



## Tax-related Identity Theft

### **HAVE YOU BEEN THE VICTIM OF TAX-RELATED IDENTITY THEFT?**

#### **A GROWING PROBLEM**

Tax-related identity theft is a growing problem affecting hundreds of thousands of people nationwide. Some identity thieves will use stolen information, such as a Social Security number, to file a tax return hoping to claim a refundable credit like the Earned Income Tax Credit. Sometimes a person without a Social Security number will use a stolen name and number in order to get a job.

#### **SIGNS THAT YOU MAY HAVE BEEN A VICTIM**

Your identity may have been stolen if:

- You owe tax for a year in which you were not required to file a return
- You received a W-2 or 1099 from an employer for whom you did not work
- You received a notice from IRS asking why you didn't report wages that you didn't earn
- Social Security has denied or adjusted your benefits because of wages you didn't earn

#### **DON'T LET THE SCAMMERS FOOL YOU!**

If IRS needs to contact you, they will attempt to do so by mailing you a notice. IRS never communicates by email or social media to request your personal information. IRS does not send emails or text messages saying that you are being audited or have a refund due to you. If you receive a scam email claiming to be from IRS, forward it to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov). If you believe you may be at risk of identity theft, contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490.

Visit [www.irs.gov/uac/Identity-Protection](http://www.irs.gov/uac/Identity-Protection) for more information about tax-related identity theft.

## TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM IDENTITY THEFT

**File early.** One way you can protect yourself is by filing your tax return early in the tax filing season even if you are not required to file. This is a time when identity thieves commonly act, in the hopes that they can obtain refunds before you notice their activity. Filing early prevents them from using your name and Social Security number.


**Protect your personal information.** Identity thieves may get access to your name and Social Security number by stealing your purse or wallet, posing as someone who needs information about you in a phone call or email, looking through your trash, or accessing personal information you provide to an unsecured Internet site.

**Monitor your accounts.** Most cases of identity theft can be resolved if they are caught early. Regularly check your bank account and credit card activity. Review your credit report at least once a year (this can be done for free through [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com))

**Get help.** If you believe you have been the victim of tax-related identity theft, the LITC at ILS may be able to help you resolve any resulting tax problem. [Contact us](#) to learn more about how we can assist you. For information from the IRS, visit the [Taxpayer Guide to Identity Theft](#).

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 [Identity Theft Flyer](#)

 [Identity Theft Tri-fold \(Spanish\)](#)

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<http://www.indianalegalservices.org/node/813/tax-related-identity-theft>

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