



Equifax Settlement Could Put Cash in Your Pocket

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MADISON – Both the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Wisconsin Attorney General, as part of a coalition of 50 Attorneys General, have announced settlements with Equifax that will offer benefits to consumers affected by the company’s September 2017 data breach – a group that is estimated to include roughly half of the American public.

The settlements include up to \$425 million to help the roughly 147 million consumers whose information was exposed in the breach. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) strongly encourages Wisconsin residents to read up on the settlement on the FTC website (ftc.gov/Equifax) and for affected consumers to submit their claims as soon as possible.

“Many Wisconsin residents will be eligible for benefits from this settlement that could include reimbursement for time they spent protecting their identities after the breach and up to 10 years of free credit monitoring or a \$125 payment for credit monitoring they may already have,” said Lara Sutherlin, Administrator for the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “We ask all Wisconsin consumers to visit ftc.gov/Equifax to learn more about their eligibility for benefits.”

The claims period opened recently and ends on January 22, 2020. Depending on final approval from the court, benefits will be distributed on January 23, 2020 at the earliest.

Starting in January 2020, all consumers in the United States (affected in the breach or not) will also be able to get six additional free credit reports each year from Equifax in addition to the free annual copy they already can receive under federal law.

News about the settlement will be housed at ftc.gov/Equifax and consumers can sign up on that page for email updates. Consumers are encouraged to use the “look-up tool” on that webpage to learn if they are affected and eligible to file a claim.

ADDITIONAL WARNING:

Consumers are encouraged to watch for scams that may pop up in response to this settlement. Imposter phone scams and look-alike websites are common ways that scammers try to use the public interest in major settlements to steal money and personal information from consumers.

Remember that no one will call you to help you file a claim for the Equifax settlement. Also, the FTC website (ftc.gov) is the primary home for information about the settlement, but that site **will route you** to <https://www.equifaxbreachsettlement.com/file-a-claim> when you are ready to file a claim. Starting your search for information about the settlement or claim process on the FTC website is the best way to avoid malicious look-alike websites that may be created.

If you run across a scam related to this settlement, please report it immediately to DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-422-7128 or datcp hotline@wi.gov.

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