

FTC Changing Consumer Demographics Workshop
December 6, 2016
Segment 2
Transcript

ROSARIO MENDEZ: All right. Good afternoon, everybody. We're going to go ahead and get started. Welcome back to the FTC workshop on the changing consumer demographics. My name is Rosario Mendez, and I'm delighted to be here, to be kicking off the afternoon panels.

In the morning, we had a terrific lineup of speakers who really enlightened us as to the demographic changes that this country has been having in the past decades and will continue to have in the future. We also heard from marketers and professionals in the marketing industry as to how they are changing their techniques and their marketing strategies to adapt to the changes in the consumer demographics.

We heard primarily about two groups that are especially growing and expected to continue to grow and emerge, the diverse consumers and the aging baby boomers. All of this information in the morning really has set the stage for us today for the afternoon to talk about how are these changes impacting our consumer protection work? What strategies are we going to be engaging in so that we make sure that we are protecting every community from fraud?

We'll hear later in the afternoon about strategies for protecting the next generation of aging baby boomers. But now we're going to start with our first panel. And we're going to be discussing strategies for protecting our diverse consumers.

Help me welcome my distinguished, our distinguished panelists. You have their bios on the handout, so I'm not going to read that. But here on my left, I have Samantha Poppe. She represents the National Council of La Raza, or NCLR. Eric Friedman is the director of consumer protection in Montgomery County, Maryland. Ruth Susswein is affirmed Consumer Action.

And later we're going to hear from Alan Lai, who is with the Chinese Information and Service Center. He is in Seattle, and we're going to be hearing from him via teleconferencing.

So let's begin. I have asked the panelists to discuss three important questions today. What are your concerns in terms of consumer protection issues that are affecting the communities you work with? Are there programs or initiatives that you know work that you can share with us so that we can be prepared to implement some of the strategies or copy them? And what should the government and consumer groups do to prepare to make sure that we are protecting every community from fraud? What do you suggest that we all do?

We're going to cover hopefully all those three questions in the hour that we have together today. So let's start with Samantha. Samantha, in your role as the Director of Economic Policy for the National Council of La Raza, you know the Hispanic community very well. But you also do a lot of research to understand consumer behavior, to understand this community, and to be able to project what are their needs so that you can back up the policies that you advocate for.

Can you tell us what do you see, what do you know? Can you give us an overview of what you as a representative of this community see in the Hispanic community changing?

SAMANTHA POPPE: Sure. Thank you. Thank you, first, to FTC for hosting this wonderful event, and to Rosario for pulling together this panel. It's really nice to see some proactive steps to really get ahead of some of these demographic changes that we're expecting to see.

So I'll use my time to just give a quick overview of three things. NCLR and what we do, the general economic outlook of Latinos, and what we're learning about Latino millennials, and how we think that might change the nature of some types of fraud. So quick intro of NCLR for those of you who aren't familiar with our organization.

We are the nation's largest Hispanic advocacy and civil rights group. For nearly 50 years, we have worked to improve opportunities for Latinos living in the United States. We do this through a few ways, but largely through our programmatic and policy advocacy work in a few different areas-- education, health care, civil rights, immigration, and of course the economy which includes our work on consumer protections.

One of our unique strengths is our robust network of affiliates. These are community-based organizations. We have nearly 300 of them across 41 states. In addition to providing valuable services to the community, they also help inform our work. They are our tie to the community, help inform our policy work-- whether it's federal policy, state policy-- so that our policy recommendations are rooted in reality.

That tie to the community is valuable. One thing that I'll tell you about a little bit later is some insights that we have on the Latino millennial population. And our affiliates were so helpful in helping us connect with over 1,000 Latino millennials that they serve so that we can learn more about their perspectives on the economy, among other things.

So our work tells us that economic reality for Latinos is really a mixed picture of progress, stalled growth, and setbacks. The hard work of Latinos and policies really that promote long term prosperity of more Americans that are inclusive have really led to some marked improvements. Recent census data was very encouraging for the Latino community. We saw family incomes improving in 2015 to levels that weren't seen since 2000.

We saw one million fewer Latinos living in poverty in 2015. That includes nearly 500,000 fewer Latino children living in poverty. So those are tremendous gains.

Unfortunately, at the same time, Latinos make up the largest share of workers earning poverty level wages. They continue to see their wages lag behind other racial and ethnic groups, and they're really starting to feel and continue to feel the effects of a growing racial wealth gap. Average Latino family right now has about \$0.10 to every dollar that the average white family has. So the daily effect is tremendous on the community.

As you know, the community size and hard work really has the potential to greatly support the US economy, and we really see evidence of that even today. We're seeing strong economic

contributions from this community. Latinos lead the country in labor force participation. The Latino unemployment rate is at lowest level since 2007. And Latino buying power is projected to reach a staggering \$1.7 trillion by 2019.

So the sheer magnitude of that figure just really places a huge target right on the backs of the Latino community. And NCLR has been focused for a while on consumer protections as a core issue. Wall Street Reform in 2010 included a lot of critical changes in how we viewed consumer products and enforcement. And Wall Street Reform really directed much needed attention to many non-bank industries that really weren't regulated beforehand, and renewed attention even on bank entities that were regulated but not necessarily with an eye to consumer protections. And this is really important as we see this growing diverse population.

So the focus of this panel is protecting diverse communities. And of course, the Latino community on its own is incredibly diverse. We originate from about 20 different Latin American countries. There is variation in language ability, geographic concentration, and increasingly some differences among age groups. So I'll focus on millennials. This is really one of these emerging populations.

They represent a quarter of the Hispanic population today. And honestly, annually we see about 900,000 Latinos turning 18 every year. We expect that trend to continue for at least the next couple of years. So again, this is a huge and growing population, and protecting them will be critical.

We've started some work to tease out and continue to tease out what we need to know about this population, this growing population, and how they might be different from their parents' generation. So we fielded two studies. One I mentioned. One was a very unscientific getting insight from our affiliates. We have over 1,000 surveys in that pool.

We also partnered with a polling firm, Latino Decisions, to do a nationally representative sample, with an over-sample of millennials to be able to tease out any differences in perspectives of thoughts on the economy between these different age groups. I'll just give you a few examples of what we're learning from that. I won't get into the numbers, because I think there were some demographers talking with you this morning.

But we know millennials are much less likely to be immigrants. They're more likely to speak English. 75% of Latino millennials are proficient in English. They're going to college in record numbers. There are 34% of Latino 18 to 24-year-olds enrolled in college.

They still have relatively low levels of financial capacity and financial education. Honestly, a big part of that is that they are getting their first foray into education in this area from their parents, who might be immigrants and not necessarily have all of the tools or access to those financial tools. We're seeing a much higher adoption in use of technology, not only for social aspects but also increased use for financial transactions which is a fairly large departure from their parents' generation.

So as we're seeing a younger, more technologically savvy group of Latinos, we're hoping that they're better equipped to not only consume important consumer protection materials coming out from agencies like FTC and others, but also more comfortable in calling out a scam when they see it and actually reporting it. We know that under-reporting and non-reporting is a huge issue, and remains so.

So we're hoping that because more millennials are not immigrants, maybe they'll be more comfortable in coming forward and reporting these types of things. At the same time, the older population, immigrant populations, those remain terribly vulnerable populations within the Latino community, and relatively static in terms of their need. They still predominantly are Spanish-speaking, prefer to do financial transactions and other things in person with a trusted messenger, brick and mortar type facilities.

There is high smartphone adoption rates, but they're not using it for financial transactions. And my guess is they're not going to be using it to file complaints either. Those types of things, there are some trust issues there. So there's still a large share of the population that's really dependent on your continued efforts to really try and outreach to these communities. Culturally, linguistically appropriate materials.

But as that population evolves, it's great to see so many people really interested in learning how to be nimble and maybe change the approach and get out in front to learn how to protect a changing community.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Great. Thank you. Certainly some of the numbers that you mentioned are parallel to what we heard this morning from demographers. So thanks for letting us know a little bit more about the Latino millennials and what their characteristics are, and how we can maybe try to reach them better.

Ruth, let's hear a little bit from you. Ruth is with the National Organization of Consumer Action. So as a national consumer advocacy organization, you have embraced the changes in demographics early on. You guys have really had a few programs and a few projects that have been successful in trying to reach diverse communities.

Can you tell us a little bit more about that? And what things would you be concerned about in terms of how to reach these communities, what have been some challenges, and what consumer protection issues specifically have you seen that are growing and emerging in the groups that you've worked with?

RUTH SUSSWEIN: Thank you, Rosario. And thank you to the FTC for inviting us here today. So I am with Consumer Action. Ruth Susswein, the Deputy Director of National Priorities. I'm here in DC. And while I focus on editorial policy and advocacy work, one of our main goals as an organization is to provide free financial education materials and training to all consumers.

But our focus is on under-served communities-- LMI and limited English populations-- to help empower them and financially prosper. We use a multi-pronged approach at Consumer Action. We serve limited English populations in at least five languages via multiple channels. Through

our trilingual complaint hotline. We take full advantage of in language media, extensive multilingual financial education materials, and direct outreach to ethnic communities.

Our website, Consumer-Action.org, is one of the few places where you can find a multitude of free financial education materials in Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, English, of course, and sometimes other languages upon request. Our personal financial material covers more topics than I can name.

But to give you an idea of the range, we cover credit scores and credit reports and mortgages and foreclosure prevention and credit and debit and debt settlement and scams and remittances and broadband and internet privacy and auto insurance, et cetera, et cetera. We distribute over a million printed publications a year to community-based organizations. We have a network of about 7,000 community-based organizations around the country.

And we provide these materials for free and in print, because we're told again and again that while it's important to have information online, it's also important for us to be able to give clients printed materials to walk out the door with. So we continue to offer that. And we offer free trainings on these materials and a whole leadership training package so that the-- it's the train the trainer model.

So that the community-based group can take the information we've provided and really get it out into their community even better than we can. We also, as I mentioned, offer a free complaint hotline. And we assist consumers in Chinese, in Spanish, and in English. We conduct media interviews in language, and community outreach when necessary in language.

We translate government materials, financial education materials, for the FTC, the CFPB, HUD, the Fed, and other agencies in as many as eight languages. And we see it as our mission to help fill a financial information vacuum in LEP communities. We have a multicultural multilingual staff that works to help consumers arm themselves with important financial information and prevent fraud.

Much of our staff in California, where we're based, has roots in ethnic communities. Our translators are native speakers of languages they're translating. They live in and serve LEP populations that we're trying to reach. And I think one of the key points is that we pride ourselves on translating information accurately, and we work to use the most appropriate language to convey this financial information, which can be tricky because there are terms that don't easily translate.

IP transition and escrow and foreclosure don't necessarily easily translate into every language. So we work very hard to make sure we get those terms across accurately, and be sure that populations really understand. We also have longstanding relationships in local communities. The organizations know us. They know our materials. And they know our commitments to the communities.

