

Dept. of Financial Institutions: Consumers who lost money to scammers via Western Union encouraged to file claims

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) today joined the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in alerting consumers who were victimized by scammers via Western Union’s money transfer system that they can file claims and potentially recoup their money. Consumers who lost funds between Jan. 1, 2004, and Jan. 19, 2017, can file claims online at FTC.gov/WU. Claims must be filed by May 31, 2018.

“For too long, Western Union looked the other way while allowing consumers to be ripped off by scam artists,” said Cheryl Olson-Collins, Administrator of DFI’s Division of Banking. “We’re pleased that any Wisconsin consumers who were victimized will have the opportunity to get their money back.”

In January 2017, the Western Union Company agreed to pay \$586 million to resolve charges brought by the FTC and the U.S. Department of Justice. The FTC alleged that fraudsters were able to use Western Union’s money transfer system to get payments from their victims, even though the company was aware of the problem and received hundreds of thousands of complaints about fraud-induced money transfers made for fraudulent [lottery prizes](#), [family emergencies](#), [advance-fee loans](#), [online dating](#) and other scams. The company also allegedly failed to promptly discipline problem Western Union agents, and failed to have effective anti-fraud policies and procedures.

Some consumers who have already reported their losses to Western Union, the FTC, or another government agency will receive a form in the mail from the claims administrator, Gilardi & Co. The form will have a Claim ID Number and a Personal Identification Number that consumers must use when filing a claim online. **Filing a claim is free.** The FTC advised consumers that they do not have to pay anyone to file a claim, and warned that no one associated with the claims process will ever call to ask for consumers' bank account or credit card numbers.

More information about the Western Union settlement can be found on the FTC website at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/11/getting-your--money-back-western-union>.