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MEDIA ALERT

Consumer Protection warns of New Charity Scam targeting Utah Latinos

"Holiday giving season brings out new telemarketing scam, callers speak Spanish"

(For immediate release)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce, announced today that the Division of Consumer Protection has received several complaints about a new charity scam that uses phone solicitations to target Spanish-speaking Utahns. Investigators say the scam begins with a caller asking if someone at the number speaks Spanish. When the recipient replies in Spanish, the caller launches into a pitch asking for donations for a charity group that teaches immigrants how to speak English. The caller also claims that if someone makes a larger donation, they can help bring the donors' foreign relatives into the United States. The caller then requests that cash donations be sent to them through Western Union. When Consumer Protection investigators tried to contact the group's numbers, they discovered that the calls were coming from a pre-paid cell phone and the charity group didn't exist.

"Utah citizens are known for their charitable spirit, especially around the holidays," said Francine A. Giani, "Make sure your donations are going to a legitimate cause by taking two minutes to check them out on our Consumer Protection website."

The Division of Consumer Protection has a public list of registered Utah charities which are authorized to solicit funds. Consumers can review this list anytime by logging on www.consumerprotection.utah.gov, clicking on the "Education" section and selecting "Registered Charities".

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