

Construction Contractors

Human Services Spotlight Series #8

In April of 2017, a homeowner in Pinellas County entered into a written agreement with an individual advertising themselves to be a construction contractor to build an additional room and remodel her residence for a total of \$31,000. She paid the individual over \$26,000, but the work he performed did not pass inspections, the city fined the homeowner, and there were serious workmanship issues with the work performed. The work was done so poorly, that it cost the homeowner an additional \$35,000 to fix the damages and complete the work.

In July of 2017, another homeowner in Pinellas County reached out to the same individual after being referred to him by a neighbor to complete home repairs. The homeowner entered into a written contract to rebuild her decks, replace siding, install new doors, retrim windows, and install fencing and provided the contractor with over \$14,000. After the work had already begun and payments were made, the homeowner realized the work was not being done properly and the contractor became very unprofessional, constantly demanding more money.

After realizing they had been taken advantage of, both homeowners reported the incidents to Pinellas County Consumer Protection with the hope of someday seeing some of their money returned and ensuring the contractor did not do this to someone else. The scope of work the contractor was contracting for and performing would have required a contractor license which he did not have. Pinellas County Consumer Protection works to conduct

criminal investigations into unlicensed contractors who have scammed, defrauded, or harmed homeowners in Pinellas County so that victims can be made whole and unlicensed contractors are held accountable for their illegal actions. Due to the diligent and thorough criminal investigation conducted by Pinellas County Consumer Protection, multiple criminal charges were filed by the State Attorney's Office, and restitution was ordered in the amount each homeowner paid the contractor.

Protect

Regulate

Investigate

Educate

Sometimes it is hard to spot fraud when it is happening. Scams can be large or small, sophisticated or simple, but the people behind them have two things in common: They want to steal your money and avoid being caught. The reality is anyone could fall victim to a scam, no matter your age, intellect or economic status. Most consumer transactions are completed satisfactorily. On occasion, however, any consumer could experience unresolved problems such as defective products, erroneous bills or non-delivery of goods or services.

When you are confronted with such a situation, the dedicated employees of Pinellas County Consumer Protection are here to assist you. Investigators are available to speak with you regarding a consumer transaction at (727) 464-6200.

www.consumer@pinellascounty.org



Doing Things For You!

For more information, visit us
online at
www.pinellascounty.org