

Federal Trade Commission Webinar

A white silhouette of a diverse group of people, including men and women of various ages and ethnicities, some with disabilities, standing in a line.

Fighting Consumer Fraud & Identity Theft in Louisiana

December 14, 2017

TO HEAR THE WEBINAR CALL 1-800-288-8975

Welcome!

Speakers:

- **Dama Brown**, FTC Southwest Regional Office
- **Cathryn E. Gits**, Louisiana Office of the Attorney General, Public Protection Division
- **Nancy Boudreaux**, Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions
- **Patti Poss**, FTC
- **Lisa Schifferle**, FTC

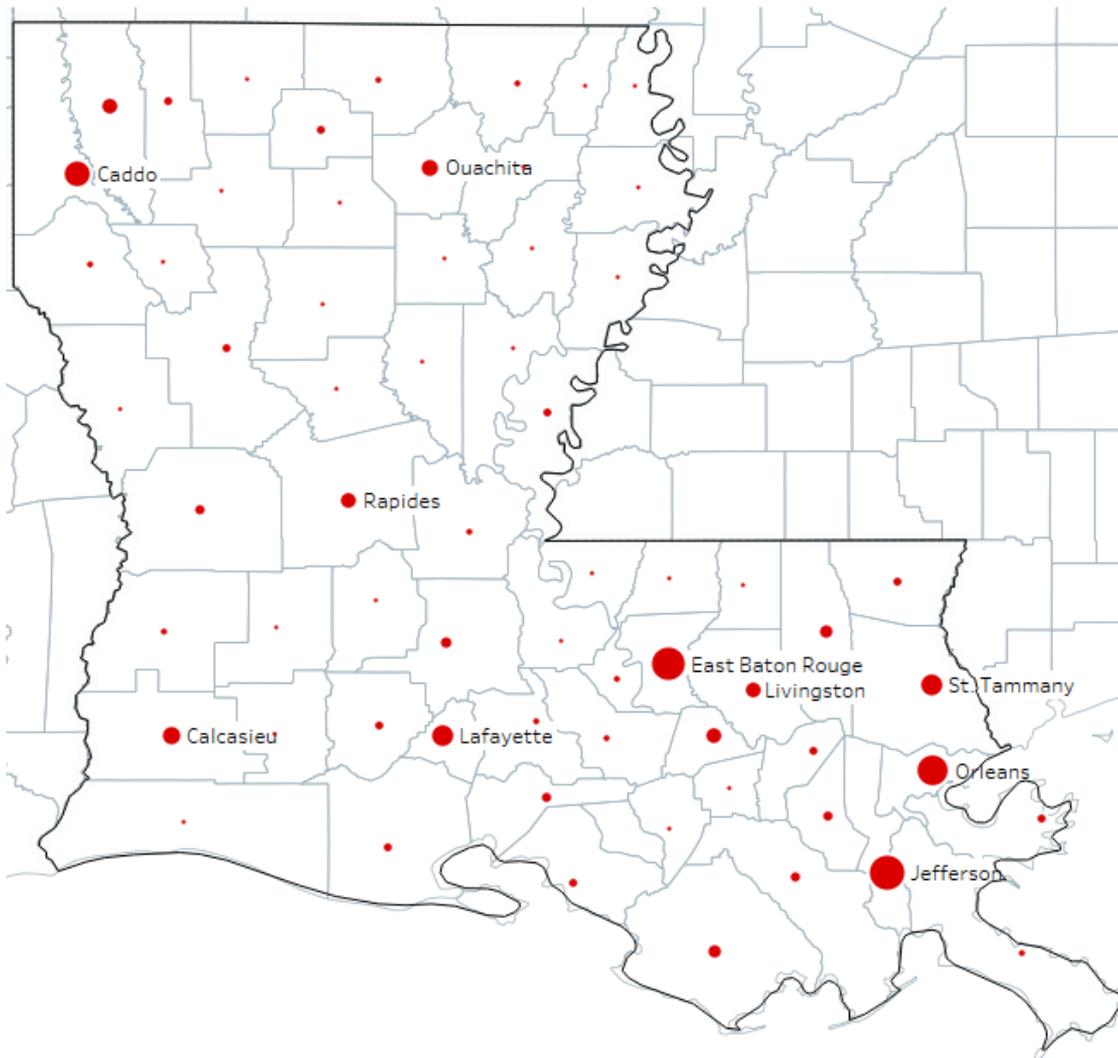
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Overview

