



SALT LAKE CITY

Consumer Protection

Affinity Fraud

You and members of your church may be at risk.

Affinity Fraud

"I want to tell you about an excellent opportunity."

"It's exclusive and I don't want anyone else to know about it."

"I'm coming to you because you're a part of my church and I trust you."

When a friend, family member, co-worker, or fellow church member encourages you to invest your money in a guaranteed opportunity, what should you do?

What is Affinity Fraud?

Affinity fraud refers to investment scams that target members of religious or ethnic groups. Perpetrators are often members of, or pretend to be members of, that religious or ethnic group. These criminals work to gain the favor of influential leaders within the group and use that to deceive the members.

Affinity fraud, like many types of fraud, may be difficult to spot. Perpetrators are those who are close to you, those who have your trust. You may not want to question their motives and intentions.

It is important to know that you have the right to ask questions about your investments. No matter what.

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"

Mark 8:36

How to Spot Affinity Fraud

Tips From the FBI

Law enforcement officials advise that before investing money, there are a few important points to keep in mind:

- **Do your homework.** Understand the investment and do research about the person you are investing with—even if you have an existing relationship with that individual.
- **Don't make investments behind closed doors.** Talk to friends, family members, or financial professionals about the possible investment, and be wary if an individual tells you not to mention the investment opportunity to others.
- **If an investment sounds too good to be true—with returns that greatly outweigh the risk—be suspicious.**
- **Beware of high-pressure tactics that pressure you to act quickly.**

- **Be an informed consumer.** Financial fraudsters are savvy salesmen and expert manipulators. They have an answer for everything. **Verify their pronouncements through independent sources.**
- If any red flags are raised about a potential investment or investment advisor, **call your local regulatory agency and speak to someone.** You can also consult Utah's White Collar Crime Offender Registry online.
- If someone tries to use their affiliation with a church or social organization to entice you to make an investment, **YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE SUSPICIOUS,** no matter what your relationship is with that person.



If you have been a victim or know a victim of affinity fraud

What Can You Do?

1. Seek private legal counsel.
 - a. If you cannot afford private legal counsel you may qualify for assistance by contacting Utah Legal Services at UtahLegalServices.org.
2. File a complaint with your local consumer protection agency. These agencies may be able to help you.
 - a. If the fraud took place in Salt Lake City you can file a complaint at SLC.gov/ConsumerProtection.
 - b. For all other cases you can file a complaint at ConsumerProtection.Utah.gov.
3. Warn others that they might be at risk.
 - a. If you see something, say something! Don't let your friends and family be taken advantage of.



What is SLCCP?

Salt Lake City Consumer Protection is a local government program dedicated to the idea that Salt Lake City consumers have the right to a sense of security about the products and services they spend their hard earned money on. SLCCP is here to deter unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent business practices by exercising the municipal authorities of Salt Lake City. By doing so we hope to maintain a fair marketplace and empower consumers and businesses to support a local culture of ethical business practices.



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File a report at:

[SLC.gov/ConsumerProtection](https://slc.gov/ConsumerProtection)

Salt Lake City Consumer Protection
451 State St. - Room 145 - SLC, UT 84111
TEL: (801)535-6526
Email: ConsumerProtection@slcgov.com