

Community: U.S. Attorney's Office and FBI partner with AARP to protect Alaskans from COVID-19 fraud

Dear Don Bush,

From the U.S. Attorney's Office:

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – On Monday, May 18, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI will participate in a statewide telephone town hall, hosted by AARP, to protect Alaskans from COVID-19 fraud. Together, the two offices will share resources and take questions to prevent Alaskans from falling victim to scams and other schemes attempting to exploit the COVID-19 pandemic.

The panelists in the telephone town hall include Bryan Schroder, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Alaska; Ryan Tansey, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Alaska; and Chris Gonzalez, Special Agent with the FBI Anchorage Field Office. The discussion will focus on COVID-19 scams, fraud identification, and prevention. Event details:

- Date: Monday, May 18, 2020
- Time: 1:00 p.m. AKDT
- To participate:
 - o Register to be called at vekeo.com/aarpalaska, or
 - o Call (855) 286-0294.
 - o The event will also stream at facebook.com/aarpak.
- After the event, a recording will be available at vekeo.com/aarpalaska.

“The U.S. Attorney's Office will not tolerate any shameful exploitation of the global health pandemic, and will take swift action to bring these fraudsters to justice,” said Bryan Schroder, U.S. Attorney for the District of Alaska. “This joint effort highlights the importance of collaboration with our law enforcement partners and public service organizations, as we continue to protect Alaskans from these schemes.”

“Despite the challenging times we are all navigating, certain things remain the same, scammers are still doing everything they can to defraud people of their hard-earned money and the FBI is doing everything we can to ensure they don't succeed,” said Robert Britt, Special Agent in Charge of FBI's Anchorage Field Office. “We are proud to partner with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the AARP to bring important information to the public in our effort to prevent members of our community from falling victim to these schemes.”

“For over 60 years, AARP has promoted the health and well-being of older Americans including their financial well-being. We're pleased to be able to bring this empowering

information to Alaskans so they can take steps to protect themselves and their loved ones,” said Teresa Holt, AARP Alaska State Director. “If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.”

From Jan. 1-April 15, the Federal Trade Commission received more than 18,000 [COVID-19-related fraud](#) reports, and people reported losing \$13.44 million dollars.

Scammers have already devised numerous methods for defrauding people in connection with COVID-19. Scammers are setting up websites, contacting people by phone and email, and posting disinformation on social media platforms. In particular, U.S. Attorney Schroder and Special Agent in Charge Britt encourage Alaskans to be on the lookout for:

- Individuals and businesses selling fake cures for COVID-19 online and engaging in other forms of fraud.
- Phishing emails from entities posing as the World Health Organization or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Malicious websites and apps that appear to share Coronavirus-related information to gain and lock access to your devices until payment is received.
- Seeking donations fraudulently for illegitimate or non-existent charitable organizations.
- Medical providers obtaining patient information for COVID-19 testing and then using that information to fraudulently bill for other tests and procedures.

If you or someone you know have been the victim of COVID-19 related fraud, please report it to the Department of Justice’s National Center for Disaster Fraud by calling the National Hotline at (866) 720-5721 or by via the [NCDF Web Complaint Form](#). You can also report it to the FBI at tips.fbi.gov, or if it’s a cyber scam, you can submit your complaint to <https://www.ic3.gov>.

Unsure if something’s a scam? Alaskans can call AARP’s Fraud Watch Network toll-free, (877) 908-3360, to talk over questionable calls or emails. They can also find tip sheets and sign up for fraud alerts at the Fraud Watch Network site, aarp.org/fraud. The service is free and open to all; you don’t have to be an AARP member.

To find out more about Department of Justice resources and information, please visit: www.justice.gov/coronavirus. AARP has resources and information at aarp.org/coronavirus, including on caregiving, tax tips, resources specifically for veterans and military families, and Community Connections, where Alaskans can create mutual aid groups and sign up to receive a call from a friendly voice.



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