

Oregon Department of Justice

FINANCIAL FRAUD/CONSUMER PROTECTION SECTION

SCAM ALERT

Scammers may try to steal direct payments to Americans for COVID-19 relief

As the Coronavirus takes a growing toll on peoples' pocketbooks, there are reports that the federal government will soon be sending money by check or direct deposit to qualifying Americans. The details are still being worked out, but there are some important things to keep in mind, no matter what this looks like.

"Normally I would want to wait to know what the payment plan looks like before I put out a message like this. But these aren't normal times," said Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum. "It is just inevitable that scammers are gearing up to exploit vulnerable Oregonians to try to steal their government relief checks. We can prevent this from happening by being on high alert now"



Attorney General Ellen
Rosenblum

Here are three tips to keep you safe:

1. The government will not contact you to ask you to pay anything up front in order to get this money. No fees. No charges. Nothing. Anyone who asks for fees up front is a scammer.
2. The government will not contact you to ask for your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number to confirm your identity. Anyone who asks for this type of information is a scammer.
3. Keep in mind that, as of today - March 26 - Congress has not yet approved these payments and it could easily be another week or so. They are still working out the details. Anyone who tells you they can get you the money right now is a scammer.

"Here's the bottom line," said Attorney General Rosenblum, "No matter when or how much this payment winds up being, only scammers will ask you for money in order to get it."

If you spot this type of scam, please contact the Oregon Department of Justice by phone at 503-387-8442 or online at www.oregonconsumer.gov. We're doing our best to stop scammers in their tracks, and your report will help.

Keep up to date with the latest Coronavirus-related scams at <https://www.doj.state.or.us/consumer-protection/sales-scams-fraud/price-gouging/>.