And we reach out to these local trusted entities. And over time, we've become a trusted entity. So we think that's essential in trying to reach LEP populations, and we think it's essential to make progress in all these different financial areas.

We understand how important it is to partner with the CBOs, not only for us to get our information out but to learn what the needs are of that community, and to learn what the problems are in that community. And then we at times act as a liaison with, for instance, government agencies. We may convey the scams that prey on ethnic communities. We may alert the government agencies to these particular problems because we're hearing them firsthand from our hotline and from the community organizations.

And at other times, we are alerting limited English communities to the latest problem. Warning LEP consumers on UnaVision or Chinese radio about Wells Fargo's fake bank account scandal. Whatever the latest issue, problem of the day, we work on reporting back to these communities, often in language.

Here in DC, we work in coalition with other groups, including NCLR, to urge corporations and government agencies to make language access a priority. And I'll stop there for now.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Great. Thank you. Thanks for explaining your multilanguage and multicultural outreach program that I think is very important. We here at the FTC also have a lot of programs on the outreach front that we try to also have in different languages. But you certainly have many more than we do. So that is a great strategy. Thank you.

Eric, let's hear from you a little bit. We've already heard from two national groups that are doing work across the entire nation. Let's now zoom in into one county, and how you handle the diversity in your county. Montgomery County, Maryland, was just named by Wallet Hub as one of the most diverse counties in the country.

In fact, Gaithersburg, I think, was the most diverse city in the entire country based on their research. I think they base that on social class, economics, and race are some of the things that they take into consideration. And two of your other cities, Gaithersburg and Silver Spring, also were on that list.

So you certainly have a county that is very diverse. So how do you handle those challenges? What kind of activities do you have to help protect the diverse consumers in your county? And what are you concerned about in the future? What kind of things do you think are going to continue growing, and how do you think you can tackle that?

ERIC FRIEDMAN: Well, thank you, Rosario, and good afternoon. How about a big cheer for local government consumer protection agencies?

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. That's pretty good for after lunch. Local agency is really the backbone of consumer protection and consumer protection movement. Montgomery County's office was created 46

years ago, one of only two in the state of Maryland. We enforce many FTC statute. We have subpoena authority, civil citation authority where we can actually write tickets, like a parking ticket, when there's a violation of consumer protection.

And as Rosario stated, Montgomery County is very diverse. One million people. Breaks down pretty much-- some of the statistics you heard this morning-- 42.2% white, 19% black, Caribbean, African-American, 19% Hispanic, 15.4% Asian, and point something percent of everything else.

And you know, there really is a paradox in terms of change. Change is a constant. The marketplace is constantly changing, and the difference today really seems to be the speed at which things are changing. Just three quick examples.

How we communicate, how we all communicate, is very, very different. The press release used to be the gold standard. If you wanted to communicate with the world, you issued a press release. That's unheard of now. We're issuing on Facebook and Twitter. And somebody tweets something at 3 o'clock in the morning, and it becomes a news item. So the way in which we communicate has drastically changed.

How we pay for things has completely changed. It used to be follow the flow of money. When the consumer got ripped off, you wanted to see the back of the check to see where the money went. Now it's all done electronically. You know, my daughter goes out-- she just started college-- she goes out to dinner with all her friends.

No one has any cash. They whip out their phones, and they're sending through Venmo. Here's \$10. I owe you \$10. The back and forth. You can't even follow the flow of money when you're going after crooks now. So that clearly has changed.

And of course, the sharing community and a sharing marketplace. It's not just Uber and Lyft. It's everything else. You can't even tell who the consumer is and who the merchant is.

When it comes to some success strategies, here's one strategy that does not work, we found. Just translating your information into another language by itself doesn't work. Sometimes that's important to do, but one size doesn't fit all. And so you have to realize you've got to do more than that.

In Montgomery County, we thought for some reason that all the faith-based places of worship in Montgomery County that don't have air conditioning would want a little hand fan like this. Not very good. Not very popular.

But let me just share four quick examples of strategies that do seem to work. Notwithstanding the age of social media, face-to-face contact really makes a difference. We took all of our employees and we had shirts made, and we did a look, learn, and listen walking tour of all the various communities in Montgomery County. Going into stores, going onto streets.

Here's the shirt. This is about as close to being a fashion model as I'll ever be. This is the shirt. It said "hello" in six different languages. On the back of the shirt, it said, "look, learn, and listen walking tour."

When there's a storm in Montgomery County, we will follow up and go door to door knocking on doors because we know the unlicensed home improvement contractors and the unlicensed tree cutters are going to be following the footprint of that storm as well. Here's a creative thing that Montgomery County did.

County executive Ike Leggett created a new office called the Office of Community Partnerships, in which they hired someone to be a liaison in each ethnic community. Someone who knows the customs, the culture, the players, who are the activists in each community. And so now in Montgomery County, we have different people in charge of the Latino community, the Middle Eastern community, African and Caribbean community, Asian community, senior community.

Montgomery County now has sister cities in El Salvador, Ethiopia, China, and India. There is a community engagement cluster where they divided the county into five different sections and put someone in charge of each section who knows what's happening in the street with all the various people.

Third example. Collaborate with existing organizations within each community. You heard this morning some talk about Spanish radio. It's unbelievable. We have a receptionist at our office who's bilingual in Spanish. We get very few calls from the Spanish community.

However, when our bilingual investigators go on Spanish language radio where there is a person who runs the station who is a known host, the radio is flooded with calls from the Hispanic community calling the radio station before they'll call the government agency.

We work with-- and this is something we're working on now-- we're trying to get a volunteer in our office who speaks Korean and Chinese and all the various languages to be in our office during certain times of every day so we can have a campaign called Time to Talk where we will talk about on Mondays between 10:00 and 2:00, we have someone who speaks Korean. And we're using the volunteer community to do that.

And the fourth and final area is some type of creative activities. To give one example, or a couple examples of things we think are a little bit creative, you may have heard of a very tragic explosion and fire in an apartment complex not too many months ago. Made the national news. About 80 apartments were demolished. Many families lost their homes.

And there was a great campaign to raise funds for them, donations. So we knew that these families were going to be getting in a few months a big check from the donations that were collected. So we developed a flyer to warn people, saying some people may try to take advantage of you because you've just received a check.

And we have certain key information that we put in there. We had it translated into several different languages. And we were able to get it in the envelope with the actual check that the family was going to be receiving. So we tried to target as best as possible.

We have an anonymous hotline, a tip line-- the card's outside as well-- where you can report things as a tip to our office in both English and Spanish. Many people get the Valpak and money mailer in the mail with coupons from some companies that appear to be a little bit sketchy. But we put our ad in there with all the rest of them, with all the air duct cleaning companies and everything else in there.

And sometimes there's some risks involved. Montgomery County sends out its personal property tax every year. So you get your tax bill for your property. And we put a flyer in there telling people you should call the Consumer Protection Office if you have any questions. And of course, we realize there were a few people that thought their taxes were too high because of supporting an agency like that. So there are a little bit of risks involved.

Those are some of the things that we've been trying to do.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Thank you. Thanks for those examples. Those are great examples of things that you've done. I know that you're doing even more than that. For example, I saw your business card outside that has your information in Spanish and in English. One side in Spanish, and one side in English.

And that's just one little example of an outreach piece that is not probably that difficult to get done, but it does have impact probably in the community when you go and you actually give a business card that has the information in their language, in the language of the community.

So with that, I would like to transition to Alan. Alan is in our office in Seattle. I think he's going to be on the screen coming up soon. Hi, Alan. How are you? Good afternoon.

ALAN LAI: Hi, I'm fine. How's everybody?

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Yeah. Technology has allowed us to have this wonderful resource here with us today even, though he is all the way in Washington state. So Alan, you've heard from your colleagues about different communities that they're working with and different strategies that they're using.

In the morning, we certainly heard demographers talk about the Asian-American community as one of the fastest, if not the fastest, growing community in the country. And very complex community. Different languages, different cultures, different levels of education, different levels of economic situations.

So please tell us what are you concerned about in terms of the Asian-American community in terms of consumer protection? Frauds that could be targeting them, specifically because of the traditions, because of beliefs, of cultures. Tell us more about what you see as an advocate for this community?

ALAN LAI: Thank you very much for inviting me, FTC. And I've been a longtime supporter with what FTC in Seattle does. And my office is located in the Chinatown international district of Seattle. And we are right next to the zip code which has the most culturally diverse zip code in the nation. It's 98144.

And we have worked with a lot of Asian-Americans who were scammed. Many times when a lot of the government brochures are not translated, the perpetrators did their work. They speak the victim's language. And because of the fact that they speak the language, they can easily buy into their trust.

And the victims [INAUDIBLE]. And just over here in Chinatown Seattle-- not just in Seattle, the Chinatown in San Francisco, in New York. In fact, all over the world, there were a lot of blessing scams that were going around since two summers ago.

And a typical Chinese victim were ripped off \$30,000, \$40,000 each. How did that happen? I think there's a stereotype that Asian-Americans are very well educated. That's true, some of them are very well educated. But the older generation may not be that well educated.

And plus, they have their cultural belief that is deep in their roots. And they have their superstition. And the blessing scams goes like this. The scammers will speak their language. And they would target the lonely Chinese woman and befriended them. Hey, how are you doing? I'm looking for a Chinese herbalist.

The victim may be trying to retrieve. No, I don't know the Chinese herbalist. But say, no, no, no. I have a daughter who is 10 years old. Menstruation started but never stopped.

And then the second perpetrator will come. Oh, you're looking? You must be looking for the Chinese herbalist. I know him. Let's go look for him together.

And then they started talking to this victim, getting some basic information from her. And then very soon, they come to the third perpetrator. By that time, they got some basic information about the victim. And they say, oh, well, wait a minute. Chinese herbalist is my grandfather.

He has retired. But let's wait one moment. Let's see if he would help you. So he'll go away. Come back very quickly. Now my grandfather said, are you from Shanghai? Then the victim will go, wow! Your grandfather must know magic. I'm from Shanghai.

And then you have a beloved son. And then they would be making up a story. Like, oh, your son must have step on the brunt of a fatal accident in Chinatown last month. And the spirits had their eyes on your son. Your son will die. My grandfather said your son will die in 10 hours.

So the scare sink in. And then the victim will say, well, how can you help me? My grandfather said take this back home, put all your jewelries. Put all your personal savings in this bag. And then he'll give you the blessing, and then your son will be saved. Otherwise, he will die.

The superstition sink in. The scare sink in. And they would go home, take everything in. And then very quickly, they would switch the bag. And then take this back, this is heavenly secret. Do not leak the heavenly secret. Meaning don't tell anybody.

So the blessing scam has been going around. And I think to break that cycle, Eric said that very well. Just the written translation doesn't work. We need the radio station program. We need TV station program.

