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*"Rummaging in the government's attic"*

Description of document: Two (2) records created by Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Consumer and Business Education (BCBE) with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) re: the Cobell Settlement, 2013

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Source of document: Freedom of Information Act Request  
Office of General Counsel  
Federal Trade Commission  
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Washington, D.C. 20580  
Fax: (202) 326-2477  
Email: [FOIA@FTC.GOV](mailto:FOIA@FTC.GOV)

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

SEP 27 2017

Re: FOIA-2017-01461  
Resources for Tribal Nations

This is in response to your request dated September 07, 2017 under the Freedom of Information Act seeking access to a document known as "Resources for Tribal Nations" developed by FTC Consumer and Business Education (BCBE). In accordance with the FOIA and agency policy, we have searched our records as of September 12, 2017, the date we received your request in our FOIA office. Our search of the FTC's records did not identify any record that would respond to your request. If you believe that you have additional information that may help locate responsive records, please submit a new FOIA request with further details.

In our search, we did locate three pages of records BCBE created with the National Congress of American Indians. You are granted full access to the enclosed records.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request, you may appeal by writing to Freedom of Information Act Appeal, Office of the General Counsel, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580, within 90 days of the date of this letter. Please enclose a copy of your original request and a copy of this response.

You also may seek dispute resolution services from the FTC FOIA Public Liaison Richard Gold via telephone at 202-326-3355 or via e-mail at [rgold@ftc.gov](mailto:rgold@ftc.gov); or from the Office of Government Information Services via email at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov), via fax at 202-741-5769, or via mail at Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740.

If you have any questions about the way we have handled your request or about the FOIA regulations or procedures, please contact Chip Taylor at 202-326-3258.

Sincerely,

Dione J. Stearns  
Assistant General Counsel



## An Alert for People Getting the Cobell Settlement

You will be getting your second (and final) payment from the Cobell Settlement, also called the Indian Trust Settlement. Based on what has happened with other settlements, people who know about this might ask you for money, or target you for scams. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), working in collaboration with a broad alliance of tribes and organizations, wants to give you information to help you protect your money.

The second payment of this settlement will arrive between October and December, 2013. Many people will get \$1,800 - \$2,200, but some will get even more, based on the established formula. There may be many people in your tribe, on your reservation or in your community receiving this payment, including many members of your family. Taken together, this money can benefit your family and the local economy. But it will draw other people who may want to take advantage of you.

### “I heard you got your money...”

When people get big payments, like in the Cobell Settlement, they usually get mail, phone calls, and email with ideas for how to spend the money. For example, you and your family might get offers for:

- ◆ **New vehicles.** Businesses might try to get you to put a down payment on a car, motorcycle, boat, or mobile home. But people who buy vehicles know the best deals are the ones you look for and negotiate, not the deals that find you.
- ◆ **Used Vehicles.** Used cars that cost exactly the \$1,000 of your settlement payment will be for sale in and around your communities. Often these vehicles have been reclaimed from natural disasters, such as floods, or involved in accidents and only look roadworthy. Don't be swayed by the low price.
- ◆ **Credit card or loan offers.** When companies know you have money, they might offer you a credit card or loan. People who shop for credit cards or loans know you get better deals when you compare offers and terms.
- ◆ **Rent-to-own “deals.”** Getting furniture or an appliance through rent-to-own might seem like you get more for your money. But you always pay much more for something when you rent it before you own it.
- ◆ **Advances on your money.** You may have gotten a loan as an advance on your money. This is a loan you will repay with the money you get from the settlement. An advance loan usually is very expensive, with high fees and high interest rates.

People close to you also might have ideas for your money. They might recommend an investment. They might say they need money themselves. But it's your money. You decide how to save it and spend it.

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## Spot the Scams

Before you spend or save your settlement money, watch for these signs of a scam in a deal someone is offering you:

- ◆ **Act now!** Scammers are in a rush to get their hands on your money. Take your time.
- ◆ **Big promises.** Scammers guarantee big money, fast. But there is never a guarantee when it comes to making money.
- ◆ **No risk.** Scammers promise your money is safe. They might say you can get your money back. But once a scammer has your money, you will never see your money again.
- ◆ **Keep it secret.** Scammers might say they have information no one else has. If anyone tells you to keep a deal a secret, it's a scam.

## Protect Your Money

You have waited a long time for this settlement. You have thought a lot about how you might use this money. Now that you have the money, people will tell you their ideas for how to spend it. But it's your money. You decide how to save it or spend it.

Before you save or spend your money:

- ◆ **Make a plan.** You might save the money, help a grandchild go to college, pay off some bills, or buy something. Planning helps you think about options. If others in your family are also getting a payment, you may want to pool your money for a larger goal or plan together.
- ◆ **Take your time.** If someone asks you to spend your money a certain way, take your time. You don't have to decide right away, no matter what they say. Take time to think before you decide.
- ◆ **Ask questions.** If someone wants your money, get more information. Get investment information in writing. Then check it out with a banker, a financial advisor, or a lawyer.
- ◆ **Talk to someone you trust.** Before you give money to anyone, talk to somebody you trust. What do they think of the idea? What questions do they have? Can you answer the questions, or do you need more information?

## Need More Help?

You can get more information about the settlement or how to spot a scam:

- ◆ Find out more about the Cobell Settlement. Go to [www.indiantrust.com](http://www.indiantrust.com), call the help line: 800-961-6109, or email [Info@IndianTrust.com](mailto:Info@IndianTrust.com)
- ◆ Report any scams or fraud you see. Call the Federal Trade Commission: 877-382-4357
- ◆ Report problems with advance loans or credit cards. Call the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: 855-411-2372

The National Congress of American Indians, founded in 1944, is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities. To learn more about NCAI, visit [ncai.org](http://ncai.org) or call 202-466-7767.



## **Alert to Tribal Leaders: Second Payment of the Cobell Settlement Coming Soon**

Between October and December 2013, members of your community will be getting their second check as part of the Cobell Settlement. Most will get around \$2,000, but some will get more.

An influx of cash into our communities presents opportunities for good and for bad. Tribal leadership can help:

- ◆ You can help your community be proactive: planning for how they want to spend their money, or opening bank accounts if they don't already have them.
- ◆ You can help your community be prepared to spot scams: reminding them of the kinds of offers they might expect, along with the signs of a scam.
- ◆ You can help other community leaders be aware of the public safety risks of an influx of cash in the community, and take steps to keep people safe.

Get free resources to share with your community at [www.ncai.org/ProtectNativeMoney](http://www.ncai.org/ProtectNativeMoney).

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