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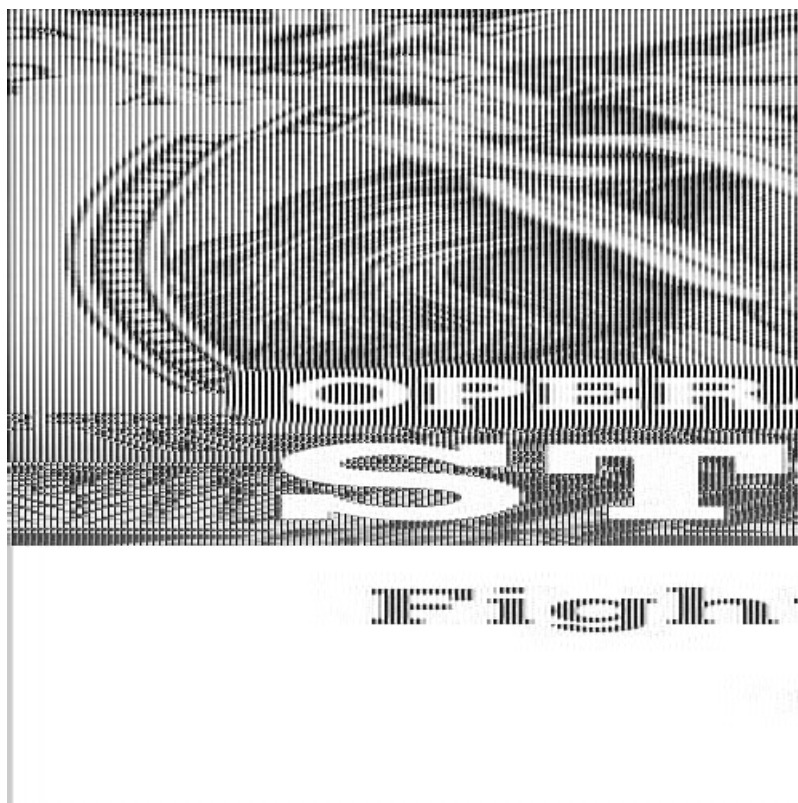
## AARP's Annual "Operation: Stop Scams" to Feature Document-Shredding Events and Other Activities in Communities Nationwide

New Survey finds Most Agree on Importance of Shredding, but Almost Half Don't Follow Through

**WASHINGTON, DC**—As AARP today launches its second annual "*Operation: Stop Scams*" -- a five-week-long series of more than 150 free document-shredding events and fraud education activities in communities coast-to-coast -- a new AARP survey finds that almost half of consumers ignore experts' recommendations to regularly shred their sensitive financial records.

The anti-fraud activities, sponsored by AARP's local offices in more than 35 states, include: paper-shredding events, fraud education programs -- popularly referred to as "scam jams," **AARP Fraud Watch Network** background presentations, tele-town halls and phone bank call-out sessions to warn consumers of the latest scams. Consumers can find their closest local event at [www.aarp.org/OperationStopScams](http://www.aarp.org/OperationStopScams).

In AARP's recent **poll** on tax fraud and identity theft issues, 80 percent of respondents agreed that shredding paperwork that contains Social Security numbers, birth dates and financial account numbers is "very" or "extremely" important. Yet, 34 percent admitted that they shred just "rarely" or "sometimes." Twelve percent said they have never shredded such documents.



"With Tuesday marking the end of the tax-filing season, we're reminding our members and others that it's a great time to clear out and discard their obsolete financial documents. Our shredding events in dozens of communities provide a convenient and safe way for people to destroy this sensitive paperwork," said Jean Setzfand, senior vice president, programs, AARP. "April also brings the personal finance awareness activities of *Money Smart Week*, so we're excited to do our part with events to teach consumers to be smart about avoiding fraud and scams."

**Money Smart Week, April 21-28**, is a collaborative between thousands of organizations across the United States that offer financial education programs designed to help consumers learn to better manage their personal finances.

Specific examples of AARP "*Operation: Stop Scams*" **events** range from a presentation on identity theft and cybersecurity privacy in Ralston, Neb.; to a "Scam Jam" in Rochester, Minn.; to a fraud-fighting seminar in Fairfield, Conn. Paper-shredding events total more than 100. More than 1 million pounds of sensitive documents were destroyed during "*Operation Stop Scams*" in 2017.

The **AARP Fraud Watch Network** launched in 2013 as a free resource for people of all ages. The FWN website provides information about fraud and scams, prevention tips from experts, an interactive **scam-tracking map**, fun educational quizzes, and video presentations featuring Fraud Watch Network Ambassador **Frank Abagnale**. Users may sign up for "Watchdog Alert" emails that deliver breaking scam information, or call a free helpline at 877-908-3360 to speak with volunteers trained in fraud counseling.

Abagnale, the renowned fraud expert whose personal story was depicted in the hit movie "Catch Me If You Can," is also host of a new AARP weekly podcast series, "**The Perfect Scam**," that launched this month.

**About AARP**

*AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.*

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