And now you may think the older people are superstitious, the younger people are well educated. They will not be scammed. But another scam happened to the UDub students. More than \$1 million were scammed. And it was the perpetrators telling them-- perpetrators speak Chinese-- telling them, I pay your tuition ahead of time. You save 5%.

5% is equivalent to more than \$1,000. So they say, OK, let's do that. So they give them the student ID. And those are done electronically. The perpetrators use a fraudulent credit card to pay their tuition online.

And UDub give them a reply. Tuition has been paid. Then they go to the victim. Now your tuition has been paid. Now write me a check, give me cash for that amount. And then by the UDub find out the credit cards were fraudulent, money were gone. The victim students have to pay the tuition a second time.

So a lot of these things, it's like the minorities, Asians, they don't trust law enforcement as much. And so we need to work with them before a lot of crime happen, on an ongoing basis so they would trust us. They would work with us.

Besides using the newspapers, the ethnic newspaper, we can use the radio station. We can use TV, do what the Consumer Protection people are doing. Do what AARP is doing. And work with local organizations like us, that we have a trust with the community. And that way, we have an ongoing relationship.

We can tell our clients that we speak your language. Your voice will be heard. And people will be more willing to come forward when crime happens.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Great. Thanks so much. Thanks for those examples, Alan. So you really had some good insights in terms of what's happening in the Asian-American community. But I think that also translates to the other diverse communities in the country. Distrust, maybe, and that's why they're not reporting.

They don't feel a connection. You need to reach them, get in some kind of emotional connection. And that's what the scammers are doing really well, right? They are connecting emotionally based on culture and traditions and language.

We've also talked about that. And you mentioned and Eric mentioned, and others, the value of partnerships and working directly. Ruth has staff that has roots in the connections. NCLR certainly has their affiliates. And those seem to be some strategies that work.

However, we also know that a lot of these organizations have many challenges. Maybe they don't have a lot of money. They're overworked. They have a lot of things happening. They're dealing with a lot of things at the same time.

So how do you work-- what would be helpful for those organizations? How can the government make it a little bit easier for them? How can we make it a little easier so that they can actually reach their communities a little better?

SAMANTHA POPPE: I can start. Three things, I think. Education, research, and enforcement are three things that we'd like to see the government do. You already are doing them, so those efforts maintained, but also strengthened.

So in terms of education. We think, again, those materials for consumers are invaluable to our networks. Again, they're stretched. A lot of this information, it's very technical, very dense information.

I was in a situation in a community, and I was trying to explain payday loans. And it's not easy. So again, those materials. FTC has some fantastic materials. I saw some of them out on the table.

But also education for law enforcement. I think that would tremendously help with the under-reporting, to get some more law enforcement training on how to build trust and work with communities. A lot of localities are doing a great job at this.

We're particularly concerned about those communities where we see explosive growth in diverse populations that haven't typically had those interactions and that need before. We'd like to see some more research. We were excited to see recently a proposed survey by the FTC on consumer experiences with buying cars and automobiles. We think that will really help bolster efforts to really understand the experience of diverse communities in that space.

And we also want to see enforcement, continued enforcement. I mean, ultimately there has to be strong enforcement. It's a valuable communication tool to show that fraud will not be tolerated. You know, the Sequoia One recent actions. I think that's a great example of how to protect consumer data in this changing environment, especially with lead generators and privacy issues. So those are my three asks.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Thanks.

RUTH SUSSWEIN: So I would say we have been working with other groups to encourage particularly government agencies-- and not just, actually, industry as well-- to translate key financial documents so that even if the financial-- and we've been focused on the mortgage industry currently. But even if the actual transaction is done in English, that there be a valid translation in the language that is preferred by that client so that they really have a clear understanding of what they're getting into and what they're committing to.

There are just horrifying stories of people who end up in foreclosure, end up with an interest-only loan that they thought was a fixed rate that they'd been paying on religiously. And yet they

did everything they thought they should, and in fact their translator, who was their friend, was more of a friend to the broker or the servicer than to them.

So having key financial documents in language can be very, very valuable. Complaints. No matter what the agency. If complaints are accepted by the agency, if they can be accepted in language, that would be very helpful. But it's also very important that whoever's collecting the complaints, that a lot of time and effort go into really reviewing them.

See what the problems are in that community. And then where possible, do outreach to those communities for those particular issues so that you can take the materials you already have and offer them to the community that is having that problem. And where possible, have translations.

We, in order to help local groups, in addition to the free materials and training that we also, also offer some small stipends. Because you're right. Very often, these groups are operating on a shoestring. And so if you have targeted education materials and fraud prevention materials that can go to a certain community and you can offer some sort of stipend, that can be very, very helpful to the orgs.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Yes. Eric?

ERIC FRIEDMAN: I would add that we clearly see that the key is to have a liaison in every community. For example, the blessing scam that you heard about is going to be more prevalent in the Chinese community. There is a version in the Hispanic community.

We have people going door to door selling pots and pans and doing water purification tests in the Hispanic community. So the key really is to know the players there. Our office has relied heavily upon the expertise of volunteers that work with our office.

Just a very quick example. The administrator of our office was in line waiting for early voting. Noticed that the woman in front of her was texting on her cell phone, and it was all in Chinese. So she started talking to that woman.

Long story short, that woman is now a volunteer in our office who's teaching us something about WeChat. And people in the audience may know a lot more about it than we do. It's kind of a combination of Facebook and Instagram and many other things, phone service.

So she is now communicating with 3,500 Chinese-speaking residents of Montgomery County, all in Chinese, sending out our information just from that chance meeting. And is going to be a great asset to our office. So you really have to find the key players in the community.

RUTH SUSSWEIN: And I would just note we've had the same situation that Eric talked about earlier where we have certain people who are fluent in Chinese and regularly do Chinese radio. And we've had the same experience where the lines are flooded because people feel comfortable knowing that a native speaker is warning them about certain scams, and then coming forward to not only let people know about other ones but also to get some help.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Thank you. Alan, did you have something?

ALAN LAI: I cannot agree more. This is Alan. And I approve of what Eric said. Indeed, a lot of the Chinese population these days, they do not use computers. They use WeChat because it's readily available in their phone.

And with the WeChat, it's very easy to texting via WeChat. People from mainland China use WeChat. People from Hong Kong use WhatsApp. So those are very easily collectable criminal evidence. But there's also some tips for the law enforcement.

So maybe with the training, with the outreach, the education, think outside the box. We are mainstream Americans. We think, oh, it's easy. If some crime happened, what do we do? We call our law enforcement.

How do we call our law enforcement? Call 911. Now, many of these immigrants, where they are coming from, back home they may not call 911. If they are from Russia, they call 119. If they are from China, they may call 112. From Hong Kong, they call 999.

So something as basic as that. Call 911 and telling them all law enforcement throughout the nation have access to the language line. You just speak the language, in one simple language, one simple word.

What is your name? Chinese. What dialect do you speak? What happened? Chinese, Chinese. Just saying the word Chinese will get the dispatcher, get you an interpreter to speak your language in less than one minute or two minutes. And that will get the message across that the communication fluid.

And so the sooner you call 911, the more faster you get to the basic information. The sooner you can work with the perpetrators. So think outside the box.

Oftentimes, we have too much generalization. Thinking, oh, just call 911. Something as simple as that may not be as simple, as easy, for the immigrant. And get your allies in your community like a non-profit organization in the Chinese community, in the Korean community, or the religious organizations. Work with them early on.

And that's why although my office is in Chinatown, Seattle, a lot of times the victims will come to me before they call 911. And so it's someone they trust, and they would be more readily use the service. And then hopefully the under-reporting will improve. Thank you.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Thanks, Alan. Those are very good points. So with that, it really is every community is different. There's no one size solution for everybody. And I think that's the theme that we keep hearing. You really have to know who you want to reach, and how to get to them.

In the last 10 minutes or so that we have, I would like to hear other things, other strategies that you know that work. But also what are you concerned about in terms of consumer protection?

What do you think are going to be some of the frauds in addition to the ones that we've heard from Asian-American community.

For the Hispanic community, for example, the millennials are emerging, are a growing group. But there's also other ages and other groups, subgroups, within the Hispanic community. What are you concerned about in terms of frauds that could be affecting them, for example?

SAMANTHA POPPE: Right. So right now, we definitely have a renewed urgency on immigration related fraud following post-election fear with a very divisive campaign rhetoric around immigrants. That we're seeing a rise in the longstanding notario frauds, of folks pretending to offer legal services, promising to really fix any of your legal immigration problems even when they know full well that they cannot do that.

So people are spending a lot of money on these services in hopes of being able to stay in the country. Again, these are folks who know the culture, know how to prey on them. A lot of some of the same tactics that Alan and others had mentioned.

We're also looking into rising number of issues related to online activities related to fintech. Privacy and lead generators and sharing of personally identifiable information, financial technology. There are some promising practices just given their technological advancements. But just given that it's a largely unregulated industry, we're really worried that some predatory practices might fall through the cracks.

Auto lending is something that we're seeing a lot of unscrupulous lending practices, either tacking on extra interest for communities of color and discriminatory lending, forcing purchase of warranties or other add-ons. So we're certainly watching that, trying to get some more regulation and protections in that area.

And the last is really related to this drive in millennial growth. And that's in the education sector. More Latinos than ever are entering post-secondary institutions, and so a lot of them are first generation students. A lot of them are being drawn into these for-profit institutions that are promising job placement, that are promising five, six figure salaries.

And so a lot of money is going into these predatory institutions, who have been really shown in the data to prey on black and Latino communities. So there's that aspect. There's also the aspect of student debt with more Latinos entering college, less familial wealth. A lot of Latinos are dependent on student loans, like a lot of students are.

But a lot of Latinos are not completing their education. So they're leaving college with debt but no degree, and none of the economic prospects and benefits that come with that degree. So they're faced with debt that they often can't pay back because they don't have a job. They don't have that degree. So they end up in delinquency or forbearance and bankruptcy.

And all of these other situations that affect their financial stability. So we haven't heard a whole lot of debt to there within the community. But I know personally I've gotten the scam phone calls

on my phone saying we can forgive your student debt. Just call us in one easy step. So that's something that we have our ears perked up to hopefully not hear, but to be responsive.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Thank you. Ruth?

RUTH SUSSWEIN: We have also heard specifically in California in the Chinese communities a wireless lifeline scam where there's a pitch for a free cell phone, and next thing you know your lifeline account is switched from landline to switched over to your cell phone.

And once you figure that out and decide that's not what you wanted-- you wanted a free cell phone-- if you go to switch back then there's cancellation fees and something called a conversion fee. And so you end up in a big mess and with a lot of costly fees. So that's something that we've seen hitting particularly San Francisco, but California Chinese consumers.

