

Raoul Announces Webinar Series to Help Parents, Caregivers Keep Children Safe from Online Predators; Unveils Mobile Unit to Support Child Pornography

October 5 2021 8:58 AM



CHICAGO – Attorney General Kwame Raoul, along with Acting U.S. Attorney for the Central District of Illinois Douglas J. Quivey, Illinois State Police Director Brendan Kelly and Sangamon County State’s Attorney Dan Wright, today announced initiatives the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force is utilizing to protect children from online predators.

As part of his ongoing efforts to investigate and prosecute cases of child pornography and exploitation, Attorney General Raoul announced the ICAC Task Force, managed by the Attorney General’s office, will offer a series of webinars to help families ensure children are safe online. In addition, Raoul unveiled a new mobile forensic unit that will provide critical support to law enforcement conducting child pornography investigations in communities throughout the state.

“Reports of child pornography and child exploitation have increased over the last several years, and that trend does not show signs of stopping. Protecting children and helping them foster healthy interactions online requires a collaboration involving parents and guardians, educators, and law enforcement,” Raoul said. “My Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force allows local, state, and federal law enforcement to share resources to identify and apprehend offenders who prey upon children through apps, social media, and the internet. I am encouraging families and educators to also take an active role in digital safety, and my office’s webinars will teach them about the apps their children might be using and how to identify the signs that a child has been victimized.”

Attorney General Raoul’s office, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, runs the [ICAC Task Force](#) that investigates child sexual exploitation crimes, trains law enforcement agencies, and provides online safety education to children and adults. The task force receives CyberTips, or online reports of child pornography, from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Over the last several years, CyberTipline reports have steadily increased; in fact, Raoul’s office projects that reports to the ICAC during 2021 will increase by 23% over 2020. According to the Attorney General’s office, the trend is in part due to increased reporting and awareness by social media platforms and apps.

Attorney General Raoul is encouraging parents, guardians, and educators to participate in a series of free online trainings hosted by the Attorney General’s office that will provide information to help children develop healthy internet habits. The online safety webinars will teach parents about the apps children and teens may be using; how to help youth navigate aggressive online behavior, both as a victim and perpetrator; how to help children foster healthy online interactions; and how to identify signs that a child or

student may have been a victim of online child solicitation. The series will begin on Oct. 7, and webinars will take place at 6:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. Interested parties should email karilyn.orr@ilag.gov to register.

While parental engagement is one important tool to combat reports of increasing online child exploitation, Attorney General Raoul highlighted another resource his office is deploying throughout the state to support local law enforcement investigations into child pornography and exploitation. Raoul's ICAC Task Force is utilizing a mobile forensic unit that allows task force investigators executing child pornography search warrants to process digital evidence in the field. The mobile unit, which was funded using federal ICAC grant money, allows for three computer evidence recovery technicians to process digital evidence such as cell phones, hard drives, and laptops. The unit provides storage, Wi-Fi, and printing capabilities, and serves as a location where investigators and attorneys can confer onsite. Since acquiring the mobile forensic unit in September, the Attorney General's ICAC Task Force has partnered with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to conduct investigations in Livingston County, the Metro East, and Winnebago County, which resulted in suspects – in one case, a Rockford police detective – being charged with child pornography offenses.

Illinois' ICAC Task Force is one of 61 ICAC Task Forces throughout the country and is comprised of a network of more than 225 local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, and the task force covers 101 of Illinois' 102 counties. Since 2019, the Attorney General's ICAC Task Force has received more than 13,353 cyber tips and has been involved in more than 150 arrests of sexual predators. The task force also has provided internet safety training and education to more than 5,000 parents, teachers, and students.

To report suspected online child sexual exploitation, please contact local law enforcement or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children CyberTipline at 1-800-THE-LOST. To schedule a live webinar session, please email karilyn.orr@ilag.gov.