



Office of Inspector General
Legal Services Corporation

The Fraud Corner

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC), Office of Inspector General (OIG), has been made aware that LSC's main number telephone was compromised in a spoofing scam. According to the Better Business Bureau (BBB)¹, spoofing scams are committed by individuals who use technology to modify caller ID information to trick individuals into believing that an incoming call is local, or from someone they know. The scammers engage the individuals in conversation attempting to gain personal identifying information and/or elicit money. This scheme is known as "spoofing" or "spoof calling."

LSC has received numerous calls from individuals stating they received calls from LSC's main telephone number (202) 295-1500. Individuals receiving these calls had no past business dealings with LSC, nor were they clients seeking legal representation from one of LSC's grantees. The perpetrator of the scheme placed random calls to these individuals leaving them puzzled as to why they received a call from LSC. The spoof caller never associates him or herself with the "LSC name brand" or its mission. The caller will use a ruse in an attempt to obtain personal identifying information or money from the individual. Such calls can be stressful and confusing to the person receiving the call. Government agencies have been victims of this type of scam and have made the public aware of these fraudulent schemes.

It is important for the public to know that LSC would never initiate a call to obtain personal identifying information or intimidate you in an effort to elicit money. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC)² lists steps you can take to avoid these spoofing calls. These steps include using call blocking technology as well as simply not answering calls from unfamiliar telephone numbers. Your local telephone company may be able to assist you in blocking unwanted calls. You can also register your number with the "Do Not Call Registry" which may help you to identify scam calls.

If you do answer a call and the perpetrator attempts to elicit money from you, do not engage with the caller, do not verify your name with the caller, do not divulge personal identifying information such as bank account or credit card information, social security number, date of birth, or common passwords such as mother's maiden name. The LSC OIG encourages you to protect your personal information and never provide your personal information over the phone.

¹ A New Kind of Phone Scam: Neighbor Spoofing 2018, accessed 20 August 2018, <https://www.bbb.org/en/us/article/news-releases/16670-a-new-kind-of-phone-scam-neighbor-spoofing>

² Spoofing and Caller ID 2008, accessed 20 August 2018, <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/spoofing-and-caller-id>

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If you are the victim of a spoofing scam with (202) 295-1500 as the caller ID or call-back number, please file a complaint with the FCC's Consumer Complaint Center at consumercomplaints.fcc.gov and provide as much information as you can about the call.