We've also seen debt relief scams. That and foreclosure prevention scams. Even though the worst of the foreclosure crisis is behind us, Probably a lot of people here know that that doesn't mean that foreclosure is history for everyone. And unfortunately, some limited English communities have been real targets of foreclosure prevention scams.

And the other is elder fraud. That can hit all communities, but it seems to be a particular problem in limited English communities.

ERIC FRIEDMAN: Just to add to that list. Again, immigration scams are our number one concern. We're doing collaborations with nonprofit organizations to do sweeps in Montgomery County where we go to stores that offer the multi-services, tax and immigration preparedness and things of that sort, to see if they're actually licensed and doing what they can legally.

And also elder fraud. The county has brought together all the various agencies to work with respect to every issue in terms of elder fraud, and to collaborate. For example, half the homes, or a great percentage of them, in Montgomery County still don't have working smoke detectors. So we work with the fire department and all the other agencies to have a holistic approach to all these concerns.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Thank you.

ALAN LAI: I would like to echo immigration scam would be ongoing because they are immigrants. Even when they get their green card, they want to petition for their loved one to come. And back home, they are used to when you don't know the higher up government officers, the only way to get things done is to pay some bribery.

So very easily, the people will be trapped into paying some bribery, paying some money under the table. Someone said they know some big shots in the immigration office. And that will be very easily scammed.

And then the blessing scam I mentioned because the fact that each time they scam a victim, it's like hitting the jackpot. \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 worth of their lifelong savings and jewelry.

And so it will happen time and again in every summer in every Chinatown, because it has already proven that has happened in all the Chinatowns all over the world for two, three summers in a row already.

So we need to continue to work with the victims. Working with Chinese Asian victims is like an uphill battle. Chinese has a proverb that says when I die, I do not want to go to hell. As long as I'm living, I do not want to set my foot in any government office.

This is a little bit of the mindset of the Asian population. But like what Eric said, what Samantha said, what Ruth said. We work with the nonprofit, work with the minority community leaders before things happen. Build up the working relationship. Then through that relationship, they will trust us more. They will be coming forward a lot faster and sooner. Thank you.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Thank you, Alan. Yes. So we've heard several strategies, several techniques that we know have been working. And hopefully we'll continue to explore even more than that, more than the ones that we have talked about today.

And one of the things, why this is important, this type of panel, is because we need to hear from people who are actually working with these communities so that we know what it is that is happening in those communities so that we can help protect every community from fraud, as I said in the beginning. And one of the things at the FTC that we've been doing is working a lot with the legal services providers so that we can hear from them what their clients are experiencing.

And I would like to call on Allie Yang, who I think is in the audience. She has also been working from the Department of Justice on an initiative to reach out to legal aid providers. And I think that's a really good strategy and initiative from the government to hear more about the scams and the problems that diverse communities are having. And they may be not communicating directly with the government, but they're communicating with people who are locally in their communities that they trust.

ALLIE YANG-GREEN: Hello, everyone. My name is Allie Yang-Green. I think Rosario just said half of what I wanted to say already. So I work for the Department of Justice, Office for Access to Justice. And we staff this interagency effort of federal government level called the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable.

It's, at this point, a 22 federal agency effort. And FTC has been a very strong partner in this collaboration from the very outset in 2012. And we became a White House initiative in 2015. And as Rosario said, we really look to Civil Legal Aid as one of the community organizations that are trusted partners of the communities that are diverse who may not have easy access or vetted trust with the government offices.

And our basic premise is that many of the federal programs that serve the under-served communities and the low income impoverished communities can be more effective and stronger when they partner with community organizations like Civil Legal Aid. Those organizations and programs that provide free legal services for those who are eligible.

So as I mentioned, and as Rosario said, FTC is really an exemplar program where they have regional offices where they have a designee who liaise with local Civil Legal Aid organizations so that there is an ongoing open dialogue communication between a local community that can inform what's going on to a government office so it can help inform the government priorities, as well as having regional meetings where they can come together for FTC to convey what's going on, the newly developed expertise and case information to local communities and for the local folks to share the information to FTC.

And we're so excited to share that the FTC's great work has inspired other federal agencies such as the Department of Labor, which is a really key agency that does a lot of-- I guess more of worker, labor protection work-- but which is very much related to the consumer protection work.

We'll be launching the similar program this coming year to have their regional offices designating someone to liaise with community organizations, including Civil Legal Aid, so they can better collaborate and strengthen their programs and protect the communities better. So this is one example of a federal effort to support what's happening on the state level, local level, and other non-governmental spaces.

So if you want to learn more about what we do, our website is Justice.gov. www.justice.gov/lair. L-a-i-r. And we have a brand new report that just came out that catalogs our work, our partner agencies' work, in this space collaborating with Civil Legal Aid in the past four years and beyond in one document. So if you want to look it up, please do so. Thank you.

ROSARIO MENDEZ: Great. Thank you, Allie. Well, I think we're out of time in our panel. But I really want to thank everybody for being here today. We keep hearing that partnerships are important, that getting trusted sources in the community are important. And I think at the FTC, we try to work on that. But there's always so much more room to get it better, and to do it even more in the diverse communities that we're trying to help.

So I really hope that we continue this conversation. And if anyone has any questions or any other comments, feel free to email to us at the workshop email. And we'll try to get back to you. But we would love to keep working with everybody on the panel, and those who are listening to us, and Alan from Seattle, to make sure that we are protecting every community from fraud and that we keep thinking about the issues that these communities are going to be experiencing in the future as well as today. Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

SAMANTHA POPPE: That was great.

PATTI ROSS: OK. We're going to quickly call up the last panel of the day. One hour left. We'll do a quick change over here.

It's funny. OK. We are going to get started with our last group of the day. A lot of creative thinkers on this panel. And we'll have someone on the VTC. I'm going to call on Marti in a minute.

But this panel is "Strategies for Protecting the Next Generation of Aging Consumers." We certainly heard a lot of numbers this morning from the demographers about the aging population. What's happening, the aging baby boomers, how we're going to radically change as that shift happens, and also the length of the time in which people are in that end of their life phase.

So today what we're going to talk about is the next generation of aging consumers. We're going to try and focus on those that are moving into retirement. I call those the young old, something like that. But that's what we're going to kick it off with.

And our panel has three big questions also, which similar to previous panel. What are the growing concerns for this next generation of aging consumers? How should government and consumer groups prepare to meet their needs? And are there programs or initiatives that have been effective or likely would be successful in protecting this group of consumers?

We have five panelists today. We're going to start in a minute with our first one listed there on the slide, who's Marti DiLiema. She is at Stanford Center on Longevity. And I'll call on her in a minute.

To my left, I have Rich Goldberg. He is with the Department of Justice, Office of Consumer Protection. And we have-- oh, I'm out of order here-- Merinda Meghelli from Pro Bono Net. And we have Amy Nofziger, who is with the AARP Foundation. And on the end there, we have Jennifer Taylor. She is with Legal Aid of West Virginia.

And you're going to get to hear a little bit from each one. But I want to start us off with Marti DiLiema, who is from Stanford Center on Longevity. She is sitting-- there she is-- in our San Francisco office of the FTC. And Marti, could you start us off with what you think are some of the unique characteristics of this next generation of aging consumers, and some of the concerns you have when it comes to the potential for consumer fraud here.

MARTI DILIEMA: Sure. So virtually hello to everyone. I guess it's only fitting that since this is a panel focusing on the future that I'm beaming in from San Francisco. So I do want to set the stage, so to speak, and talk about the financial picture of adults who are now in middle age, but will be in their 80s, 90s, and even 100s if we're looking 20 to 30 years in the future.

So according to the Society of Actuaries, a healthy non-smoking 60-year-old woman has a 50% chance of reaching age 90 and a 14% chance of reaching age 100. And for men, it's a 62% chance of reaching 90 and an 8% chance of reaching 100. And with these additional years of life expectancy for men and women, we often think that it's getting tacked on to older age.

But the reality is that we're really seeing people having those added years of life in middle age. So we're also looking at trends. People are delaying certain milestones. So they're getting married later. They're buying their first home and having children later. So really, if we're thinking about the life course and this increase in longevity, we can't just think about it at that tail end of life. It's really inserted into multiple life stages.

So we are retiring slightly later, but we're spending more of our lives in retirement. So the push back in work has not been proportional to our increase in age. And as one of our center's faculty advisers, a Stanford economist professor named John Shoven, famously says, few people can fund a 30 year retirement off of a 40 year career.

And you know, the 2016 Retirement Confidence Survey showed that only 30% of workers 55 and older have accumulated \$250,000 in assets, and 17% have \$1,000 or less. And what's really shocking is the difference between white Americans and African-American and Latinos.

So if we look at just annual household income, the median income for white households is about \$56,000. But for African-American and Latino households, it's around \$31,000. So that's a \$25,000 difference. But it really pales in comparison to wealth.

So the average wealth of a white household is \$142,000. For Latino and African-Americans, it's closer to \$12,000. That's only 9% of what white Americans have for thinking about retirement. And these declines are due to a number of reasons.

For one, only 47% of Americans are eligible for a work-based retirement plan. And among those who are eligible, only 58% are contributing the recommended 10% of their pay. That's actually down since 2001. And this data that I'm sharing with you is from the 2001 and 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances.

We also know that homeownership rates are down. So from a peak of 67% in 2004 to 62% today. That means that fewer people can tap into that equity when they retire. And what's more troubling is that more people are entering retirement not having paid off their mortgages. So they're entering retirement in debt.

And the result of all these factors is that people have no safety net in later life. So according to the Survey of Consumer Finances, 80% of Americans in 2001 could cover a \$3,000 emergency. But today, it's less than three in four Americans can cover a \$3,000 emergency. So the financial picture I'm trying to paint is that in the future, we're going to see more of a separation between the haves and the have nots.

And I really anticipate that a lot of the fraud schemes that we're going to see are going to be tailored differentially to target those two groups. Thank you.

PATTI ROSS: Great. Oh, thank you so much, Marti. And we'll come back to you in a minute. I want to move to Amy, who works with-- you want to tell us a little bit about what you do, and then tell us what are the unique characteristics that you think of this next group of aging consumers and some of the concerns that you have and are seeing when it comes to consumer fraud.

AMY NOFZIGER: Thank you, and thanks for having me today. And I just have to laugh because in the about hour I've sat in this room, I've already myself experienced some generational differences. My staff emailed me and said to please give our Twitter handle to somebody. And I said, I don't know what that means.

So thank gosh I found the Twitter person in the back, and she was able to help my generation understand what to do with that. So again, I'm Amy Nofziger. And I been with the AARP Foundation for 15 years. Some things about the foundation and the work we do with consumer protection.

We have been fighting hard for everyone to have a safe and secure retirement and life. And obviously, we know fighting consumer fraud is one of the big portions of that. So in my job in the last 15 years, every single day I've been out there fighting fraud.

