

## **WARNING: Be Aware of Scam (Fake) Consulate/IRS/FBI/USCIS Phone Calls - Don't Lose Your Money!**

The International Center would like to warn you about phone calls and emails from criminals pretending to be from your home country consulate (or embassy), from U.S. law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, or from U.S. government agencies such as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the IRS (Internal Revenue Service), or the Michigan Department of Treasury. The calls may also be "robocalls" making "urgent" callback requests. The links at the end of this announcement have more information and some examples, including a U-M Information and Technology Services (ITS) warning about [recent scam robocalls in Mandarin](#) [1]. Also, ITS recently issued a warning to U-M faculty and staff about emails that appear to be from U-M leadership [asking for help with a payment or gifts for an event](#) [2]. These emails are fraudulent or malicious, and it is important not to respond, click any link in them, or provide personal information or money.

**Remember:** Your home country consulate will not call you and ask you to transfer money. They also won't call you and ask you for your ID or bank account information, or tell you that they are transferring the call to "Interpol" or to the police. Similarly, U.S. government agencies will not call you and ask for money, or threaten to have the FBI arrest you. **They will never ask for payment with iTunes cards or other gift cards.** Please be careful! Criminals have stolen money from U-M international students this way.

**If you receive a call like this and are not sure what to do:** Call the International Center or the U-M Police Department (734-763-1131). The U-M Police Department is always open so if you get a call like this at night or over the weekend you can always call them for advice. Students can also ask [Student Legal Services](#) [3] for assistance, or consult residence hall staff if they live in university housing. **Call for advice BEFORE sending money and before giving out personal information.\***

**Even though the caller may sound very real and very threatening, do not be fooled. If an unknown caller threatens you or makes you uncomfortable, just end the call.**

Since criminals sometimes use "spoofing services" to choose the number or name that shows up on your phone, the call may appear to come from a government agency, from a consulate, or from the FBI or the police, but it actually does not. These calls are fake or "scam" calls. You should also be very careful about emails that appear to come from U.S. government agencies such as the IRS. They may include links that can be used to steal your personal information and your money.

See the links below for more details, examples of common scams, and advice about avoiding scams:

- Scam calls from people pretending to work for the Chinese consulate:
  - U-M Information and Technology Services warning about [recent scam robocalls in Mandarin](#) [1].
  - [Warning from the Chinese Consulate: Be Careful of Telecom Scams Using the Phone Number of the Chinese Consulate General in Chicago](#) [4]
- [Tax Scams/Consumer Alerts](#) [5]
- The U.S. Government has prepared information for students (but it is useful for everyone) to help you avoid these scams: [Students: Read these Tips to Avoid Scams](#) [6]
- Michigan Department of Treasury's [Tax Scam Warning](#) [7]
- If the caller is pretending to be from the FBI, you can file a complaint through the FBI's [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) [8]

\* Personal information includes your date of birth and place of birth, your social security number if you have one, personal financial information such as bank account or credit card numbers, etc.

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**Source URL:** <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/warning-be-aware-scam-fake-phone-calls>

### Links

[1] <https://www.safecomputing.umich.edu/security-alerts/international-robocall-scam-targeting-chinese-visitors-and-immigrants?fbclid=IwAR3yWQTFdmzvWkYi9FXWOefyblUuS4tUON5i9BgQaKAzc4cnNsSR-BJqB1M>

[2] <https://safecomputing.umich.edu/phishing-alerts/subject-varies-hi-i-am-busy-i-need-you-purchase-gift-cards-2019-02-05-000000>

[3] <https://studentlegalservices.umich.edu/>

[4] <http://www.chinaconsulatechicago.org/eng/zytz/t1555970.htm>

[5] <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>

[6] <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2018/08/students-read-these-tips-to-avoid-scams>

[7] <https://www.michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-26847-456793--,00.html>

[8] <https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>