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TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Malcolm G. Lewis
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FRAUD ADVISORY

The Tohono O'odham Police Department, Financial Crimes Division would like to alert community members to a series of scams which could, if you are not prepared, cause you to fall victim to. There are several scams operating simultaneously. The following are some examples:

- Callers will notify a resident of a past due bill or credit problem. The caller will then tell the resident the matter has been turned over to Law Enforcement authorities, a warrant has been issued, and the person will be arrested unless payment(s) are immediately made.
- Caller will notify residents that they are from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and back taxes are owed. They also threaten to seize assets, or take various steps of payments if not immediately paid.
- Callers will notify a resident they are from the IRS and are in possession of a tax refund. They will request private information from the resident to 'verify' they are the proper recipient of the refund.

Past due bills are not a Criminal Matter and Warrants will not be issued for debt collection. If you pay funds to a scammer, your true unpaid debt will remain unpaid. Ensure you only pay debts to a legitimate Debt Collection Agency.

The IRS will not call you, or email you. If they wish to contact you, you will receive an Official Letter on IRS letterhead providing contact information.

Per Capita Check/U.S. Government Stimulus Check:

Unauthorized check cashing can happen whether it is the U.S. Government stimulus check, or the Nation's Per Capita Check. There are various methods criminals use to cash a check which does not belong to them. Counterfeit checks are either created from scratch or by altering an existing check to reflect an unauthorized change. A forged check may be stolen or changed by the individual presenting it for check cashing. Forgery also includes checks written without proper authorization.

COVID 19 SCAMS:

- Do not respond to texts, emails or calls about checks from the government.
- Ignore online offers for vaccinations and home test kits. There are no products proven to treat or prevent COVID-19 at this time.
- Hang up on *robocalls*. Scammers are using illegal *robocalls* to pitch everything from low-priced health insurance to work-at-home schemes.
- Watch for emails claiming to be from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO). Use sites like [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and [usa.gov/coronavirus](https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus) to get the latest information. Do not click on links from sources you don't know.

- Check the Official web site of the Tohono O'odham Nation for further information on COVID-19 and available resources to community members at www.tonation-nsn.gov/
- Do your homework when it comes to donations. Never donate in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money to a source that you are not personally acquainted with.

Remember; never provide personal or financial data over the phone or in an email unless you are certain you know who you are speaking with.

What should you do?

Contact the Tohono O'odham Police Department at **(520) 383-3275**

This is not limited to only financial crimes, but also includes crimes against elders who may possibly be victims of financial exploitation, physically abused or know someone who is.

Report if you are a victim of a crime. Request the incident number from the Police Officer and save it for future reference. It is encouraged to review your credit report and credit history from the credit bureaus located online to make sure no accounts have been started using your personal information without your knowledge. You can request a free credit report from: annualcreditreport.com.