Some of the activities that we do. We have an outbound call center. And I know we've partnered some with people in this room on our outbound call centers. So actively, every day we have volunteers reach out to older adults across the country and give them fraud prevention messages proactively.

And how we do that-- and that's a little bit about what I'm going to talk today-- is we base it on who we think is more vulnerable to that scam. So we know what the victim profile of an investment fraud victim looks like, so we work with our media partners, our marketing partners, and we buy lists. And we proactively call them.

Now, I'm just going to pose a question. Will that work for the Gen-Xers and will that work for the baby boomers? We're not sure. Also, we partner with AARP's Fraud Watch Network. The Fraud Watch Network is a free resource of anybody of any age to get access to fraud information.

And I really like to stress the any age, because one of the things that we're finding out now is if we're just educating the 50 plus or the 65 plus, we're too late to the game. I use a-- it's not a really good example, but it hits home for me-- is I have a 12-year-old. And we have messages about drug prevention. He's 12. We might be early. But we need to start early.

So that is the same thing with fraud prevention. We need to start early. We need to start when people are 35 and 40. And that's why Fraud Watch Network is so important, because it's for anybody of any age.

Some of the great things about Fraud Watch Network that AARP manages is we have a scam tracking map. Our partners at the Better Business Bureau have one as well. But this is a great resource to really try to hit those demographic generations that like to have quick access on the computer, drill down to their community and state, and see what frauds and scams are happening.

Also, one of the things we have is we have a help line. We get about 2,000 calls a month. And that's hardly advertised. 2,000 calls a month from people who have been a victim of fraud or scam, or have questions about a fraud or scam. And who manages that help line are trained volunteers.

Again, that's based on research that we've done that older people, the ones that we're primarily serving now, like to work with a peer. They like to work with a peer person. So our volunteers take those calls, and they spend an average of 22 minutes with that person on the phone.

So how will our strategies change? Some of the things we're looking at based on generational differences are apps. Well, people like to have a smartphone app where they can immediately report fraud or learn about frauds and scams. Chats. That's one of the things we're certainly looking at right now.

I know for me, who is Generation X, when I get online and I have an issue with customer service, I don't really want to call somebody. I would just like the chat help me now. And I get quick access. So we're looking at that. Could we have a volunteer sit there with a chat box and help people?

Other things is we're looking to really integrate with our friends and partners in the entertainment business. Can we write fraud and scams story lines into television shows that youngsters watch? Because we know if they watch it and they see it, the people that they trust and want to be like-- listen, I have a lot of Nickelodeon and Disney on in my house. If one of the children is helping their older adult or their parent or their neighbor with a fraud and scam, are we starting young.

So quickly, just some of the things that we are trying to predict. And this is what's really hard. Is if you can know the values and cultural attributes of each generation-- and for those of you out there who have studied this, sometimes it's very conflicting. Sometimes it's different. Sometimes a boomer is 50. Sometimes a Gen-Xer is 30. Whatever.

But if you just look at it and take it at its face value, some of the things we know about the traditionalists today. They respect authority. Think about the frauds and scams that are going on right now with that. Respect authority. So the IRS calls you? You respect them.

The jury duty scam? You respect it. Baby boomers, not so much. So could we predict that maybe boomers will not be vulnerable to an authoritative impostor scam? One thing we do know about baby boomers, they're consumerist. They like to buy a lot of things.

So will there be more online shopping scams? Will there will be more too good to be true "health" offers because they want to be young and vibrant? But we know they're going to want to buy stuff.

The value. How they value of money. Traditionalists, they value money as a livelihood. Baby boomers, it's a status symbol. Gen-Xers, we just use money as a means to the end. But if you take it on the baby boomers, investment fraud. Work at home. They want to have more money because that's more status.

And then just briefly, how they're motivated. Traditionalists, they're motivated by being respected. Think about the scams. Being respected. Mrs. Smith. Mr. Smith. I know you worked hard. I know you served in your military. The scammers are giving them that respect, because that is what they value.

Boomers. They're motivated by money. Gen-Xers, we're motivated by freedom and not really have any barriers and no rules. But that's interesting to know about because are the scammers going to use that to then perpetrate something against me that's going to offer freedom of travel, freedom of no restraints. Maybe potentially some of those-- I don't want to use the name, but where you can rent somebody's house on vacation. We're not going to go maybe to the old route of hotels.

And then just finally some of the things that we have on our radar when it comes to boomers. Definitely time shares and the time share resales. Because if they had purchased a timeshare predicting that they were going to be using it in their retirement, and then had a long time to recover because of the great recession and they're not using it as much, are they going to be wanting to dump those timeshares.

We in our office through the Fraud Watch Network help line, we have had a large increase over time share resale scams. Just last week, we had a woman who had wired over \$30,000. So those are just some of the things that we're looking at right now when it comes to understanding the next wave of older adults.

PATTI ROSS: Great. Thank you, Amy. OK, Rich. I'd love to hear from you to describe some of DOJ's work protecting older adults, and concerns you have for the next generation of aging consumers when it comes to fraud.

RICH GOLDBERG: Well, I can corroborate what everybody has said so far in terms of the types of schemes that we see. Debt relief schemes, mortgage foreclosure schemes, business opportunity fraud, work at home schemes, dietary supplement sales where they're trying to appeal to youthful, losing weight, disease claims, Alzheimer's. Everything that an older American would be concerned about, that's the kind of work that we see.

And at the Consumer Protection Branch of the Department of Justice, we enforce civil and criminal laws against the perpetrators of these types of schemes. In the last panel, there was a discussion of what's the worst thing to do when you're trying to connect with your audience? Issue a press release.

Unfortunately, that's what the Department of Justice does. We are old school. We have Twitter. We have other resources at our disposal. But I know people here at the FTC have told me we need to get off of the press release issue and model because it just doesn't communicate with these populations, and that's why our partnership with the FTC is so critical because the FTC is equipped to communicate with these audiences.

But I'd also say that our partnership with NGOs is absolutely critical to the equation. There have been studies showing that if the message is transmitted by the government or by an NGO, which are they more likely to believe and absorb? And clearly, it is the NGOs.

There's so much distrust and mistrust of the government out there right now that is being sold in a variety of different media that we need to get our message out in other ways. That's why we are

trying to package our cases together so that we can have a message that goes out to the public, and at the same time to partner with NGOs.

So just in September, we had a big sweep of mass mailing fraud cases that were victimizing older Americans. And so we not only had a press conference, but we invited a variety of NGOs to participate as well, and to issue their own press release and have their own events so that they could communicate with the public as well. Because that's the way that our message is going to get out.

And I would submit that the message to older Americans is going to need to be grassroots. Not just issuing Twitter messages. Not just issuing press releases in a general way. But what we've seen when we try and contact victims, a lot of times it takes a long time to understand that consumer's need individually.

I think talking with folks like others on the panel, AARP, associations of health care providers, nurses, health practitioners, doctors, assisted living centers, and having programs from people in the community are going to be absolutely crucial. Because we cannot prosecute our way out of the problem that we're talking about here today.

PATTI ROSS: Great. OK, Merinda. I'm going to turn the stage over to you here.

MIRENDA MEGHELLI: OK.

PATTI ROSS: Merinda's going to share with us-- slip out of here. Here we go. Oops. Merinda works with Pro Bono Net, and she is going to share with us a great example of the use of technology to help that worked with a legal aid office in Queens.

MIRENDA MEGHELLI: Thank you, Patti, and thank you FTC for having me. Again, I'm Merinda Meghelli, and I work at Pro Bono Net, and I'm going to be talking to you today about the Risk Detector, an app that we developed with some of our partners.

So just a little background about Pro Bono Net. We work with legal aid organizations, courts, other access to justice stakeholders to provide innovative technology solutions to help those with legal needs and to support collaborations among advocates, low income users, et cetera. So there are a number of platforms and programs.

I'm actually involved with something called LawHelpInteractive.org, a document assembly program where we work with those courts and legal aid organizations to provide free forms online. So think of Turbo Tax or LegalZoom, but the output is to really serve low income users and advocates that serve them.

So back to the Risk Detector. And Amy talked a little bit about using apps in the approach of helping aging adults. In this model, what we do is we have an app that can be used in its first iteration to identify risk around consumer debt issues and also housing issues for aging adults.

And the app was originally developed as part of a clinic at Georgetown Law. So law students worked closely with JASA, which is a community-based legal organization in New York serving aging adults in Queens to be able to identify these types of legal risks. After the app was originally developed, we received additional funding to work with JASA and another organization, Legal Assistance of Western New York. And we added a financial exploitation logic to the app.

So the app is being used by social workers who go to their aging adult in-bound clients in an area called Far Rockaway, Queens. The social workers ask questions to their clients, and are able to determine the level of risk around financial exploitation, consumer debt, housing issues, et cetera. So it's based on Neota Logic, which is an expert system.

It uses some AI technology. So there's logic, document automation, and other technology on the back end with an easy to use interview interface on the front end. So the social workers ask the questions. The output is sent back to the office where lawyers can do a review and see what the legal risks are.

So here are some additional images. And I hope you can see them well. The font isn't too small. But these are what the easy to use screens look like. The questions were designed in plain language, although they're being used with the social workers. And the subject matter experts at JASA who are familiar with these issues with aging populations, financial exploitation, et cetera, have developed the questions along with this expert technology.

So once the interview is done-- and that's part of the normal client home visits-- the report is sent back, as mentioned before, to the legal aid organization. And in the subject itself, the level of risk is identified. So the lawyer can quickly triage and say, OK, I see that this client is at high risk of financial exploitation, so I'm going to follow up on this one first and work my way down.

So hopefully, that quick and dirty introduction to the app was helpful. And part of the reason that I believe I was asked to talk about it was just to stimulate ideas about how technology can be used when we're thinking about serving aging populations, when we're thinking about baby boomers, and their already having a certain level of comfort with technology.

So one of the things that works really well with this model is social workers who are already making home visits are able to not just do their social services work, but also do this legal work. So it really supports a holistic model in serving aging adults. It also is a great example of different stakeholders being able to come together to meet legal needs around financial exploitation.

So it started off with law students developing an app. There's also social workers involved, as well as lawyers. And finally, it's also an important model because the logic supports identifying and preventing risk of financial exploitation, and not just mitigating the risk and harm once it's already present.

So those are my slides. And I will turn things back over to Patti. Thank you for listening.

PATTI ROSS: Thank you so much, Merinda. You're raising several follow up questions there in your summary at the end.

So speaking of partnerships and bringing together lots of entities to work on a problem, next up is Jennifer Taylor who's going to talk about her work and how she brings together resources in West Virginia.

