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San Francisco Police Department partners with Self-Help for the Elderly, East West Bank to make banking safer for seniors 21-214

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Reduced money order fees for East West Bank account holders can help seniors avoid carrying large amounts of cash to obtain lower-cost money orders elsewhere

The San Francisco Police Department today announced a new public safety strategy in partnership with Self-Help for the Elderly and East West Bank to reduce money order fees for senior account holders aged 62 and over, thereby eliminating high-risk incentives for seniors to carry large amounts of cash for lower-cost money orders sold elsewhere.

East West Bank will now offer discounted rates for bank-issued money orders at all their branches, as part of an effort to keep seniors safe. Eligible senior account holders will now pay only \$1.75 to purchase money orders.

The brainchild of SFPD Captain Julian Ng, who commands the Central District police district that includes Chinatown and North Beach, the idea emerged after recent

incidents in which seniors of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) descent were robbed of cash withdrawn from their bank accounts while on their way to purchase money orders to make rental payments.

“Throughout the pandemic, we’ve seen a number of unacceptable incidents against seniors in our community, and it’s important that we come together to keep all of our residents safe,” said **Mayor London Breed**. “I am grateful for this partnership between East West Bank, Self Help for the Elderly, and the San Francisco Police Department to help ensure that our seniors are not targeted and can feel safe in their neighborhoods.”

“This solution aims to avoid crimes that can doubly victimize seniors, who are first robbed in sometimes violent encounters and then left to face possible eviction for nonpayment for rent,” said **SFPD Captain Julian Ng**. “The idea we proposed reflects our department’s commitment to community policing — seeking partnerships and creative approaches wherever we can to keep our residents and our neighborhoods safe. I’m grateful to Self-Help for the Elderly for working with us to approach financial institutions with the idea, and especially to East West Bank for being the first financial institution in San Francisco to adopt it. We hope other banks will follow the lead of East West Bank to help keep more of our seniors safe.”

“We care about the safety of the seniors in the communities we serve, many of whom are also longtime East West Bank customers,” said **Manni Liu, Senior Vice President and Manager of Customer Communications at East West Bank**. “Through our collaboration with Self-Help for the Elderly and SFPD, we developed a solution to help keep seniors out of harm’s way and have implemented this discounted rate for money orders at all our branches, not just the ones in San Francisco.”

“Since the start of the pandemic, Self-Help has been working with partners like SFPD and East West Bank to identify more ways to protect our AAPI seniors in San Francisco,” said Anni Chung, President, and CEO of Self-Help for the Elderly. “For seniors who are on fixed incomes and don’t write checks, having access to lower-cost money orders will reduce their need to carry around lots of cash. That, in addition to programs like our escort services for seniors, will hopefully provide seniors with options to help keep themselves safe.”

During the holiday season, SFPD also urges seniors to take safety precautions and remain vigilant while out in public. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been

an alarming increase in xenophobia and bigotry against those of AAPI descent. According to [Stop AAPI Hate](#), a total of 10,370 hate incidents against AAPIs have been reported throughout the country as of September 30, 2021, with 31.2 percent occurring on public streets and sidewalks and 16.1 percent ending in physical assault. AAPI seniors make up 7.1 percent of all total incidents.

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