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## AARP 'Shred Fest 2016' Helps Consumers Avoid Risk of Identity Theft

### Dozens of Shred Fest Events Scheduled Nationwide to Provide Secure Document Destruction

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – As part of their ongoing efforts to help consumers protect themselves from identity theft, the **AARP Fraud Watch Network** and the **AARP Foundation** are sponsoring “*Shred Fest 2016*,” a series of document-shredding events in communities nationwide, during **Money Smart Week®** April 23-30.

More than 90 free Shred Fest events are planned in 37 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Consumers may check the **online schedule** for an event convenient to their location.

“Once the tax-filing season is behind us, many taxpayers like to do a spring cleaning of their old financial statements and other records,” said Nancy LeaMond, Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer, AARP. “That’s a good idea, but remember that rifling through dumpsters and other trash receptacles is one of the main tricks of the scammer’s trade. Our *Shred Fest 2016* community events will allow consumers to discard sensitive documents in a safe and secure manner.”

In 2015 the Federal Trade Commission received 490,000 complaints nationwide about **identity theft**, an increase of 47% over 2014.

To avoid having your sensitive information compromised, security experts recommend shredding of the following types of materials:

- Old documents: Papers that carry your Social Security number, birth date, signature, account numbers, passwords or PIN numbers.
- Banking: Canceled or unused checks. Shred deposit slips and ATM and credit card receipts, once you receive your monthly statements.
- Credit Cards: Preapproved credit card applications and incentive/gift checks from credit card companies.
- Medical: unneeded medical bills.
- Investments: Investment account statements.
- Obsolete ID cards: Expired driver’s licenses, medical insurance cards and passports.

These and other sensitive documents will be safely destroyed at no charge, at any of the *Shred Fest 2016* events. Please check the event **schedule** for locations, operating hours and restrictions.

And for those consumers who use a home shredder, experts also recommend the use of a micro-cut model. Tests have shown that the scraps of paper from a straight or cross-cut shredder can be reassembled by identity thieves. With a micro-cut shredder, the paper is rendered into impossible-to-reassemble debris.

For more information on how to keep yourself safe from identity theft scams and other fraud schemes, visit [www.aarp.org/FraudWatchNetwork](http://www.aarp.org/FraudWatchNetwork).

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**About AARP** AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into 'Real Possibilities' by changing the way America defines aging. With staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and promote the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare security, financial security and personal fulfillment. AARP also advocates for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the world’s largest circulation magazine, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @aarp and our CEO @JoAnn\_Jenkins on Twitter.

**About the AARP Foundation** AARP Foundation is working to win back opportunity for struggling Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and

isolation. By coordinating responses to these issues on all four fronts at once, and supporting them with vigorous legal advocacy, the Foundation serves the unique needs of those 50+ while working with local organizations nationwide to reach more people, strengthen communities, work more efficiently and make resources go further. AARP Foundation is AARP's affiliated charity. Learn more at [www.aarpfoundation.org](http://www.aarpfoundation.org).

**CONTACT:**

Mark Bagley, 202-434-2560, [mbagley@aarp.org](mailto:mbagley@aarp.org), [@AARPMedia](https://twitter.com/AARPMedia)

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