



August 1998

Office for Victims of Crime

OVC Fact Sheet

Advocating for the Fair

Treatment of Crime Victims

Telemarketing Fraud Prevention, Public Awareness, and Training Activities

Everyday, thousands of Americans receive unsolicited phone calls from telemarketers selling a variety of products and services. Although the many of telemarketers represent legitimate businesses, many do not. Unscrupulous telemarketers are successful at swindling consumers out of millions of dollars. Unfortunately many criminal efforts are aimed at elderly senior citizens who do not have time to replenish their savings and who may be devastated by the financial losses.

Congress has appropriated money to implement programs designed to prevent telemarketing fraud and to improve services for elderly telemarketing fraud victims. Through these appropriated monies, OVC funded four innovative projects designed to prevent and intervene in telemarketing fraud schemes that target elderly citizens.

Elder Financial Exploitation Prevention Program

Oregon Senior and Disabled Services Division
Oregon State Department of Human Resources
500 Summer Street, NW
2nd Floor, Salem, OR 97310-1015
Contact Person: Aileen Kaye
503-945-6399 or Fax No: 503-947-5044

This project is comprised of two principal phases. One phase provides training and information for bank personnel so that they can quickly spot potential fraud, address the issue, and alert law enforcement officers. The Oregon Bankers Association, the Senior and Disabled Services Division, the U.S. Attorney, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, American Association of Retired Persons, and law enforcement have joined together to train bank

personnel in how to recognize signs of elder financial exploitation and to report suspected abuse.

The second phase creates services for elderly fraud victims. The Senior and Disabled Services Division, other State agencies, and private organizations with expertise in fighting fraud will work together to create a reverse boiler room to identify high risk seniors and target assistance directly to them using trained volunteers. The volunteers will be carefully screened, trained, and carry State identification before they are permitted to work with the seniors.

A Telemarketing Fraud Project for Latino Elderly

National Hispanic Council on Aging
2713 Ontario Road, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009
Contact Person: Marta Sotomayor, Ph.D.
202-265-1288 or Fax No. 202-745-2522

This project is designed to increase Latino elderly's awareness of telemarketing fraud through education and the coordination of prevention and intervention services. Two groups will be selected from geographical areas with large Latino populations and high numbers of immigrants who present socioeconomic characteristics that place them at high risk for telemarketing fraud. Two groups will enable comparisons and the development of models to be replicated in other settings with different Latino elderly populations. The project, at the local level, will be hosted by the National Hispanic Council on Aging network members who will provide support and ensure continuity upon completion of the project by receiving training as senior peer counselors.

Operation Fraudstop: A Partnership to Reduce Telemarketing Fraud and Assist Victims

National Sheriffs' Association
1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
Contact Person: Terri Hicks
703-836-7827 or Fax No. 703-519-8567

The National Sheriffs' Association is coordinating OPERATION FRAUDSTOP with a variety of agencies that have expertise in fighting crimes against the elderly. This is a campaign to make it difficult for swindlers to succeed with their illegal activities via the telephone and to provide education and assistance to telemarketing fraud victims, especially seniors. This program will capitalize on existing partnerships and programs such as community policing and TRIAD as well as employ resources to include the media, various publications, and private corporations such as Radio Shack and Wal*Mart. The project will be pilot-tested on both coasts. The States of Maryland, Montana, Virginia, and Washington represent the sites for the initial phase of the project, with plans to replicate the best program elements and strategies nationwide.

Telemarketing Fraud Prevention, Public Awareness, and Training Activities

Baltimore County Department of Aging
611 Central Avenue, Towson, MD 21204
Contact Person: Arnold Appel
410-887-2108 or Fax No. 410-887-2149

The Baltimore County Department of Aging will write, produce, and distribute a booklet aimed at preventing telemarketing and telephone fraud. There will be two sections, one dealing with telemarketing fraud and the other with telephone fraud (theft of service).

The booklet will be produced in print suitable for a senior audience. The Baltimore Sunday edition of *The Sunpaper* will use the booklet as an insert at their cost. The Baltimore County Department on Aging's Senior Information and Assistance Service, which reaches more than 30,000 seniors each year, also will distribute the booklet. The right to reproduce the booklet will be made available to national organizations that wish to distribute it to their members. Sponsors from the private sector will be sought and invited to distribute the booklet through their organizations as well.

For Further Information

More information about the Office for Victims of Crime is available through the following sources:

OVC 202-307-5983
OVC Web Site <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>
OVC Resource Center 800-627-6872
OVC Resource Center Web Site <http://www.ncjrs.org>

FS000214

OVC Fact Sheet
Telemarketing Fraud Prevention, Public Awareness, and Training Activities

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Office for Victims of Crime
Washington, D.C. 20531
Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

BULK RATE
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
DOJ/OVC
Permit No. G-91