JENNIFER TAYLOR: Thank you, Patti, and thank you to the FTC for hosting this very, very interesting workshop. I'm Jennifer Taylor, and I am the ombudsman attorney for Legal Aid of West Virginia. I've been practicing law for about 30 years. And about three years ago, I started working part time for Legal Aid as the ombudsman attorney.

The ombudsman represent anyone who is or has been or maybe even will be in long term care settings. I was on the job for about three weeks when I got my first phone call. Someone's put Mom in the nursing home, took the money, and ran. I'm like, really? Who does this to Mom?

A lot of people, especially in West Virginia. West Virginia used to be the second oldest population in the country, but we're now number one. We have the oldest population in the country. Every day, 71 West Virginians turn 65. And given our demographics, that's one in four of our citizens.

So we have a booming, booming aging population. And that's created several dynamics that lead to financial exploitation. One of them is what we call the boomerang children. You throw them out and they just keep coming back.

It could be very innocent. It's the perpetual college student. It's a child who's lost a job, who's been through divorce, or maybe there is a criminal action. That for whatever reason, they need to come home.

And you get them back on their feet and you push them out the door, and then they just keep coming back. And again, it could be very innocent. But it's also the beginning of the end for financial exploitation because it makes the parents, especially as they get older, very vulnerable.

We also have what we call the sandwich generation. It's those of us who have aging parents, but we're trying to raise our children at the same time. And the stress of trying to juggle all of this-- especially perhaps working at the same time. You've got your relationship with your spouse, if you have one. If not, you have that issue of not having one.

You've got the issues with the kids. You've got the issues with the parents. And then you've got work. And that all creates a stressful situation that somehow again just starts the slippery slide down toward financial exploitation when they're caring for their parents.

We see long term care facilities are now just bursting at the seams because it seems like either the parents are staying at home being cared for by their children or they're going to long term care facilities. In either situation, there is a growing need for medical powers of attorney and legal powers of attorney, and there's also a growing need for understanding the difference

between legal capacity and medical capacity. And I always say, legal is not medical. Medical is not legal.

Medical capacity in West Virginia is when a doctor says, you are very sick. You cannot make a medical decision at this time. You might get better. It may come back. But the doctor can simply sign a paper which allows your medical power of attorney agent to make your medical decisions only. Or if there is no medical power of attorney executed, to appoint a health care surrogate.

You would not believe the number of agents under a medical power of attorney who think they have the right to write a check. No. Medical is not legal. Legal is not medical. Likewise, with capacity. Just because you lack the medical capacity, the capacity to make a medical decision, does not mean you lack the ability to make a legal decision.

A legal decision is a constitutional right. You cannot have your legal abilities taken away without a due process hearing, without the notice, without a court appointed attorney, without the right to be heard. It is not something willy-nilly.

In many states, including West Virginia, if you are deemed a protected person without the capacity to make a legal decision, you cannot even vote. A convicted felon has more rights than you do. So it's something very serious, and we see that confusion happening all the time. I actually once almost got arrested because a nursing home administrator didn't quite get the difference between medical capacity and legal capacity. Fortunately, the police officer did.

We're also seeing more appointments of guardians and conservators. Because when someone does not have the foresight to execute a durable power of attorney or medical power of attorney, then we have to implement the mental hygiene proceedings and get a guardian or conservator appointed. And you would think, well, that's good, right?

That's safe. There was oversight by the court. There's an attorney. There's a hearing. You would not believe the number of conservators and guardians who commit financial exploitation. It's high up on the list, notwithstanding all of the safeguards that are there.

I've heard a lot this afternoon about cooperation and partnerships and grassroots work, and even looking into the future and predicting what's going to happen. Well, fortunately, in West Virginia, the Ombudsman Advisory council could see what was happening 10 years ago. And they created the West Virginia Financial Exploitation Task Force.

And it is a remarkable, remarkable coming together of every possible agency, entity, citizens, just grassroots people, who care. We have no address. We have no office. We have no budget. We get together at whoever happens to have a conference room available, and maybe \$30 worth of bagels.

We have 50 members. They consist of ombudsmen, private attorneys, the West Virginia Bankers Association, all of the Board of Public Works. The governor, the attorney general, the auditor's office, the treasurer's office, the US postal inspectors, prosecutors, secret servicemen, AARP, the West Virginia Supreme Court, the Coalition against Domestic Violence.

A whole slew of agencies, privates, non-profits, government, prosecutors, defense. We all come together. And they have made some remarkable, remarkable achievements in West Virginia without spending a dime. They have caused some great legislation to be passed. Everything from the Uniform Durable Power of Attorney Act, to last year the legislature passed unanimously in both houses a standalone criminal financial exploitation act and a standalone civil financial exploitation act.

We publish little brochures that go out to anybody and everybody who's interested in financial exploitation that explains what it is, what to look for, and then who to call in the back. We publish pocket guides. We have them for social workers, for administrators of nursing homes. This is one for clergymen.

And it tells you how do you start the conversation. What are the red flags. What do you look for. What are the clues. That maybe if someone thinks there's financial exploitation-- again, on the back, this is who you call.

And then we do things for fun. You can't really see it. This is Fred. He's a mountain lion. He says, "I'm not yet dead." He's named after the "Monty Python Spam-A-Lot" "I'm not yet dead" Fred. Who would have thought "Monty Python" is the spokesperson for financial exploitation?

But it's a very effective group. And it's just remarkable what we can do. For example, this past summer West Virginia was hit by devastated floods. I mean, just torrential flooding. People lost their homes. People lost their lives.

The West Virginia state bar put out a call to legal aid. Can you help us put together packets to help people get housing, get benefits, to fight the contractors who are going to come around and financially exploit them. I put out a call to the members of the Financial Exploitation Task Force. By the end of the day, we had a fact sheet put together.

Ann Haight from the attorney general's office. AARP. Justin Southern from the auditor's office. We all came together. We all talked. We emailed. And we had that fact sheet put together by the end of the day.

And that's just a great example of what happens when you do collaborate, and you do partnership with everybody who matters.

PATTI ROSS: Great. Thank you, Jennifer. Thanks for being here today, too. So I want to open this up. I have a few questions myself. I'm happy to take questions from the audience. And if you're watching online, if you have questions and you want to submit them. I forgot. Our email address is demographicsworkshop@ftc.gov.

So I want to take it back. I think we'll come back up to Marti, if we can bring her up. I want to ask a couple of questions about we just heard from Merinda about the use of technology for helping older adults, one way helping older adults avoid or work on some prevention issues. And I want to come back to that issue.

But I'd like to start with how you see the use of technology being different with this next group of aging consumers. What role do you think technology will play in perpetuating fraud against this next generation? Maybe based on what you see their use and patterns. Marti, do you want to-

MARTI DILIEMA: Yeah. So baby boomers are certainly more tech savvy than their predecessors. And I think that technology in some ways will be keeping seniors more protected. I mean, I think in the future we'll see better encryption of personal data, use of a block chain instead of a brick and mortar financial institution, greater surveillance of our financial accounts, as well as our daily behaviors.

And all of these things might keep us more safe. But they don't take into account that scams aren't really perpetrated by people through brute force hacking into an account. Usually, the scam artist convinces the target to comply and give over their personal and financial information willingly, or send money directly. So I think in some ways, we might be more protected. But in other ways, we'll be much more vulnerable.

So one thing that I'm concerned about in the future is that older adults are living at increasingly distant geographic locations from their adult children and their grandchildren. And I think technology will be able to fill in some of the holes that that distance creates, like food delivery services, ride sharing apps like Uber and Lyft. We might even have driver-less cars. Very likely we'll have driver-less cars.

But I don't think that that can replace the in-person interaction that older adults should have with their loved ones. I think that there really needs to be a capable guardian close by to monitor the comings and goings of paid caregivers, also of strangers coming in and out of the older person's life.

Because there's really nothing more important than being in the home and observing are medications being taken on time? Are there unpaid bills stacking up? And I don't know if technology will be able to fill those gaps.

PATTI ROSS: Amy, do you have thoughts on this?

AMY NOFZIGER: I mean, I think Marti said most of it. But some of the things I think are interesting with technology of baby boomers-- and I am just lumping this all together, so don't yell at me-- is that they do have more confidence in knowledge of technology. But I think sometimes it's overinflated confidence in knowledge of technology.

So they're not necessarily asking the right questions. So one of the things that could be interesting to see-- and my parents are of the older boomer generation-- some of the scams that do come in via the internet. Like the person in need. So again, knowing what we know about the boomers-- some of the boomers-- maybe right now they're in their primary time and they're traveling.

Like my parents' friends. They're traveling. They're seeing the world. They worked hard. They're enjoying it. They have loyalty to their friends. The email gets hacked. My mother gets a help, I'm stuck over in Paris from one of her friends.

She goes, we would love to help you. Can you give us more information? It's like, Mother. What? Do you not remember what I do for a job?

Because she does not know what questions to ask, and she thinks she knows a lot of stuff about the internet and about technology. And she didn't even know that that's a possible scam. So I mean, it's just going to be interesting when you have your Craigslist, all your B&B stuff. Is their knowledge of technology overinflated and are they not asking the right questions when it comes to it.

PATTI ROSS: Right. And just as a quick response. So how would you take, then, also the ability to have real time access to check things like your bank account, and the confidence to do that? To quick check Urban Legend or a website to check it see if what's being said is real or not.

AMY NOFZIGER: Well, I mean, I think the resources are out there. But sometimes when you do have that overinflated ego, you're not going to even know to do it. So then again, that's where it comes in for us. Where the messaging is before you do something, check it out and get all of your information.

I mean, I do think technology is fantastic with the bank accounts and the credit cards. I mean, that is one of the biggest things that I preach. Personally, I check my bank account and credit card statement every single day because that is how you're going to quickly find out if something's going on. Same with Facebook. Same with email. You're going to find out if something's going on or if you're being hacked.

PATTI ROSS: Rich, did you want to talk about what you see in the changes in technology affecting fraud?

RICH GOLDBERG: Sure. It's probably information that most of you know, that it's incredibly easy, given technology, for an international player to defraud somebody in the US, making them think that they're in the US. Whether it's a telephone, whether it's through the mails. It's incredibly easy to spoof an area code in the US, make it look like they're actually operating from around the corner.

We have lottery fraudsters and other fraudsters that threaten consumers in the US and say, we're coming to arrest you. And we know that you have the house with the white shutters down the street. And there's a police officer on their way to execute a warrant on you.

And so a lot of this has to be addressed through industry. I think that these mass marketing fraudsters can cast an incredibly wide net. And we can try to stop m and we should try and stop this, by educating consumers, having family members interact with their older parents. But given that technology allows them, the fraudsters, to cast such a broad net, to call thousands of people at a time and only talk to those who actually answer the phone. To send letters to hundreds of

thousands of potential victims at a time and only receive payments from those who are defrauded.

