Federal Trade Commission Webinar





Fighting Consumer Fraud & Identity Theft in North Dakota

August 2, 2018

TO HEAR THE WEBINAR CALL 1-800-260-0718
Access Code: 451561

Welcome!

Presenters:

- Joannie Wei, FTC Midwest Regional Office
- Parrell Grossman, North Dakota Office of the Attorney General
- Richard LeMay, Legal Services of North Dakota
- Susan Adams Loyd, Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota
- Gloria Baca, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- Patti Poss & Drew Johnson, FTC

Overview

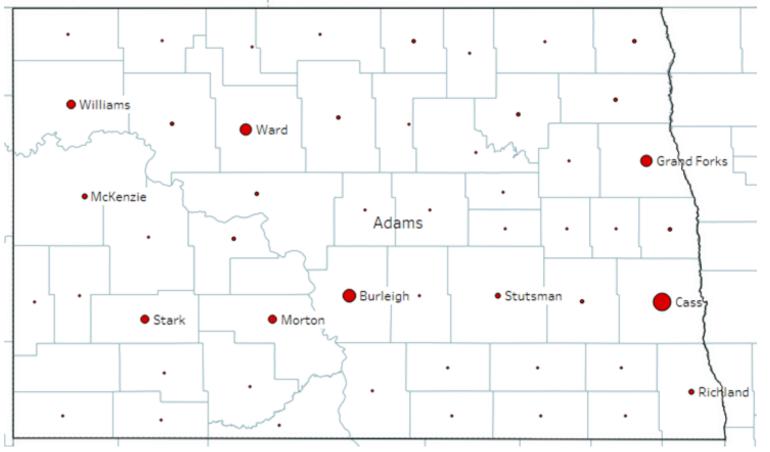
- The North Dakota landscape
- The latest scams
- Identity theft
- Working together to fight fraud and identity theft

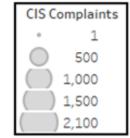
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Fraud & Identity Theft Reports in North Dakota for 2017







North Dakota Top Reports - 2017

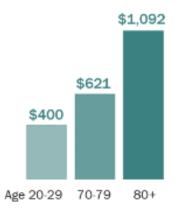
1. Imposter Scams	370	6. Banks and Lenders	140
2. Prizes, Sweepstakes and Lotteries	290	7. Credit Bureaus, Information Furnishers and Report Users	101
3. Shop-at-Home and Catalog Sales	167	8. Auto-Related Complaints	96
4. Debt Collection	164	9. Credit Cards	60
5. Telephone and Mobile Services	157	10. Health Care	48

Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2017

Younger people reported losing money to fraud more often than older people.



But when people aged 70+ had a loss, the median loss was much higher.



For Consumers Who Have Been Scammed:

- Contact the payment provider
 - Tell them the transaction was fraudulent
 - Ask for the money back

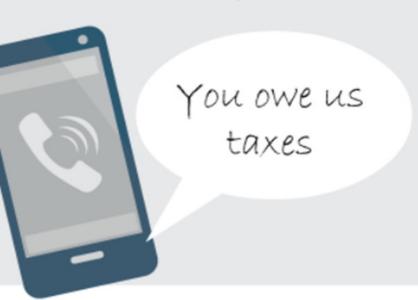
- Report the fraud to law enforcement:
 - FTC.gov/complaint or FTC.gov/queja

THE LATEST SCAMS

IRS IMPOSTER SCAMS

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the government agency that collects federal taxes.

Scammers pretend to be IRS officials to get you to send them money.





