



State of Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel

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Attorney General Nessel: Do Not Fall For Rental Payment Assistance Scam

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is warning Michigan residents to beware of a new scam aimed at those struggling to pay rent.

While the Attorney General's office has not yet received complaints of the scam occurring in Michigan, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued a [notice recently to raise awareness of the scheme](#), which involves scammers offering tenants help paying rent -- while stealing their personal and financial information.

Many Michigan residents are finding it difficult to pay rent during COVID-19 because the pandemic has caused economic hardship for countless families and individuals. Scammers looking to capitalize on that hardship may offer to provide assistance in the form of rent and utility payments or legal aid to avoid eviction, the FTC warns. To get help, residents must first provide personal information or money.

"Those facing eviction are more likely to fall victim to this scam, as they may have limited resources and nowhere else to turn," said Nessel. "This pandemic has caused financial hardship for many Michiganders, and provided scammers with an opportunity to use that desperate set of circumstances to their advantage. Do not fall victim to their schemes. Always protect your personal and financial information unless you are absolutely certain it is being provided to a legitimate organization."

Echoing suggestions from the FTC, Attorney General Nessel offers these tips to avoid becoming a victim of a scam:

- Never give your bank account, debit card, credit card or Social Security numbers to anyone who contacts you without first independently verifying that person's identity.
- Do your research on any organization that requests personal information or money.
- Investigate the company you are considering using online with the words "scam," "fraud" or "complaint" to see what others are saying. Do this prior to making contact.
- Avoid companies that tell you to stop paying rent or require an up-front fee.

Anyone struggling to make rent payments should discuss it with their landlord and look into [local programs](#) that offer rental assistance and other help.

Those who are facing eviction or need help paying rent may soon find assistance through the [COVID Emergency Rental Assistance Program \(CERA\)](#) administered by the [Michigan State Housing Development Authority](#) (MSHDA). For those who qualify, there may be help available for past due rent and utilities.

“Once the Legislature appropriates the emergency rental assistance funds, we are ready and will move swiftly to assist renters and landlords in need,” said Kelly Rose, MSHDA chief housing solutions officer. “Renters should avoid further financial risk by falling for scams. A legitimate program that can help is on the way.”

Visit the [Attorney General Landlord/Tenant](#) site for more information on Michigan’s eviction process and renters’ rights.

Attorney General Nessel is committed to making Michigan residents aware of deceptive scams designed to defraud them of money or personal information. The Department of Attorney General has a [library of consumer alerts](#) to educate and protect Michiganders.

To report fraud or file a general consumer complaint, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection team. [Filing a complaint online](#) is the best way to make [Your Connection to Consumer Protection](#) and provide a comprehensive report to the Attorney General’s office to ensure investigators have the information they need. If a consumer is unable to fill out an online complaint, they can call the toll-free Consumer Protection hotline at 877-765-8388 and staff will provide a hard copy form to fill out and return.