

For Immediate Release:

September 24, 2020

Contact: Matt Baca -- (505) 270-7148

Attorney General Balderas and the Identity Theft Resource Center to Assist COVID-19 Scam Victims with Phone Bank Event

The Office of the Attorney General and the ITRC will host a phone bank Monday, September 28, 2020 and Tuesday, September 29, 2020 to assist victims of COVID-19-related scams and identity crime

Santa Fe, NM—Today, the New Mexico Identity Theft Coalition, under the leadership of the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General, and the Identity Theft Resource Center® (ITRC), a nationally recognized non-profit organization established to support victims of identity crime, announced that they will hold a phone bank as part of a nationwide effort to help victims of COVID-19 scams and identity crime. Anyone who has been the victim of a COVID-19 scam or identity theft can call in during this time for resources and direct assistance.

“Unfortunately our current state of emergency creates a ripe environment for scams and people trying to take advantage of vulnerable New Mexicans,” said Attorney General Balderas. “We must continue to protect and educate families, and my office will prosecute any person who tries to harm them.”

Details for the event are as follows:

The New Mexico Office of the Attorney General (NMOAG), NM Identity Theft Coalition – serving New Mexico, (505)-318-1008 in Albuquerque or toll free at (888)-660-8801

- **Monday 1p.m.-5 p.m.**
- **Tuesday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Additionally, victims can contact the ITRC toll-free at 888.400.5530, or live-chat with an expert advisor on their website <https://www.idtheftcenter.org/>.

COVID-19-related scam and identity crime topics the ITRC will focus on during the phone bank include:

- Unemployment benefits identity theft
- Romance scams
- Payment platform scams
- Small Business COVID-19 loan relief scams
- Coerced debt impacted COVID-19 scams

The phone bank is part of a national effort by the National Identity Theft Victim Assistance Network (NITVAN) to assist individuals who have been victimized by COVID-19 related scams.

NITVAN was launched in 2010 with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, through the Crime Victims Fund. This unique fund is financed by fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders, not from tax dollars. The ITRC became the network leader in October 2016. Through the grant project, 11 new coalitions have been established to expand and improve victim assistance services in their respective states or regions, including the New Mexico Identity Theft Coalition under the leadership of the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General. Through the development and enhancement of these coalitions, victim service providers can better address the rights and needs of victims of identity crime through collaboration, training, and outreach. The coalition provides coordinated comprehensive services and support for victims of identity theft and fraud; provide training resources for law enforcement agencies, victim assistance organizations and other related organizations to ensure a well-educated, quality response in cases of ID theft and fraud; and provide community educational programs regarding ID theft, fraud and prevention options to reduce the risk of victimization and/or re-victimization.

For additional information on the coalitions, visit <http://www.nitvan.org/>.

Additional participants hosting phone banks across the country include:

- The National Cybersecurity Society
- Vera House, Onondaga County Elder Identity Theft Coalition
- Texas Council on Family Violence
- Texas Coalition on Coerced Debt
- Colorado Bureau of Investigation
- Identity Theft Advocacy Network (ITAN)
- Lifespan of Greater Rochester
- Finger Lakes (NY) Senior Identity Theft Coalition
- ITRC on behalf of Minnesota Alliance on Crime
- Minnesota Identity Theft and Cybercrime Information and Resource Network
- ITRC on behalf of Cybercrime Support Network, Cybercrime Support Network of West Michigan

###