IRS Imposters

Tips for Consumers:

- Never send money to anyone who asks
- Requests to wire money or send prepaid cards or gift cards are always scams
- The IRS will never threaten to arrest or deport

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0519-irs-imposter-scams-infographic

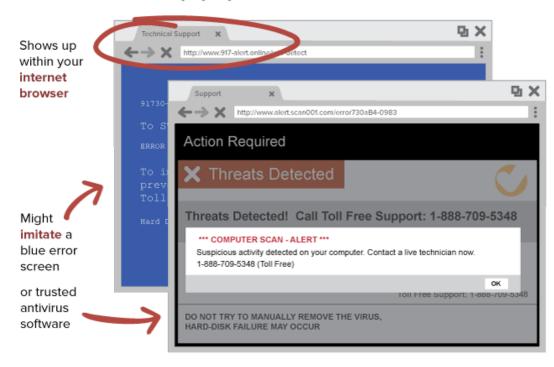
IRS Imposters: Twists

- Private debt collection for old IRS debts
- Get a letter first with name of debt collector & authentication number
- Always pay the IRS directly
- www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/04/irs-now-using-privatedebt-collectors
- Scammers make IRS deposits, then demand the money
- Follow the IRS's instructions to return money
 www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2018/03/watch-out-these-new-tax-scams

HOW TO SPOT A

TECH SUPPORT SCAM

It often starts with a pop-up . . .



CALL	NOW	OR ELSE
Wants you to call a toll-free number	Urges you to call immediately	Threatens that you may lose personal data if you don't call

Tech Support Scams

Tips for Consumers:

- Hang up on callers who say you have a computer problem
- Ignore pop-ups that say to call tech support
- Never share passwords or give remote access
- Questions? Call the legitimate company before you do anything

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0346-tech-support-scams

Sweepstakes & Grant Scams



ANITA

Substantive information contained herein for a Major Cash Prize. Please respond immediately!

CASH CLAIM VERIFICATION LETTER MESSAGE: JULY 15, 2014

Dear ANTA

Pursuant to the headline above and through which we are now contacting you via this dated correspondence, please understand trust this is NOT a preliminary or qualification letter of cash prize status; YOU HAVE WON A CASH PRIZE:

Please be assured of the accurateness of this documentation.

Your name was identified among a tiny percentage of ALL eligible toshiduals who could have received this notice. The tact that you have non a cash prize must be thinking and somewhat overwhelming - we ask that you need carefully. Do not skip ahead, Your response to its tester is MANDATORY to claim the cash prize you have been selected to receive.

To initiate issuance of your Prize Check, you must RETURN THE ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENT before the deading date specified on the enclosed according to the rules and terms hardin. Failure to do so will invalidable the prize confirmation and result in forfeiture of the Chack exercing dispatch to you directly by secured mail.

We would like to proceed with resolution of your cash prize quickly!

- [21] Your cash prize will be drawn and paid in single lump sum {Section A / page2}.
- [72] Swiepstakes report documentation for the total aggregate funds amount of \$1,943,543.54 as noted above is awaiting your raphy with proceeding see (Section 3 / page 2) for outright access to the amount fisted above. [This is not a mixtake.]

The total amount, \$1,943,543.54, being awarded by independent prize sponsors is continued and will be resolved at final proceedings pending. We are delighted to provide notification of the vioners total antitionent amount, is writing, and to issue upon your reply and payment of the processing fee, full report documents and claim procedures for the maximum aggregate funds as filed by this recorded letter and validated at \$1,948,543,54.

Please take a moment to read and complete the accompanying paperwork carefully. We are prepared to process and make delivery of the

Sweepstakes Scams

- Never pay to collect a so-called prize or grant
- Legit sweepstakes don't make you pay a fee
- www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0199-prize-scams

Grant Scams

- No surprise government grants
- No charge for a government grant or for a list of government grants-making agencies
- Grants.gov one place to apply
- www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0113-governmentgrant-scams

Family Emergency Scams



Family Emergency Scams

Tips for Consumers:

- SLOW DOWN
- Get off the phone and check with a family member or friend. (Even if they say it's a secret)
- Do not wire money or buy a prepaid card or a gift card and give someone the card's numbers
- www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0204-familyemergency-scams

Charity Scams



Operation

Donate with **Honor**

Which veterans group would you donate to?

American Disabled Veterans Foundation

National Vietnam Veterans Foundation

Healing American Heroes, Inc.