That has to be addressed in a comprehensive way through discussions with industry as well as through consumer protection efforts through NGOs. So that's what we're trying to do, to come up with solutions by looking at the technology that's being used against the victims and to work with our foreign counterparts. Because so much of this is international.

Very few of the most nefarious fraudsters are sitting in the US committing their frauds from the US. And if they are, they're trying to make it look like they're abroad using infrastructure that's in foreign countries. So it's critical for us in law enforcement to be in close communication with our foreign counterparts and to work with them to try and bring these frauds to an end.

And many of the frauds that are out there now are not only victimizing US consumers. Many of the schemes, they're not discriminating against consumers in the UK and Germany and France. They're defrauding all of them. They're hiring translators to translate their mass mailing fraud solicitations into other languages. They're hiring foreign language speaking telemarketers so that one part of the boiler room can call Spanish speaking consumers and another part can reach English speaking consumers.

So all of that industry practice has to be addressed by us in law enforcement, while at the same time trying to address it through consumer education and encouraging family members to monitor and work closely with their older relatives to stop fraud.

PATTI ROSS: And something we heard this morning from the chairwoman, a couple of things about in our FTC fraud prevalence studies we don't necessarily see a higher incidence of fraud across the board with older adults. But we see certain scams affecting certain groups, and certain scams affecting older consumers.

So starting this conversation to talk about fraud is one of the things we've learned has been a really powerful way to help bring the conversation forward. Getting people to talk about the scams and the frauds that have affected them in whatever group we're talking about. We heard about it on the previous panel. There's a real reluctance to admit or to come forward.

And that's why Merinda's app is a terrific way of getting that conversation going. And it's utilizing people who are right there, already meeting with the person. Jennifer, I was hoping you could share a couple-- you have that pocket guide, and I just thought that was a terrific example of how all these different people who come in contact with the folks she's working with get the conversation going.

How do you get that going? How do you overcome some of the reluctance? Could you read a couple of the questions of how to get the dialogue going about a scam?

JENNIFER TAYLOR: Sure. And it literally is titled, "How Do I Start the Conversation?" And this is for a minister or a person who is in the clergy. And you just simply say, "Some older folks

worry about money. Could I ask you a few questions? Are you having any of the following problems?

Who manages your money day to day? How's that going? How's it working out for you? Do you ever run out of money at the end of the month? Do you know where it's going? Do you have trouble paying your bills?

Do you have confidence in the person who's paying your bills for you? Do you ever regret any of the decisions that you've made? Do your children or others pressure you to give your money? Is someone accessing your accounts, or does money seem to disappear?"

And then look at what they call the red flags. Are they fearful or emotional or distressed. And so many times, we see a lot of people get scammed when they're widowed and they're alone and they're lonely and they're grieving and the kids forget about them. And that nice lady from the church comes in and starts taking care of them. I've got one now that we're about to recover a half a million dollars on.

Is the person suspicious or delusional? A lot of times when people are taking their money, they do become suspicious. And the physicians maybe think they're going into dementia or Alzheimer's. I have another case where the guy kept reporting to his doctor, my brother is stealing my money. My brother is trying to kill me.

Guess what? His brother did try to kill him, and his brother was stealing money. And that's another criminal case that we have going.

So you think these questions maybe are just so far out there, but they're not. They're really not. And I have found that in going through something like this-- and we have one for clergy. We have one for nursing home administrators. We have one for social workers. We're developing one for policemen and investigators. Somebody suggested maybe we needed one for bartenders. I volunteered for that one.

The more you educate people and get them aware of what's going on and what to look for, then that makes our jobs a whole lot easier because then they're not reluctant to come forward and report it, either for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

PATTI ROSS: Thank you. One of the things we heard this morning was about the diversification in our older populations that at some point we're going to hit. We heard a lot about the diverse growth in this country, certainly amongst the millennials. But we know that that's going to be moving in as we talk about the next generation of aging consumers.

How do you see that in your work? And I'm going to throw this out for anybody who wants to answer that. How do you see that in your work? Do you see the diversification of older consumers already happening? I think, actually, Mirenda, do want to mention what they're seeing in Queens?

MIRENDA MEGHELLI: Right. So Queens is the most diverse borough of New York City, which is a very diverse place. So they're experiencing differences in terms of reaching out to different populations language-wise, in terms of citizenship, et cetera. I mean, I think more generally when you're thinking about diverse populations and technology, you want to be user centered.

So things can be as small as representation. So if you have an avatar in an app or in a computer program and the avatar looks heteronormative, has hair that goes down-- my hair goes up. So that might be off putting to me if I'm your intended user.

I think those little things like that are important to take into consideration when you're thinking about diverse population. So we heard a lot about language, and not just straight translations, earlier. But also thinking about how the content needs to change depending on the populations you're reaching out to.

Well, that has implications with technology as well. What questions are you asking folks, not just in the app, not just what language, but what are the questions themselves. We work with a website in Illinois where they provide free legal information. And they started to build a mirror Spanish site. But they found that keyword searches were changing based on the language.

So top searches in English were around divorce and family law issues. Top searches in Spanish were around immigration and economic issues. So thinking about things like that and serving changing populations is helpful from my experience.

PATTI ROSS: Marti, did you want to add anything on that?

MARTI DILIEMA: Hi. So if we're looking at the population in 20 years-- and I think the morning demographers were talking a little bit about this-- we're having a baby boom population that's still largely white. But they're going to be cared for by a population that's largely minority, especially when we think about this diversification not only in race and ethnicity but also in socioeconomic status.

So I think there's going to be some cultural barriers. And we're already seeing this today, where we have very elderly non-Hispanic white people being cared for by people who are Latino and African-American. So again, that raises a lot of questions on cultural competency, and also with the difference in socioeconomic status between those two groups that might create other opportunities for financial exploitation.

PATTI ROSS: So when we talk about consumer fraud, are there subgroups within this next-- we just talked about some of the diversity issues-- but are there subgroups that concern any of you as we think about this next generation? We've identified some differences in terms of technology.

There's a digital divide, even, within this group. Some that are quite competent. Some that maybe think they're quite competent. And then some that are not necessarily touching technology at all. Amy, do you see any concerns in that pattern as we see this next 10 years?

AMY NOFZIGER: I mean, certainly within each generation there's going to be differences. And I mean, just like the scammers customize their pitch, we need to customize our pitch when it comes to fraud education and fraud prevention to each one of these subgroups. So again, looking at the demographics.

Maybe we'll just talk about the boomers again. So the boomers were one of the first generations who got divorced, and at high levels. So have they gotten remarried? We know that they're more likely to get divorced. So does that lead us to maybe more romance scams? Maybe more romance scams via Facebook, via the internet.

We know that that is a huge problem, and one that I work really hard to stop. Also, we know that they, as Marti mentioned earlier, they have not been saving or they lost a lot of their savings. So are they working longer, and are they working more "creatively."

So are they opening themselves up to maybe more work at home business opportunities. They have an entrepreneurial spirit. And again, remember, they value money. So could we assess from knowing that maybe what scams that portion of that demographic might be vulnerable to?

Because honestly, we're all vulnerable to scams and frauds. Anyone sitting in here is vulnerable to a scam and fraud today. And that's the scammer's job to know what your vulnerability is. And they will figure it out. So again, that's what we need to do. And we need to figure out our vulnerabilities to then help protect them.

PATTI ROSS: Great. Rich, did you want to add to that?

RICH GOLDBERG: Well, the clearest example, I think, of what Amy was talking about was the Spanish language case, several of them that we've prosecuted. I know the FTC has brought some cases. But we had a trial a couple of years ago of a Spanish language case where it was a defendant from Peru who was at a boiler room that was threatening consumers in the US, all Spanish speaking, with deportation and arrest and seizure of property.

Most of the consumers had bought a product online or through an infomercial. And the list of these consumers was sold to the fraudsters who would call them and threaten them with these terrible consequences for not paying a bill that they didn't actually owe any money on. And most of the victims were here lawfully in the US. They had lawful permanent resident status or they were citizens.

And we talked to a number of them before trial. And yet they still fell prey to these claims of immigration. They didn't know that for failing to pay a debt, their citizenship or their lawful permanent resident status couldn't be taken away from them. And so they were very vulnerable. This is the kind of vulnerable status-- let me go with that-- that each one of these consumers has, and different demographic groups are going to be susceptible to different claims.

And I agree, we need to address them when dealing with each different population so that we can try and help them to understand what their rights are so that they won't fall prey to this sort of

scam. Because we're seeing it every day, where the pitch is being changed for each different demographic group to prey on those vulnerabilities.

PATTI ROSS: So this morning, the chairwoman talked to us a little bit about the FTC's Pass It On campaign-- which I think most of you in the audience and at this panel are familiar with-- where we strive to use a friendly and respectful tone to engage older adults in talking about and learning about fraud, rather than telling them that they're victims that fall prey to scams.

And it strikes me that the aging baby boomers are going to be even less receptive to an education message that says, you are vulnerable. You are old. You are the problem. You are subject to scammers. What do you think will be an acceptable approach with this group? Anyone want to take a crack at that?

AMY NOFZIGER: I'm fine taking a crack at it.

PATTI ROSS: Amy will do it. Amy will do it.

AMY NOFZIGER: So I mean, this is another thing that I joke that would be on my tombstone someday is how we treat victims of frauds and scams. And I've said this many times, and I'll keep saying it. It's just the difference in how we treat people, and it's not going to change with the boomers.

If you have a 70-year-old woman walking down the street at night and her purse gets stolen and \$200 is taken from her, what do we as a society do? We hug her. We comfort her. We set up a GoFundMe account, and we bake her a casserole.

If that same 70-year-old woman is robbed over the phone for \$200, we shame her. We criticize her. We question her ability to take care of her finances. And we start to think that she's the problem. And it's certainly not going to change.

And I think one of the things with boomers, we are going to have to change. And we're going to have to get creative, especially to our regulatory friends, on how to get the boomers to report this. Because again, let's go to our little values list of what boomers values.

It's not authority. It's not necessarily the government. So is it working, like Richard said, with the NGOs, and maybe having a warm transfer for reporting these frauds and scams. But the reporting we already know is super low, and it might not get any better. So we're the ones that are going to have to change.

Because the scammers, they're nimble. They're innovative. They're quick. They don't have to do IRBs. They don't have to send it up to their boss to get approval. They can change like that. So we're going to have to start thinking about this now.

PATTI ROSS: Jennifer, did you want to add something to that?

JENNIFER TAYLOR: Well, just to transition with that. I think the most important thing is education. Not only education of the boomers themselves, or of everybody, all individuals themselves, whether it's through a Rotary Club, a social center, through a senior center, through a church.

But also educating the people who do business with these folks. For example, every time I give a financial exploitation, what I call my dog and pony show, to a group of nursing home administrators, I start getting calls the next week. I give it to bankers, and the next thing I know, we have bankers turning in folks who are financially exploiting their grandmother because they're trying to take the money out of the account.

