempted to withdraw funds and was told he had to invest an additional \$325,000 to do so, he contacted law enforcement.

CFEU recovered and returned \$139,400 to the victim.

#### **St. Johns County Case - \$17,376**

This investigation began in July 2025, when the victim, a 77-year-old female, reported to the St. Johns Sheriff's Office that she had been the victim of a cryptocurrency scam. Scammers impersonating PayPal convinced the victim that her bank account had been compromised and that she needed to transfer all funds to Bitcoin.

The scammer persuaded the victim to make 17 transactions totaling \$165,000, transferring funds to "Bitcoin machines" over 4 months. When the scammer ended communications and disconnected his phone number, the victim reported the crime.

CFEU recovered and returned \$17,376 to the victim.

#### **St. Johns County Case - \$45,156 in Restitution**

This investigation began in December 2024 when the victim reported to the St. Johns County

Sheriff's Office that she had been the victim of a cryptocurrency scam. The victim reported that she had met the scammer on the dating app "Coffee Meets Bagel," and their conversation quickly moved to WhatsApp. The scammer, who falsely claimed to work at Goldman Sachs, led the victim to believe that he could advise her on successful cryptocurrency investments.

After initially convincing the victim to invest \$1,000 through a fraudulent cryptocurrency platform, the scammer manipulated her into taking out loans and borrowing money from family members to invest additional funds. The fake investment platform falsely showed large profits and convinced the victim that her account balance had grown substantially. When the victim attempted to withdraw the funds, the scammer claimed she needed to pay nearly \$59,000 in taxes before the money could be released. After speaking with family members and conducting additional research, the victim realized she had been defrauded.

The victim ultimately lost more than \$108,000. CFEU recovered and returned \$45,156 to the victim.

### **Marion County Case - \$27,162**

This investigation began in November 2024 when the victim, a 77-year-old male, reported the scam to the Marion County Sheriff's Office. The victim met a female scammer on Facebook, and their conversation quickly moved to WhatsApp.

Over the course of approximately one year, the scammer manipulated the victim into investing over \$160,000 into a fraudulent cryptocurrency platform. When the victim attempted to withdraw funds, he was told he would need to pay additional fees, at which point he reported the crime.

Through blockchain tracing, the Marion County Sheriff's Office recovered some of the funds. CFEU was able to guide the funds through legal processes and return them to the victim in the amount of \$27,162.

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