

HOW TO CONDUCT EARNED MEDIA OUTREACH

News coverage about your large-scale investor protection event can help increase registration and also raise awareness about investment fraud and how to prevent it. Customize and distribute the media advisory and press release on pages 39 and 40 to local newspapers and television and radio stations. Talk to reporters about your event, invite them to attend and provide background information about the issue. The fact sheets included in the **Related Resources** section of the toolkit can be sent to reporters.

Community Calendar Listing Template

Newspapers, radio stations and television stations—even membership organization newsletters and e-mail listservs—will sometimes print or air information about upcoming events, free of charge. Update the community calendar listing template on the following page with details of your event and send it in an e-mail to community calendar editors or membership organizations with which you are partnering. Follow up to ensure that these outlets print or air your event information.

Letter to Community Calendar Editor

[DATE]

Dear **[COMMUNITY CALENDAR EDITOR]**:

Investment fraud affects thousands of Americans and accounts for billions in lost savings every year. Research funded by the FINRA Investor Education Foundation found that a majority of investors ages 55 to 65 do not perceive themselves as vulnerable to investment fraud; yet many engaged in investment behaviors that put them at risk.

The truth is, regardless of age or circumstance, anyone with money is bound to hear from a fraudster at some point. But the good news is there are simple steps every investor can take—like checking to see if a financial professional is licensed or a product is registered—to protect their finances and family before making any investment decision.

[ORGANIZATION], together with the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, is launching an Investor Protection Campaign to help area residents learn how to identify and prevent investment fraud.

On **[DATE]** from **[TIME]**, **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** will host a free **[EVENT TYPE]** at the **[LOCATION]**. During this forum, investors will learn:

- Key questions to ask before making any investment decision
- How to verify the legitimacy of investment products and professionals
- Common tactics fraudsters use and how to avoid them

This is an educational program—no sales presentations will be permitted during the program or on the premises.

Please include the following notice in your community calendar listing. I will follow up with you in the next few days. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact me at **[PHONE NUMBER]**.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

[INSERT NAME, TITLE]

Community Calendar Listing

Before you invest, ask and check. Join us for a FREE [EVENT TYPE].

Even if you have never been subject to an investment fraudster's sales pitch, you probably know someone who has. Learn how you can identify and prevent investment fraud at a **[EVENT TYPE]** presented by **[ORGANIZATION NAME]**. Join us at the **[LOCATION]**, on **[DATE]** from **[TIME]**.

To register and to receive more information, call **[PHONE NUMBER]**. There is no charge for the program.

Media Advisory Template

A media advisory is often used when inviting members of the media to attend an event. Identify ahead of time potential reporters at local television and radio stations and newspapers to whom you can e-mail this media advisory. If you have an existing relationship with a reporter, we strongly recommend contacting him or her first. The media advisory should be sent up to one week in advance of your event.

Contact: **[YOUR NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER]**

****MEDIA ADVISORY****

[DATE]

**Campaign Helps Investors Fight Back Against Fraud by Teaching Them
How to “Ask and Check” Before Making Financial Decisions**

What: **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation are teaching investors how to spot and resist investment fraud as part of a national Investor Protection Campaign. **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** will host a **[EVENT TYPE]** on **[DAY, MONTH]**. At the event, attendees will learn the tactics commonly used by fraudsters and the simple steps every investor can take to reduce the risk of being defrauded.

Experts in fraud prevention, including **[SPEAKER NAMES]**, will be on hand to answer questions and topics will include: **[LIST OF TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED]**.

Who: **[NAMES AND TITLES OF SPEAKERS]**

When: **[INSERT DATE AND TIME OF EVENT]**

Where: **[LOCATION]**
[ADDRESS]

About the FINRA Investor Education Foundation

The mission of the FINRA Investor Education Foundation is to provide underserved Americans with the knowledge, skills and tools necessary for financial success throughout life. The FINRA Foundation awards education and research grants and develops targeted programs aimed at segments of the investing public that could benefit from additional resources. Empowered by the federal government, FINRA is an independent, not-for-profit regulator of all securities firms doing business in the United States. FINRA and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation do not sell investment products, promote products or firms or offer specific investment advice.

About **[PARTNER ORGANIZATION]**
[INFORMATION HERE]

For more information, please visit **www.SaveAndInvest.org** or call **[CONTACT NAME]**.

News Release Template

The template press release can be tailored with details of your event. The release should be sent out to the same reporters who received the media advisory for your large-scale investor protection event, unless a specific reporter provided a new contact. E-mail is often the preferred communication method. Typically, a news release is sent the morning of the event but can be sent earlier on an “embargoed” basis, meaning the information should not be shared until a certain date.

EMBARGOED for release on [DATE]

**Contact: [NAME]
[PHONE]**

**Campaign Helps Investors Fight Back Against Fraud by Teaching Them
How to “Ask and Check” Before Making Financial Decisions**

**[ORGANIZATION NAME] Offers Free Training to Help Investors
Spot and Resist Investment Fraud**

[CITY, STATE]—A comprehensive new campaign is underway in **[LOCATION]** to reduce the incidence of investment fraud among older investors. The Investor Protection Campaign, which features hands-on training and online resources at www.SaveAndInvest.org, was developed by the FINRA Investor Education Foundation to teach investors the tactics commonly used by fraudsters and the simple steps every investor can take to reduce the risk of being defrauded.