Veterans Fighting Breast Cancer

Military Families of America

VietNow National Headquarters, Inc.

Foundation for American Veterans, Inc.

Healing Heroes Network

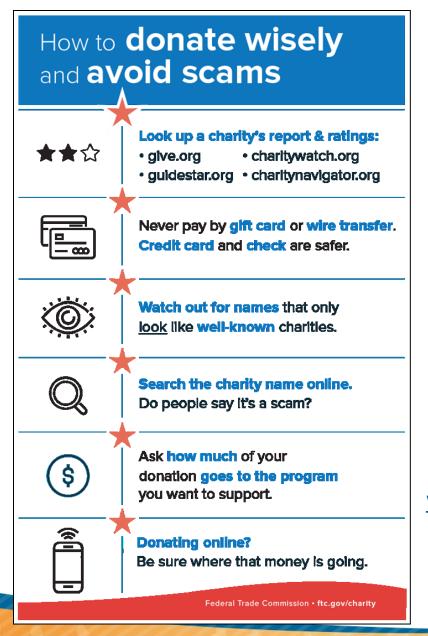
Help the Vets, Inc.

They have all been sued for lying to donors.

Don't depend on the name.

Do your research.

Then donate.



Charity Scams

Other tips at:

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0074giving-charity

Unwanted Calls

 Telemarketing robocalls are more than just annoying: they are illegal

- The FTC has sued operations selling:
 - medical alert and home security systems
 - interest rate reduction services
 - auto warranties
 - free vacations

Unwanted Calls

- Report them:
 - DoNotCall.gov or 1-888-382-1222
- FTC shares information about reported unwanted calls with phone companies
 - Helps them block numbers
- Don't trust caller ID: easy to spoof
- Just hang up! It's ok to be rude
- Call-blocking technology
 - www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0548-blockingunwanted-calls

How to Stop Unwanted Calls

www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/how-stop-unwanted-calls





Debt Collection and Debt Scams

Fake Debt Collection Scams

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0258-fake-debt-collectors

Mortgage Relief & Foreclosure Rescue Scams

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0100-mortgage-relief-scams

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0193-facing-foreclosure

Student Loan Debt Scams

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/1028-student-loans www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa

Opportunity Scams

- Investments
- Job scams
- Business opportunities



- BE YOUR OWN BOSS
- NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED
- EARN THOUSANDS MONTHLY
- ✓ BECOME PART OF A WINNING TEAM
- ✓ WORK FROM ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

CALL TODAY AND START

Small Business Scams

- Unordered supplies
- Business directory listings
- Domain name/website registrations
- Payment processing
- Charity scams

www.FTC.gov/SmallBusiness



IDENTITY THEFT

Someone uses your personal information to

- Open accounts
- File taxes
- Buy things



Examples of Misuse

- Open Credit Cards
- Open Utility Accounts
- Apply for a Tax Refund
- Get a Loan
- Apply for Employment
- Get Medical Care



Impact on Victims

- Denial of credit/loans
- Denial of public benefits
- Denial of medical care
- Denial/loss of employment
- Harassment by debt collectors
- Legal issues/arrest
- Stress/anxiety
- Recovery time/expense





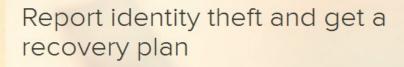
Reduce the Risk

- Review your mail, especially financial statements
- Check your credit report every year:
 - Free report from <u>AnnualCreditReport.com</u>
- Protect your Social Security and Medicare numbers
- Store documents securely and shred before discarding
- File your taxes as early as you can

Equifax Data Breach

- Check if you're affected: <u>equifaxsecurity2017.com</u>
- What can you do?
 - Monitor your accounts
 - Fraud alert or credit freeze
 - File taxes early
- Visit <u>ftc.gov/equifax</u>





Get Started ->

or browse recovery steps

IdentityTheft.gov can help you report and recover from identity theft.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:











Tell us what happened.