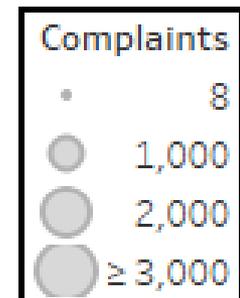
- **The Louisiana landscape**
- **The latest scams**
- **Identity theft**
- **Working together to fight fraud and identity theft**

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Fraud & Identity Theft Reports in Louisiana



Reports for 2016 by Parish



Louisiana's Top Reports - 2016

1. Debt Collection	12,154	6. Shop-at-Home and Catalog Sales	1,258
2. Telephone and Mobile Services	4,515	7. Auto-related Complaints	1,001
3. Imposter Scams	3,788	8. Credit Bureaus, Information Furnishers and Report Users	705
4. Prizes, Sweepstakes and Lotteries	2,337	9. Television and Electronic Media	620
5. Banks and Lenders	1,647	10. Credit Cards	447

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](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint) or [FTC.gov/queja](https://www.ftc.gov/queja)

THE LATEST SCAMS

IRS IMPOSTER SCAMS

on the rise

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.



You owe us
taxes



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: A New Twist

- Private debt collection for old IRS debts
- Always get a letter first
 - Name of debt collector
 - Authentication number
- Always pay the IRS, nobody else
- Questions? Call the IRS: 1-800-829-1040 or check [IRS.gov/balancedue](https://www.irs.gov/balancedue)

www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/04/irs-now-using-private-debt-collectors

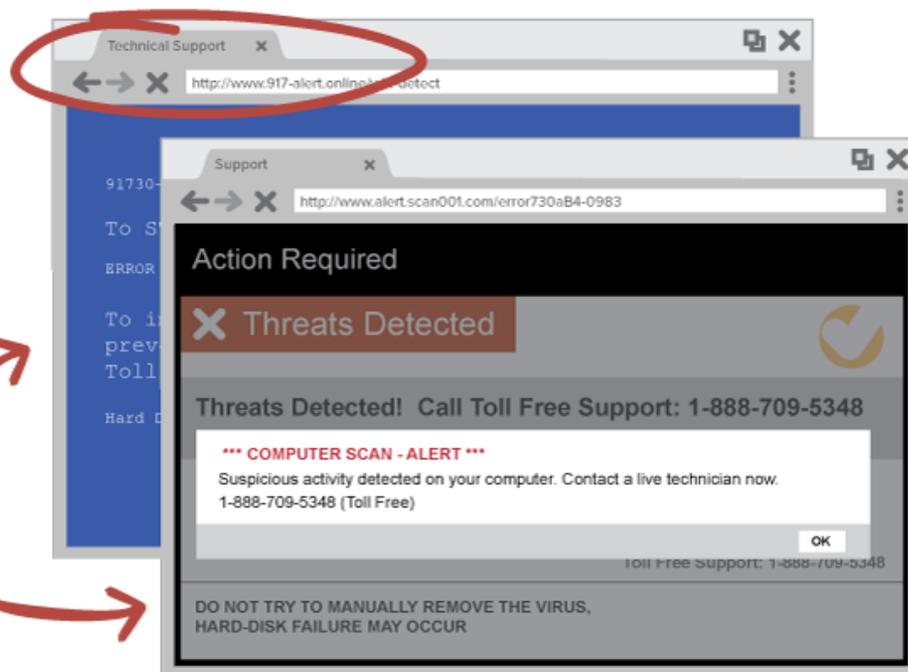
HOW TO SPOT A TECH SUPPORT SCAM

It often starts with a pop-up . . .

Shows up
within your
**internet
browser**

Might
imitate
a blue
error
screen

or trusted
antivirus
software



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 they 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

<https://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 ANITA:

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

This letter constitutes actual designation of ANITA as a cash prize winner! May we offer our warmest wishes at this moment from the management and executive offices, as well as our entire organization and staff.

Please be assured of the accuracy of this documentation!

Your name was identified among a tiny percentage of ALL eligible individuals who could have received this notice. The fact that you have won a cash prize must be thrilling and somewhat overwhelming - we ask that you read carefully. Do not skip ahead. Your response to this letter 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 deadline date specified on the enclosed according to the rules and terms herein. Failure to do so will invalidate the prize confirmation and result in forfeiture of the Check awaiting dispatch to you directly by secured mail.

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

- (#1) Your cash prize will be drawn and paid in single lump sum (Section A / page 2);
- (#2) Sweepstakes report documentation for the total aggregate funds amount of \$1,943,543.54 as noted above is awaiting your reply with proceeding fee (Section B / page 2) for outright access to the amount listed above. [This is not a mistake.]

The total amount, \$1,943,543.54, being awarded by independent prize sponsors is confirmed and will be resolved at final proceedings pending. We are delighted to provide notification of the winners total entitlement amount, in 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 \$1,943,543.54.

