

FTC Consumer Alert

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Division of Consumer & Business Education

Money for Resettled Refugees

Scammers pretending to work for the U.S. government are targeting refugees from Bhutan who have recently resettled in the United States. They tell the refugees that they are eligible to get \$10,000 from the government, but first, they have to pay some fees. No refugee who has paid the fees has received a so-called grant.

Scammers Target Bhutanese Refugees

Here's how the scam works: A recently resettled Bhutanese refugee gets a call from someone who says he's from the "Federal Grants Department" in Washington, DC, and seems to be calling from a DC-area phone number. The caller claims that the person, as a refugee from Bhutan, is eligible for a \$10,000 grant, but first must send a money order for \$650 in "processing fees" to claim it.

In variations of the scam, the caller says he's with the IRS and tells refugees to wire money to people in India; or the caller asks the refugee for bank or debit account information so he can "deposit" the grant money.

How to Avoid the Scam

Unfortunately, people are getting hurt by this scam: some refugees are losing thousands of dollars. How can you avoid scams like this?

- Don't give important personal information – or money – to someone you don't know or to someone who contacts you unexpectedly.
- Remember that the U.S. government does **not** charge security deposits or processing fees when it gives financial grants.

If you are a refugee and get a call like this, talk to the case manager at your resettlement agency immediately. Then report it to the Federal Trade Commission online or at 1-877-FTC-HELP.

To find out more about how to avoid immigration scams, visit ftc.gov/immigration or ftc.gov/inmigracion.

The FTC works to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. Watch a video, *How to File a Complaint*, at ftc.gov/video to learn more. The FTC enters consumer complaints into the Consumer Sentinel Network, a secure online database and investigative tool used by hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.



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