We'll ask some questions about your situation. Tell us as much as you can.

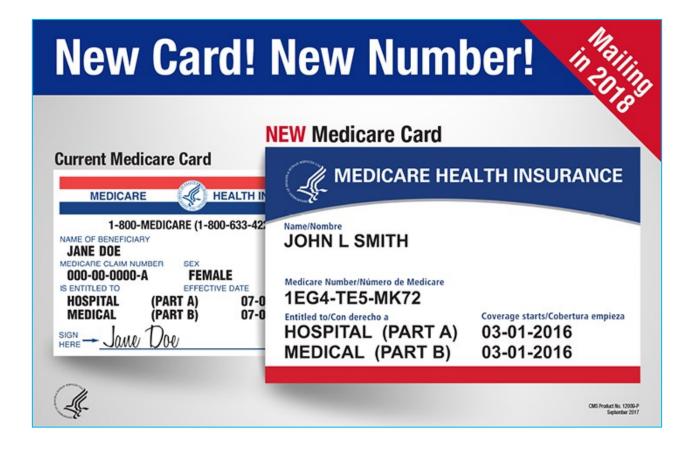
Get a recovery plan.

We'll use that info to create a personal recovery plan.

Put your plan into action.

If you create an account, we'll walk you through each recovery step, update your plan as needed, track your progress, and pre-fill forms and letters for you.

New Medicare Cards Starting In April 2018



New Medicare Cards – Stay Connected

- Find more technical information, detailed updates, training opportunities, and materials to share on the web:
 - CMS.gov/newcard
- Comments and questions are always welcome! Send to: NewMedicareCardSSNRemoval@cms.hhs.gov
 - Information for people with Medicare:
 - Medicare.gov/newcard

Report Fraud to the FTC



FTC.gov/complaint or FTC.gov/queja
1-877-FTC-HELP

North Dakota Attorney General Contact Information

Consumer Protection & Antitrust Division

1050 East Interstate Avenue, Suite 200

Bismarck, ND 58503-5574

Toll Free Number 1-800-472-2600

701-328-3404

Fax-701-328-5568

E-Mail: CPAT@nd.gov

WEBSITE: attorneygeneral.nd.gov

Report Fraud to the Attorney General

- In addition to reporting fraud to the Federal Trade Commission, report fraud to the North Dakota Attorney General
- Also, file complaints with the Consumer Protection Division for mediation or investigation
- Check on a business's complaint history with the Attorney General

Consumer Protection Division Staff

- Director
- Two Assistant Attorneys General
- Four Investigators (including two licensed peace officers)
- Two administrative assistants

Areas of Enforcement

 Protect North Dakota consumers from misleading, deceptive, fraudulent and unfair trade practices in connection with the sale or advertisement of goods or services by enforcing the state's antitrust, consumer fraud (including, among others, false advertising, unfair trade practices, home solicitation sales, pyramid, contest prize notices), do-not-call, consumer credit counseling services, transient merchant, charitable solicitations, nonprofit corporation, data security, privacy, and nonprofit corporation laws.

Other Activities

- Complaint Data Base-maintain data base of all consumer complaints
- Mediation-Mediate consumer complaints between consumers and businesses
- Initiate investigations and pursue legal actions for violations of laws enforced by the division
- Educate consumers and law enforcement personnel on consumer fraud prevention and enforcement
- Coordinate investigations and legal actions with local, state and federal law enforcement

Top Ten North Dakota Complaints January 1, 2017-July 31, 2018

- 1. Telemarketing / Do Not Call
- 2. Imposter Scams
- 3. Contractor/Home Improvement
- 4. Debt Adjustment-Settlement-Credit Counseling-Debt Collection
- 5. Mail Order
- 6. Automobiles (Advertising, repairs warranty problems)
- 7. Identity Theft
- 8. Medical
- 9. Services (credit card processing/home security)
- 10. Retail

Imposter Scams-ND's Most Serious Problem

Some additional Imposter Scam comments

- Scammer pretends to be someone you trust to send you money
- Lottery Sweepstakes—Family Emergency—Romance— Computer Technician—Free Government Grants--IRS
- WITH ALL OF YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE HAPPENING TO YOU NOW, HERE ARE SOME THINGS DEFINITELY NOT HAPPENING TO YOU...
- 2017--123 victim reports with total losses of \$1.8M
- 2018-January 1 to date—80 victims with total losses of \$2.2M
- May just be tip of the iceberg--many of the imposter scam victims do not report to the Attorney General or report only to local law enforcement, etc.

