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# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST)

Office of the Secretary  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: Debby Pafel  
(202) 208-4289

### **The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians Cautions Trust Account Holders About Misleading Notifications**

The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) warns Individual Indian Monies (IIM) beneficiaries to use caution if they are contacted about their accounts by private firms. OST has become aware of firms charging fees for account holder services that are free to beneficiaries.

OST is continually looking for people who have funds in trust but who do not have current contact information on file. There is more than \$70 million in trust for over 70,000 people whose whereabouts are unknown (WAU). One business is charging WAU individuals a fee and may misrepresent the amount an individual has in an account. Another firm claimed Power of Attorney status for several WAU account holders and instructed OST to forward all forms, documents and checks directly to the company. The Department of Interior's Solicitor has reviewed that company's paperwork and does not recognize its validity.

"These firms have not contracted nor are they affiliated with OST or the U.S. Government. Beneficiaries should not be led to believe they need to pay finder fees to receive their trust funds nor that firms have access to their account balances," said a spokesperson from the Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC). "People who wonder if they have funds in trust can call the TBCC and establish rights to their accounts without paying fees."

IIM beneficiaries can call the TBCC to receive accurate and timely information and assistance about their accounts. There is no cost to the beneficiary to receive assistance from the TBCC; even the phone call is toll free. Beneficiaries with questions or concerns should call 1- 888-678-6836 from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 am to noon on Saturday. All times noted are in the Mountain Time Zone.

Visit the OST website at [www.doi.gov/ost](http://www.doi.gov/ost) for information about IIM beneficiary benefits and the TBCC.

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U.S. Department of the Interior  
Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians  
1849 C Street, NW, Suite 5140 • Washington, D.C. 20240  
(202) 208-4866 • (888) 678-6836 (Toll Free Trust Beneficiary Call Center)  
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