



[Home](#) | [Search Site](#)

[Go »](#)

Who We Are

Attorney General
Tom Miller

[Office Directory](#)

What We Do

[Protecting Consumers](#)

[Fighting Crime](#)

[Helping Victims of Crime](#)

[Working for Farmers](#)

[Protecting the
Environment](#)

[Protecting Charitable
Giving](#)

[Raising Child Support
Awareness](#)

[Representing State
Government](#)

[Issuing Attorney General
Opinions](#)

[Enforcing Tobacco Laws](#)

[Protecting Utility
Customers](#)

Resources

[File a Consumer
Complaint](#)

[Other Helpful Resources](#)

[News Releases &
Publications](#)

[Legal Resources](#)

[Jobs & Internships](#)

[Contact Us](#)

For release: After 11 a.m., Friday, February 12, 2010.

Contact: Karen Austin, Deputy State Treasurer, 515-281-7677

Bill Roach, Iowa Attorney General's Office, 515-281-5536, Bill.Roach@iowa.gov

State Treasurer and Attorney General Settle with Sprint over Iowans' Uncashed Rebate Checks

Iowa Leads a \$22 Million Multi-State Settlement to Get Rebates Back in the Hands of People Across the Country

Des Moines. State Treasurer Michael Fitzgerald and Attorney General Tom Miller announced Friday that Iowa has reached a settlement in a lawsuit against Sprint over uncashed rebate checks. Thirty-six states signed on to the \$22 million settlement. As a result, thousands of people will be able to claim their rebate checks and put money back in their pockets.

At the center of the suit was whether uncashed rebate checks are reportable under Iowa's unclaimed property laws and, if so, who is the proper party to report them to the State Treasurer. The Treasurer's Office runs the "Great Iowa Treasure Hunt," a program to reconnect Iowans with their unclaimed property.

"We argued that rebate checks, like other types of obligations, become abandoned property under Iowa law if they go uncashed for three years," Fitzgerald said. "The law requires companies to report abandoned property to the Treasurer's Office each year."

"This is a matter where Iowans are entitled to their rebates but may not have even been aware the check was due them," Attorney General Tom Miller said. "In this economic time, we want to be more certain than ever that Iowans get every opportunity to claim property that belongs to them. That's why Treasurer Fitzgerald and I undertook this action together"

The lawsuit began in 2006 against Young America Corporation, a rebate processor company from Minnesota. Fitzgerald later expanded the suit to include T-Mobile, Walgreens, and Sprint as individual companies that used Young America to process their rebates.

The lawsuit contended that either Young America or the retailer was responsible to report uncashed rebate checks to the Treasurer, making it possible for rebate holders to make a claim for their rebate check. The retailers contended that Young America was responsible, while Young America contended the retailers were responsible. Iowa settled with Walgreens and T-Mobile in 2009.

The Treasurer and Sprint agreed to leave the disputed issues unresolved in order to avoid additional litigation and accomplish the settlement. Sprint denies any liability for the money claimed by the Treasurer and other states.

Sprint will pay over \$127,000 to the Treasurer to resolve the matter. Young America also turned over names and addresses of Iowans to whom the Sprint uncashed rebate checks were sent. (Rebate checks might be uncashed because they were mailed to a wrong address or mislaid, for example.)

"This settlement will ensure that Iowans will be able to get the full value of any rebate checks issued by Sprint and processed by Young America from 1999 through 2002. In addition, Sprint has agreed to report all future unclaimed rebates annually," Fitzgerald said. "Now we can go to work to find the rightful owners."

Background and more detail -- The Treasurer's Unclaimed Property Program:

Iowa Code Chapter 556 deals with "Disposition of Unclaimed Property." Unclaimed property can be any financial asset abandoned by its owner for a period of time specified by the law (three years for uncashed rebate checks.) "Unclaimed property" includes uncashed checks or gift certificates, forgotten safe-deposit

boxes, dormant bank accounts, unclaimed wages, unclaimed utility refunds or insurance dividends, and stock certificates and dividends.

Property may become abandoned when people move and simply forget about an account or deposit, when people get a check and forget to deposit it, when people divorce or remarry, or when an error causes a mailing to be returned as non-deliverable.

Under Iowa law, the State of Iowa "stands in the shoes" of the missing owner, and the State Treasurer maintains custody until the rightful owners (or heirs) claim the property. Rightful owners or legal heirs always have the right to claim assets. There is no time limit to file a claim, and the Treasurer's Office provides the service free of charge. Iowans may go to to see if they have unclaimed property listed at the Treasurer's Office.

Miller and Fitzgerald listed several tips to assure consumers obtain their rebate:

- Know and follow all rebate rules, requirements and deadlines (some rebate offers expire soon after a purchase). Be very careful about all required details, including your exact address. (Note: a high percentage of rebate processors will not send rebates to a post office box.)
- Keep copies of receipts, the universal product code (UPC code) and the rebate form you submit. (You might ask the retailer for TWO copies of the original receipt - sometimes original receipts are required for both the rebate and warranty service.)
- Send your rebate form via certified, return-receipt mail from your post office -- so you have proof that the company received your application and when it was received.
- Track your rebate, know when you can expect payment, and follow up if there is any delay. Know who is processing your rebate application (it's often a "fulfillment" house, not the retail company), and contact them about the status if there is a delay.
- If you do not receive your rebate and don't receive a satisfactory explanation, file a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division (www.iowaattorneygeneral.org) and the Federal Trade Commission (www.ftc.gov) see also the previous news release from February, 2006.
http://www.state.ia.us/government/ag/latest_news/releases/feb_2006/.