



Department
of Commerce

NEWS RELEASE

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OHIO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WARNS **OHIOANS OF UNCLAIMED FUNDS SCAM**

Division of Unclaimed Funds is the Only Official Authority to Receive and Safeguard Lost and Abandoned Property

The Ohio Department of Commerce is warning Ohioans about a company that is mailing postcards to Ohioans asking them to call and search their name for unclaimed funds.

The postcards have appeared in various colors including green, blue, yellow and orange. Regardless of the color, they are not being sent out by the Ohio Department of Commerce Division of Unclaimed Funds, the official state agency tasked with reuniting Ohioans with lost or forgotten money.

How the scheme works: A citizen receives the postcard instructing him/her to call a toll free telephone number. A prompt asks the caller for their Social Security Number. The recorded message then instructs the caller to search for unclaimed property at www.unclaimed.org, the official website of the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators (NAUPA), which makes the communication seem like a legitimate search for funds.

David Milby, Executive Director of NAUPA, says NAUPA has no involvement with the postcards. Milby added that he has found multiple reports on the Internet explaining that the company mailing the postcards is a debt collector. It is believed that the company disguises itself as having something to do with unclaimed property as a means to buy time to collect more information and skirt debt collection laws.

“It is a shame that some bad actors are attempting to take advantage of our mission of returning Ohioans’ hard-earned money to them,” said Andre Porter, Director of the Ohio Department of Commerce. “The sender of these postcards is not looking to return money to Ohioans. Rather, this is an attempt to trick the recipient into providing personal and financial information.”

Under Ohio Revised Code 169.16(A), “No person, on behalf of any other person, shall engage in any activity for the purpose of locating, delivering, recovering, or assisting in the recovery of unclaimed funds or contents of a safe deposit box, and receive a fee, compensation, commission, or other remuneration for such activity, without first having obtained a certificate of registration from the director of commerce.”

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The company in question is not registered with the Department of Commerce and is therefore not authorized to engage in such activity. Director Porter strongly encourages Ohioans to work directly with the Division of Unclaimed Funds.

“Our forms are official, free and will lead to claim payment once proper verification is approved,” he said.

The proper method for checking your name for unclaimed funds is to visit the Division of Unclaimed Funds website at www.com.ohio.gov/unfd. Individuals without Internet access can write to the division and provide the full name(s) to be searched, along with the counties in which the person(s) might have resided. The division’s address is 77 South High Street, 20th Floor, Columbus, OH, 43215. Anyone with questions regarding the state of Ohio unclaimed funds program can call the division toll free at 1-877-644-6823 (OHIO-UCF).

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www.com.ohio.gov/unfd

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