Do Not Call in North Dakota

- Unwanted telephone calls continue to be a serious problem in North Dakota and enforcement of illegal robo-calls is a concern, although very problematic
- The calls originate from spoofed (faked) numbers and impossible to trace the origins
- These calls are solicitations for lowering credit card interest rates, automobile warranty, health related, student loan debt, and general scams including IRS, computer technician, grants, etc.
- Call recipients cannot rely on the telephone numbers appearing on the caller ID, and can be easily manipulated.
- FTC will be addressing some of the call blocking technology in this presentation
- Contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division for more information about this issue.

Office of the North Dakota Attorney General

STATISTICS-July 1, 2015-June 30, 2017

- Opened 2,590 complaints and investigations
- Closed 2,557 complaints and investigations
- Conducted 224 consumer fraud investigations
- \$1.3M in refunds to consumers through complaints and legal actions
- 46 Contractor/Construction Fraud Legal Actions
- 205 do not call complaints, including robo-calls, resulting in 36 legal actions
- Processed 184 Identity Theft Affidavits in Attorney General's ID Theft Clearinghouse

What to Do! (Fraud Prevention)

- Check it out
- Don't' be in a hurry
- Talk about it—especially if they tell you NOT to tell...
- Report it to the Attorney General or local law enforcement
- Trust your gut. If it doesn't seem right, then don't do it!
- Educate others—young and old.
- It can happen to anyone, so never say it can't happen to you.
- If it sounds too good to be true...it is!



LEGAL SERVICES

of North Dakota

Legal Services of North Dakota

- Central Intake: 1-800-634-5263 Mondays, through Thursdays from 9am – 3pm
- Senior Hotline: 1-866-621-9886 Monday through Friday from 8am – 5pm (must be 60 or older)
- www.legalassist.org: Apply online 24/7





Legal Services of North Dakota

- Bismarck Law Office
 418 E Broadway #7
 Bismarck, North Dakota 58501
- Fargo Law Office

 112 N University Suite 220
 PO Box 1327
 Fargo, North Dakota 58107
- Grand Forks Office
 UND School of Law Suite 1
 215 Centennial Drive Stop 9003
 Grand Forks, ND 58202-9003
- Minot Law Office/Central Intake
 Unit
 20 1st St SW Suite 201

Minot, North Dakota 58701

- Belcourt OfficeBIA Road 7 Bldg 85PO Box 1365
- New Town Office
 345 Main St
 PO Box 217
 New Town, North Dakota 58763

Belcourt, North Dakota 58316

Administrative Office
 418 E Broadway #7
 Bismarck, North Dakota 58501



Better Business Bureau

Vision

• An ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other.

Mission

BBB's mission is to be the leader in advancing marketplace trust. We do this by:

- Setting standards for marketplace trust
- Encouraging and supporting best practices by engaging with and educating consumers and businesses
- Celebrating marketplace role models
- Calling out and addressing substandard marketplace behavior
- Creating a community of trustworthy businesses and charities



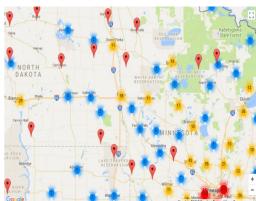
Fighting Consumer Fraud with Scam Tracker

BBB Scam Tracker

bbb.org/scamtracker/us

- Invaluable tool for consumers, law enforcement, media and consumer advocates
- Tracks pulse of the marketplace
- More than 115,000 nationally and 2,300 locally scam reported
- Allows people the ability to see where scams are happening locally and nationally and the ability to search by keyword or geographical region
- These reports are compiled and shared with law enforcement
- Help us help others!