Please take a moment to read and complete the accompanying paperwork carefully. We are prepared to process and make delivery of the cash prize within your state upon to follow all instructions and requirements, and inspect that your name and address is correct as it

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-government-grant-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-family-emergency-scams

Charity Scams



“ . . . thank you for your kind and generous donation on behalf of the Children’s Cancer Fund of America. You’re helping these children with their hospice equipment, medical supplies, and medication . . . ”

LIES

Charity Scams

Tips for Consumers:

- “No thanks” and hang up; or “I don’t give money over the phone. If you send something in writing, I’ll consider it”
- Do some research:
 - [give.org](https://www.give.org); [charitynavigator.org](https://www.charitynavigator.org); [charitywatch.org](https://www.charitywatch.org);
[guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org)

Other tips at:

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0074-giving-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](https://www.donotcall.gov) or 1-888-382-1212
- 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-blocking-unwanted-calls

Debt Collection and Debt Scams

Fair Debt Collection Practices Act

Prohibits debt collectors from using abusive, unfair, or deceptive practices to collect.

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0149-debt-collection

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.StudentAid.gov/repay

Opportunity Scams

- Investments
- Job scams
- Business opportunities



Real People
Achieving Real Results

- ✓ **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
EARNING TOMORROW!**

Opportunity Scams

Tips for Consumers:

- Check it out
 - Research the opportunity online
 - Company name + “complaint” + “scam”
 - Talk to references, participants and experts
 - Check company’s record: state AG or BBB
 - Avoid high-pressure pitches
 - Be skeptical of glowing testimonials
- Talk to an attorney, accountant or advisor **before** acting
- www.consumer.ftc.gov/jobs

Small Business Scams

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



Small Business Scams

- Inform your staff
- Check invoices carefully
- Check out anybody asking for money
- 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 AnnualCreditReport.com
- 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: equifaxsecurity2017.com
- What can you do?
 - Monitor your accounts
 - Consider free credit monitoring
 - Fraud alert or credit freeze
 - File taxes early
- Visit www.ftc.gov/equifax-data-breach



Report identity theft and get a recovery plan

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.

Report Fraud to the FTC



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

Louisiana's Office of the Attorney General



Consumer Protection Section: Information for Consumers

www.ag.state.la.us/ConsumerSafety

Report Consumer Complaints to Louisiana's Office of the Attorney General

Call 1-800-351-4889

Consumer Dispute Form:

www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/36?catId=0

**Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Section**

P.O. Box 94005

Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9005

Fax: (225) 326-6499



Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions

Investor Education – Investment Fraud

Toll-free Hotline: 1-877-516-3653

www.ofi.la.gov/SecInvestorEd.htm

FREE Speaker to groups in Louisiana:

Nancy Boudreaux, Training Manager

Call 1-877-516-3653 or (225) 925-4677, or

Email nboudreaux@ofi.la.gov



Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions

Top 2 Sources of Investment Fraud in North America

Unregistered Investment Professionals, selling

Unregistered Securities

The investment professional AND the security should be registered with *OFI* or *FINRA BrokerCheck* to be sold in Louisiana. (Exemptions from Registrations are available)

Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions

www.ofi.la.gov/SecuritiesInvestorEd.htm

Updated monthly



Investor Education

AT NO CHARGE TO YOU!

For background checks on investment professionals registered with OFI, [click here](#)

For details on how to request a CRD Report, [click here](#)

Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions

Investor Hotline
Toll-Free 1-877-516-3653

Investor Assistance

Senior Financial Exploitation

Defrauding elderly investors of their life savings is now a multi-billion dollar problem in the United States. Our nation's elderly continue to be potential targets for financial con artists, along with others seeking to take advantage of their trust.

WISE UP, and learn about investment scams and how to protect your savings from financial elder abuse.

Free Tools & Resources

Fraud Awareness

News Releases

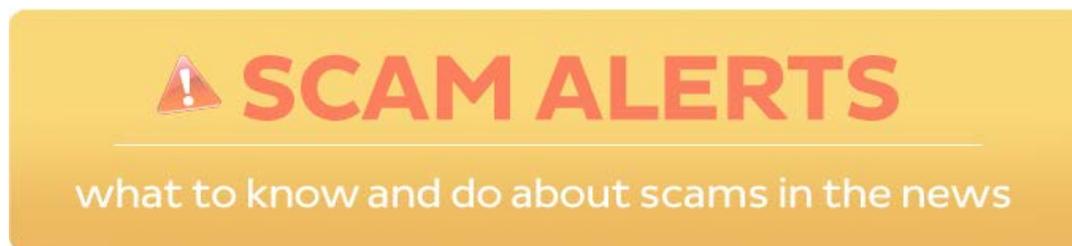
Other Resources in Louisiana

To check out or report a Louisiana business:

- Find your local Better Business Bureau at **BBB.org**
- Five BBB offices cover the state:
 - Acadiana, info@acadiana.bbb.org
 - Baton Rouge, info@batonrouge.bbb.org
 - Lake Charles, info@lakecharles.bbb.org
 - New Orleans, info@neworleans.bbb.org
 - Shreveport, andyfisher@shreveport.bbb.org

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

Keep up with the latest scams and share with your community



- Sign up for scam alerts at [FTC.gov/scams](https://www.ftc.gov/scams)
- 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

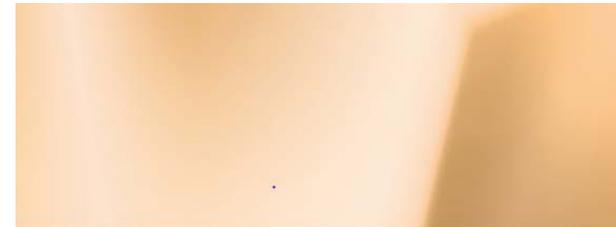
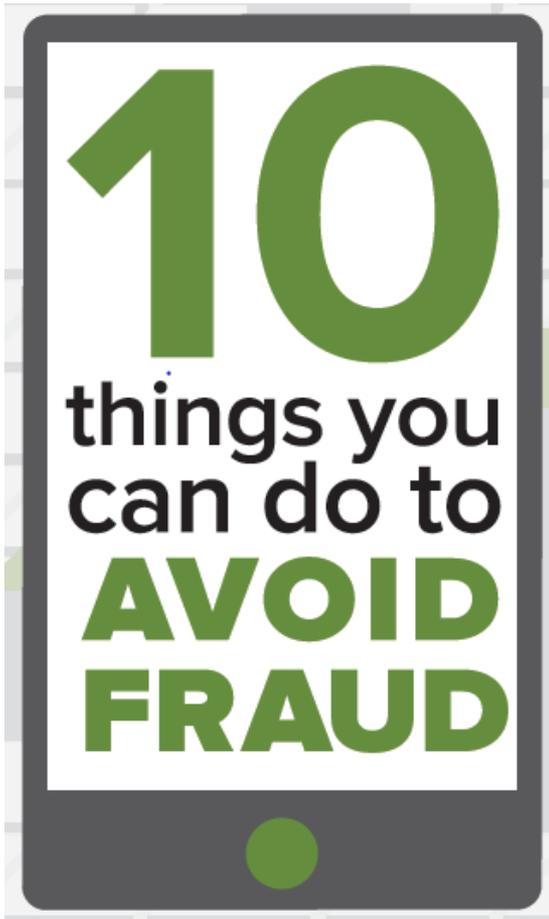
- Follow us on social media and share:
 - @FTC
 - @laFTC
 - @MilConsumer
 - Facebook.com/FederalTradeCommission
 - Facebook.com/MilitaryConsumer

Use and Share Free FTC Resources

- [Consumer.FTC.gov](https://consumer.ftc.gov): hundreds of fraud articles
- [Consumer.gov](https://consumer.gov): consumer protection basics, plain and simple
- [FTC.gov/PassItOn](https://ftc.gov/PassItOn): helping older adults protect others from fraud
- [YouTube.com/FTCVideos](https://youtube.com/FTCVideos): view and share videos

Use and Share Free FTC Resources

Bulkorder.FTC.gov



Identity Theft

What to know, What to do



Talk to Us

- **Help for Louisiana's Congressional delegation**
 - Derick Rill, FTC's Office of Congressional Relations
drill@ftc.gov or 202-326-3007
- **Holding a big event? Need a speaker?**
 - Dama Brown, Director, FTC Southwest Region, 214-979-9374
 - Louisiana's Attorney General Consumer Protection Division, 1-800-351-4889
 - Louisiana's Office of Financial Institutions, Nancy Boudreaux at 1-877-516-3653.

Thank you for joining us!

- Dama Brown: dbrown1@ftc.gov
- Cathryn Gits: GitsC@ag.louisiana.gov
- Nancy Boudreaux: nboudreaux@ofi.la.gov
- Patti Poss: pposs@ftc.gov
- Lisa Schifferle: lschifferle@ftc.gov

Slides available at: Consumer.gov/StateWebinars

*Please spread the word to fight fraud and
identity theft throughout Louisiana*