In partnership with the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** will host a free **[EVENT TYPE]** on **[DATE]** at **[LOCATION, ADDRESS]**. This event is open to the public. To register and to receive more information, call **[PHONE NUMBER]**.

**["QUOTE THAT DELIVERS A MAJOR MESSAGE POINT," BY ORGANIZATION.
"QUOTE THAT STATES AN OPINION."]**

**[ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENT IN THE THIRD PARAGRAPH.
INCLUDE RELEVANT FACTS THAT ARE PART OF THE MAIN MESSAGE]**

As part of the campaign, the FINRA Investor Education Foundation offers free tools at www.SaveAndInvest.org, including a Scam Meter to help spot red flags in an investment pitch, as well as a Risk Meter to help individuals identify characteristics and behavior traits that may make them vulnerable to investment fraud. The campaign encourages individuals to use the following key strategies when approached with any investment offer:

- 1. Ask questions and verify answers.** Take time to learn about investments and the professional selling them. Turn the tables and ask questions to verify the legitimacy of an investment and investment professional.

(News Release Continued)

- 2. Check out the seller.** Before giving out personal information, ask whether the seller is registered with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or **[STATE SECURITIES REGULATOR]**. Find registration and other information on individual brokers, securities firms and investment advisor firms on BrokerCheck at **www.SaveAndInvest.org** or by calling (888) 295-7422.
- 3. Check out the investment.** Confirm whether a security is registered with the SEC and get access to a company's financial information by using the SEC's Next-Generation EDGAR Database at **www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml**, also accessible through **www.SaveAndInvest.org**.
- 4. Beware of exaggerated claims.** Any claim that sounds too good to be true probably is. Visit **www.SaveAndInvest.org** to learn about persuasion tactics commonly used to perpetrate investment fraud.
- 5. Practice saying "no."** Know your exit strategy from any investment conversation. Be prepared to end the conversation and tell anyone who offers you an investment product: "I am sorry, I am not interested. Thank you."

The mission of the **FINRA Investor Education Foundation** is to provide underserved Americans with the knowledge, skills and tools necessary for financial success throughout life. The FINRA Foundation awards education and research grants and develops targeted programs aimed at segments of the investing public that could benefit from additional resources. Empowered by the federal government, FINRA is an independent, not-for-profit regulator of all securities firms doing business in the United States. FINRA and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation do not sell investment products, promote products or firms or offer specific investment advice.

[INFORMATION ABOUT PARTNERS]

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Template Newsletter Article

If you are working with a membership organization that distributes a newsletter to members, ask your contact to also include the “drop-in” newsletter article, which you can customize with specific information about any events you are planning. You should also consider contacting small, community newspapers about running this article, as these newspapers are often looking for content to fill their newspapers.

Before You Invest, Ask and Check

Tips to avoid investment fraud and protect your finances

Investment fraud affects thousands of Americans and accounts for billions in lost savings every year. The profile of a typical fraud victim is not who you might think—they are financially knowledgeable; have above average income; are college educated; and self-reliant when it comes to making decisions. Moreover, a majority of investors ages 55 to 65 do not perceive themselves as vulnerable to investment fraud; yet many of their reported investment behaviors put them at risk. In fact, a majority of investors in a recent survey indicated that they did not check either the registration status of a financial professional or the registration of an investment product—two important steps to take before making any financial decision.

The truth is, regardless of age or circumstance, anyone with money is bound to hear from a fraudster at some point. But the good news is there are simple steps every investor can take to protect their finances and family before making any investment decision. Here are the top five strategies you should remember when approached with an investment offer:

- 1. Ask questions and verify answers.** Take time to learn about investments and the professional selling them. Turn the tables and ask questions to verify the legitimacy of an investment and investment professional.
- 2. Check out the seller.** A legitimate investment professional must be licensed. Before giving out your personal information, ask whether the seller is registered with Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or **[STATE SECURITIES REGULATOR]**. Find registration and other information on individual brokers, securities firms and investment advisor firms at www.finra.org/brokercheck.

(Template Drop-In Article Continued)

3. **Check out the investment.** It's not enough to take an investment professional's word for it. You also need to check whether an investment is registered and right for you. Confirm whether a security is registered with the SEC and get access to a company's financial information by using the SEC's Next-Generation EDGAR Database at www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml, also accessible through www.SaveAndInvest.org.
4. **Beware of exaggerated claims.** Any claim that sounds too good to be true probably is. Visit www.SaveAndInvest.org to learn about common persuasion tactics often used to sell fraudulent investments.
5. **Practice saying "no."** Know your exit strategy from any investment conversation. Be prepared to end the conversation and tell anyone who offers you an investment product: "I am sorry, I am not interested. Thank you."

[MONTH/TIMEFRAME], [ORGANIZATION NAME] and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation are teaching investors how to spot and resist investment fraud as part of a national Investor Protection Campaign. At the free **[EVENT TYPE]**, attendees will learn the tactics commonly used by fraudsters and the simple steps every investor can take to reduce the risk of being defrauded.