Top Scams as reported to BBB's Scam Tracker

Top 10 scams for 2017 in North Dakota:

- Phishing
- Online purchases
- Travel/vacation offers
- Tech support schemes
- Suspect debt collect calls
- Unwanted credit card offers
- Tax/IRS collection schemes
- Counterfeit products



Our data shows the percentage of those reporting who lost money to a scams fell from 18.8% in 2016 to 15.8% in 2017.

We also saw a 17% decrease in median monetary loss, down to \$228.

As of March 2018, online purchase scams are now the riskiest. The most common online scams were related to pets, clothing, cosmetics, electronics and automobiles. As of today, online purchase scams are trending #1.



The offer of free trials was a common tactic. For example, 67% of scams involving cosmetics and 60% involving nutrition products mentioned a free trial opportunity.

BBB Scam Risk Index

BBB utilizes our Scam Risk Index to determine riskiest scams based on:

- Exposure
- Susceptibility
- Monetary loss



Scam Tracker warns the consuming public of scams. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Key findings:

- Young people continue to be at a higher risk for scams
- Susceptibility decreases with age...BUT dollars lost increases when victims are older
- One of the most common tactics of scammers is impersonation, where the scammer pretends to be a legitimate business that is well known and trusted by the consumer.
- The primary means of contact is telephone, but websites are the top means of contact for scams with monetary loss.

HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER TO FIGHT FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT?

Keep up with the latest scams and share with your community

A SCAM ALERTS

what to know and do about scams in the news

- Sign up for scam alerts at <u>FTC.gov/scams</u>
- Share these alerts on your website, in your newsletter or emails, or on social media

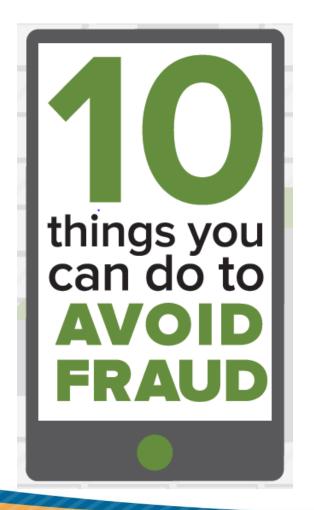
Keep up with the latest scams and share with your community

- Follow us on social media and share:
 - @FTC
 - @laFTC
 - @MilConsumer
 - Facebook.com/FederalTradeCommission
 - Facebook.com/MilitaryConsumer

Use and Share Free FTC Resources

- Consumer.FTC.gov: hundreds of fraud articles
- <u>Consumer.gov</u>: consumer protection basics, plain and simple
- FTC.gov/PassItOn: helping older adults protect others from fraud
- YouTube.com/FTCVideos: view and share videos

Use and Share Free FTC Resources <u>Bulkorder.FTC.gov</u>





Talk to Us

- Help for North Dakota's Congressional delegation
 - Derick Rill, FTC's Office of Congressional Relations
 drill@ftc.gov or 202-326-3007
- Consumer Sentinel Network
 - www.ftc.gov/enforcement/consumer-sentinel-network
 - Law enforcement groups can obtain access to complaints by contacting Nick Mastrocinque at nmastrocinque@ftc.gov

Thank you for joining us!

Speakers:

- Joannie Wei, FTC Midwest Regional Office
- Parrell Grossman, North Dakota Office of the Attorney General
- Richard LeMay, Legal Services of North Dakota
- Susan Adams Loyd, Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota
- Gloria Baca, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- Patti Poss & Drew Johnson, FTC

Thank you for joining us!

Slides available at: Consumer.gov/StateWebinars

Please spread the word to fight fraud and identity theft throughout North Dakota!

Feedback about the webinar:

everycommunity@ftc.gov

