



AN ALERT UPDATE FOR NATIVE AMERICAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS

You are getting your lump-sum payment from the Keepseagle 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) and its Partnership for Tribal Governance, working in collaboration with a broad alliance of tribes and organizations, wants to give you information to help you protect your money.

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 also will attract other people who may want to take advantage of you.

“I heard you got your money...”

As you know, when people get big payments, like with this settlement, they usually get mail, phone calls, and email with ideas about how to spend the money. For example, you (and/or your family) might get offers for:

- ◆ **Investments that promise a high return with a low risk:** Experienced investors know that a high return always means a high risk. If you risk a lot of money, you can lose a lot of money. If someone pressures you into an investment that promises a high return, it's a scam.
- ◆ **Business “opportunities” promising quick, guaranteed profits:** Small business owners know that profit is never a guarantee. If someone asks you to act fast, guarantees profit, or says the offer is available for a limited time, it's a scam.
- ◆ **Vehicles:** Businesses near you might try to sell you farm equipment, a car, motorcycle, boat, or mobile home. But people who buy vehicles know the best deals are the ones you seek out and negotiate, not the deals that find you.
- ◆ **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 owning 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 can be 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/or spend it.

Spot the Scams

Before you spend or save your settlement money, watch for these signs of a scam:

- ◆ **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 it, people will tell you how to spend it. But remember: *it's your decision.*

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 reinvest the money in your farm. Planning helps you think about options. If you're putting money into your farm, consider redoing your business plan. If you already have a security agreement or a lien instrument, you have important decisions to make. Your existing lenders might encumber your settlement money, or the things you buy with it. Check your records.
- ◆ **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 Keepseagle Settlement:** Go to www.indianfarmclass.com, or call the Keepseagle Claims Administrator at 888-233-5006.
- ◆ **Find out about a technical resource network:** Go to www.indianaglink.com or call the Intertribal Agriculture Council at 406-259-3525. For business technical assistance and loan information, you also can contact the Native CDFI Network at info@nativecdfi.net to get connected with a CDFI near you.
- ◆ **Report any scams or fraud you see:** Call the Federal Trade Commission at 877-382-4357.
- ◆ **Report problems with advance loans or credit cards:** Call the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau at 855-411-2372.

For related information, visit the Native Financial Education Coalition website at www.nfec.us.

If you have any other questions, please contact NCAI's Partnership for Tribal Governance at irecord@ncai.org.