I have found that training and education, whether it's individual, grass roots, the churches, or whether it's corporate seminars, wherever. That seems to be the key because you're educating on both ends. And then that's when someone is not afraid to self-report. Someone's not afraid to report they've seen this happen in their business.

Then somehow it comes together and we get the fraud stopped. And we hopefully get some assistance for the individuals. And the education that I have done over the last three years has resulted in my being a part time financial exploitation attorney at Legal Aid to now we have another full time attorney and a full financial exploitation department.

And we will now not only serve individuals who are in long term care facilities, but we can serve anyone who's been financially exploited. So it is the fastest growing crime, the silent crime of the 21st century. And I think education is key in preventing it.

PATTI ROSS: Rich, did you want to add to that?

RICH GOLDBERG: Yeah. I just wanted to put in my pitch that we need to, as a community, stop the old adage of if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is. Because I think that perpetuates the stereotype of the fraud victim as stupid, as not looking out for themselves.

And if you ask any victim of fraud whether they've heard that adage before, some of them will bring it up to you themselves. They all say, I knew that. I've heard that a thousand times. But that's the role of the fraudster, to not make it sound too good to be true.

You know, if it sounded too good to be true, then nobody would buy or nobody would send their money. So I think we need to, as has been said, treat these victims with respect. I think the British are starting to call them experts with experience instead of victims. Because just calling them a victim in and of itself is a stigma, and they don't want to think of themselves as victims.

They don't want to think of themselves as vulnerable. They don't want to think of themselves as having fell for something that was too good to be true. They sent their money to something that they thought was reasonable given their particular circumstances. And I think we need to start viewing them in that way as well.

PATTI ROSS: We just have literally three minutes left. So I want to give each of the panelists a chance to give a tidbit of advice to all of us who are working in this area. Obviously, we're interested at the FTC as we strategize and think for the future. But if you have any advice for us.

And I'll start with Marti. Do you have anything you want to add?

MARTI DILIEMA: Sure. Just going back to the last question. I think we need a lot more engagement from our financial institutions. So they're the conduits from where the money transfers hands from the victim to the perpetrator. So they have this pivotal role to play in protecting consumers. And I think that as consumers, we need to advocate more for the financial institutions to do more about this.

And I also think we need to think hard about the disbursement plans in retirement. So now that pensions have gone away and we have these defined contribution plans like 401(k)s, I think there's going to be a whole wave of scams coming online where fraudsters are going to try to convince people, new retirees, to basically withdraw their entire 401(k) and invest it with them by promising, again, something that's too good to be true. And so I really worry that that could financially devastate a whole cohort of people, if they succumb to those types of schemes.

PATTI ROSS: Thank you. Yes. The liquidity of the retirement savings. First you talked about how little there might be, but even what's there, if it's not in a pension form, it's liquid and can be accessed.

MARTI DILIEMA: Exactly.

PATTI ROSS: OK. Let's start with Jennifer. Do you have parting words?

JENNIFER TAYLOR: My parting words are usually what I call my PEP talk, P-E-P. Partnership, educate, and plagiarize. Partner with anyone in your area. Like I said, our Financial Exploitation Task Force has 50 different areas, 50 different people, 50 different agencies, who come together and accomplish really good things.

So we partnership. And then we educate. We go out. We have several of us. We'll give you a presentation on financial exploitation wherever and whenever you need it. And then in compiling that education, feel free to plagiarize. The FTC has wonderful information, and they've given me carte blanche to just use it.

PATTI ROSS: It's not copyrighted.

JENNIFER TAYLOR: AARP will give you anything you need. The Coalition against Domestic Violence. If I need state stats from our DHHR folks who are on the exploitation task force, I pick up the phone. I get the information. And I just willy nilly plagiarize everywhere and anywhere that I can. So that's my little PEP talk.

PATTI ROSS: Amy?

AMY NOFZIGER: I mean, my pep talk would have been about how we talk about victims. But I already did that pep talk. So I really just want to talk about the public-private partnership and how we really do need to get creative and really think outside of the box. I mean, the new word is "innovation," right?

Especially at AARP. Everything is innovative and new and exciting. And that's great. But sometimes the tried and true messaging and outreach methods and prevention, they still do work. So maybe we just need to change them to meet the needs of the emerging demographics and the emerging boomers.

But sometimes things that have been in existence for 20 years still do work. So don't always look to the shiny new object, which is surprising for me to say because I have that syndrome. But I think really just looking at what works in the community and really putting resources towards that.

PATTI ROSS: Mirenda.

MIRENDA MEGHELLI: I'm going to plagiarize Jennifer and say PEP. So partnerships, education, and plagiarize. And I think that technology's going to become an important tool to enhance our ability to engage in partnerships, enhance our ability to officially educate populations, and allow us to cut and paste and plagiarize.

I think Richard talked a little bit about how technology is really increasing efficiency for scammers to go ahead and mass email folks. The same way that that happens, we need to think about how good actors can use technology to increase efficiencies and really increase outreach in effective ways, because there's so much that we have to do. Without tools like technology, it's going to be very difficult.

PATTI ROSS: Rich?

RICH GOLDBERG: So the Department of Justice is trying its best to put its resources to fight elder financial exploitation. And if you have an area that you believe is a trending area, if you have a type of fraud that isn't being looked at as far as you know, but should be looked at, we're looking for the most prolific fraud schemes that are victimizing Americans, especially older Americans.

And so please use my contact information. Contact me. We're happy to take a look. And please, a parting pitch for Consumer Sentinel. Please feed your complaints into Consumer Sentinel, into the FTC's complaint assistant website. That will allow for law enforcement-- not only FTC, but state, local, and the Department of Justice, other federal agencies-- to access those complaints so that we can see the trends that indicate what fraud schemes we should be targeting.

PATTI ROSS: Great. Great. Great parting tips from all of you. And I do want to refer folks to the FTC.gov, both where our Complaint Assistant is and our consumer education materials that are in the public domain and can be copied and used freely. With that, we're going to wrap up this panel. Please give them a round of applause.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you all. And thanks to Marti. Thank you so much for joining us virtually. And I'm going to turn it over to Lois Greisman who is going to do our wrap-up.

Sit or stand?

LOIS GREISMAN: I'll stand. This is hot. Thanks, Rich.

RICH GOLDBERG: Thank you.

LOIS GREISMAN: So good afternoon, everybody. My name's Lois Greisman, as Patti said. And I head the Division of Marketing Practices. So my main thought at the moment is wow. What an incredible day filled with rich and challenging information.

I'm listed here as giving a wrap-up. First of all, there's no way to wrap this up and the last thing I want to do is wrap it up. I actually want to stimulate it and keep it going. So let me mention some of the FTC's goals in doing something like this.

So one goal is to stimulate public debate. I think that's been done. Another goal is to stimulate research. And I hope this will do that. Another goal really echoes what Chairwoman Ramirez said at the beginning, is to help the FTC do a better job.

It's to help us know what we should be doing, understand better what's going on in the marketplace. And this is especially true for the agency's fraud program. So let me recap a couple of things that are very top level on what we heard and what I think are just some things that it's useful to keep fresh in our minds.

Two major demographic shifts. One is the impact of the baby boomers. The baby boomers started turning 65 in 2011, and by 2030 they will all be 65 or older. Projections also show an increase in diversity. The nation is projected to become majority minority between 2040 and 2050. And that is when no race or ethnic group is going to represent more than 50% of the total population.

We also looked at what's going on in the marketplace as people adapt. Some very interesting preliminary research giving a lens on what type of target marketing is going on online involving specific populations. For marketers, obviously they know there are unique characteristics in communities, and it's important for them to understand their audience. That's a good thing.

It's important for them to be culturally relevant in order to get attention. It's important to use trusted media outlets and trusted influencers. Each of those matters enormously. But misperceptions are real. The digital divide is very much real. And authenticity matters.

We also looked at some data-driven research based upon the FTC's complaint data, and also information obtained from law enforcement cases on actual people who are victims, though I use the word victim lightly-- or I use it with great care in light of the last panel.

Government. We know from this research, from the data, the government is not hearing from all communities. We know that there are differences in what certain communities complain about. And we know that certain frauds, certain scams, impact different groups differently, and that those differences don't necessarily correlate to complaint rates.

For us at the FTC, that's something we deal with on a daily basis and it's a very significant issue for us. Many people talked a lot about the strategies for protecting consumers and the targeting of consumers in the context of diverse populations. Obviously, diverse populations have many, many subgroups and they are diverse within themselves. None is monolithic.

But we spent a fair amount of time talking about the sophistication of scammers as they do target particular communities in the context of preying upon people's superstition. There was mention made of the blessing scam, mention made of natural disasters and how those precipitate door to door scams that can prey upon specific populations. Obviously, there's just an endless parade of scams that target different populations, or target every population that exists.

Immigration, though, is of particular concern. Immigration scams. Auto lending scams. Debt relief scams.

Strategies to protect diverse populations. Some wonderful ones. Ones as simple as well you're standing at line to do early voting, recruit the person next to you who's using an app in a different language. Focus on liaisons in communities. How vital these are, and how they might actually assist us in some of the under-reporting that is going on. The value of trusted partners such as Legal Aid.

We also heard repeatedly-- and this is obviously true-- translating consumer ed materials alone is just not enough. It's not going to cut it. A lot of focus on the older population, the aging population, the young older consumers, and also the old older consumers, including those in assisted living areas or nursing homes.

Fair amount of discussion on what I'll call the corner diners 10 page menu of scams that affect older consumers. Just goes on and on, but with a keen focus on investment scams, times share resale types of scams. And of course from the data that we know, the impact of lottery, sweepstakes, prize promotion scams, on older old consumers.

Strategies to protect that population. Fantastic innovative app that's being developed and used by social workers that actually functions as a diagnostic tool to assess risk of financial exploitation. That's phenomenal. And the use of other technologies that can be used to assist aging consumers.

The baby boomer population is tech savvy. This stereotype that not only older consumers don't know what they're doing, but that everyone who's a victim somehow is vulnerable or somehow is just incapable of protecting themselves. We've just got to rethink all the language that we use around that, and recognize that many segments of the older population are incredibly sophisticated.

So where does that leave us? Well, first of all we're going to stay in touch. This is an important dialogue that we're having, and it's one that we need to continue. The FTC, as Chairwoman Ramirez also said this morning, we are committed to our work in the Every Community Initiative. It's important work.

And as Patti said, we're very proud of it. It makes a difference to us, and we think it makes a difference in the marketplace. And our goal is to partner with each and every one of you to do our job better than we're currently doing it.

I want to give thanks to all of the panelists, and also to the FTC staff who did such a tremendous job in putting this together. This really is an innovative type of workshop for us to host, and we're thrilled to have been able to do so. And again, stay in touch. You know how to reach us. And thank you all.

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]