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Scam Victims can get refunds from Western Union

CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OH – The Cuyahoga County Department of Consumer Affairs is encouraging scam victims who wired money to scammers through Western Union to apply for refunds by the Feb. 12 deadline.

Western Union agreed to pay $586 million to settle charges by the Federal Trade Commission and U.S. Justice Department that the company looked the other way while scammers used its money wiring system, despite receiving hundreds of thousands of complaints about scam activity.

The Justice Department is refunding the money to fraud victims who wired money to scammers through Western Union between Jan. 1, 2004, and Jan. 19, 2017.

To receive funds, wronged consumers must submit a claim by Feb. 12.

"It's rare for scam victims to get their money back," said Sheryl Harris, Director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Consumer Affairs. **"We want to make sure that county residents who are eligible for these refunds don't miss the deadline to apply."**

Consumers who believe they are eligible for refunds should visit FTC.gov/WU for claim forms and updates. Those who have power of attorney can apply on behalf of an eligible scam victim.

Consumers can file a claim online or print out a claim form to return by mail.

Consumers can contact the claims administrator at 1-844-319-2124.

Scams that commonly relied on money wire transfers include impostor cons in which scammers posed as friends or family members in trouble, romance scams, and a wide range of scams involving fake checks, including mystery shopping, government grant and sweepstakes or lottery scams.

The Department of Consumer Affairs and its Cuyahoga County Scam Squad partners remind consumers that no legitimate government agency accepts funds through money wires or gift cards.

To report a scam, please call the Scam Squad at 216-443-SCAM (7226).

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