

Steps You Can Take

Updated on March 20, 2014 at 9:30 A.M.

Initial Notice sent on 3/7/2014

It has recently come to our attention that some current and former Archdiocesan employees and volunteers are victims of a national tax refund fraud.

Victims' social security numbers have been used in fraudulent tax returns for the calendar year 2013. Please be assured that we are taking appropriate steps to determine whether or not there has been a breach of systems within the Archdiocese which may include Parishes and Schools, the systems of our vendors, or if there is a problem with some other source. We have hired the forensic security firm Stroz Friedberg to assist us in analyzing the situation. We are also working with the FBI and IRS to address the issue. We will update this site as more information becomes available.

All current and former employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Seattle should take the following steps as soon as possible:

1. Call the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1(800)908-4490 extension 245.
 - a. The IRS representative will walk you through steps to determine if your tax identity has been compromised. Note: For joint filers, both spouses should speak to an IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit representative.
 - b. If your identity has not been compromised, consider having the IRS place a note on your file in their records. In addition, it is possible to file Form 14039 '*Identity Theft Affidavit*' (link available on this website) to alert the IRS to the risk that an event has occurred that may affect your future income tax filings. The IRS representative can explain this process to you.
 - i. You should also contact Equifax, a credit bureau, at https://www.alerts.equifax.com/AutoFraud_Online/jsp/fraudAlert.jsp and check the box for a 90 Day Fraud Alert to be placed on your credit report. They will notify the other credit bureaus.
 - c. If your identity has been compromised, follow the instruction given by the representative. Steps to be taken will vary depending on each individual filer's circumstances, but may include:
 - i. Complete and file IRS Form 14039 '*Identity Theft Affidavit*'. Note: a copy of your identification will need to be filed with this form.
 - ii. Contact Equifax to report the fraud at 1(800)525-6285. They will notify the other major credit reporting agencies.
 - iii. Submit a report of the theft to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). This can be done online at www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0277-create-identity-theft-report.

1. Click on “*How to Create an Identity Theft Report*” and follow the directions listed. The FTC will assign a case number.
- iv. File a police report with your local police department. Call the department for instructions on how to complete this. In Seattle, this step can be done by phone.
 1. The police department will assign a case number or reference number.
- v. Call the FTC to report the number assigned to the case by the local police department. You will need the FTC case number to complete this step.
- vi. Contact the Social Security Administration at www.socialsecurity.gov/fraudreport/oig/public_fraud_reporting/form.htm.
- d. If you find you have been compromised, please call Supervisory Special Agent Leia Bellis in the Criminal Investigation Unit of the IRS at 206-464-4920.
2. Further information from the IRS can be found at www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/Tips-for-Taxpayers,-Victims-about-Identity-Theft-and-Tax>Returns-2014.

Phone Scams Alert!

IRS phone scams are on the rise, and they can take on a variety of forms. They can threaten the taxpayer with arrest, loss of a driver’s license or in some cases deportation. Others scammers call fishing for personal information like Social Security numbers by telling the taxpayer they are owed a big refund — all one would need to do is verify certain personal details. In many cases this is followed up with a call from someone claiming to be with the local police department or DMV.

The IRS says if you receive one of these phone calls **DO NOT** verify your information. *Hang up* and call the IRS at 800-829-1040. And if you know for certain that you don’t owe money; call to report the incident at 800-366-4484.

If you find that your tax return is compromised, please notify the Archdiocese of Seattle at taxinformation@seattlearch.org. Please include your full name, parish or school with which you are associated, and please indicate your status as an employee, volunteer or both.