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MEDIA RELEASE

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Consumer Federation of America Announces Nation's Top 10 Consumer Complaints

LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, Other State and Local Agencies Remained on the Front Lines of Consumer Protection During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Pandemic-related problems were among the top ten complaints made to state and local consumer agencies in 2020, according to an [annual survey](#) by Consumer Federation of America (CFA). They also topped the lists of worst, fastest-growing, and new complaints. "COVID-19 generated complaints about everything from appliance repairs to childcare, trash pick-up to towing," said Susan Grant, CFA's Director of Consumer Protection and Privacy. "Business closings, job lay-offs, supply chain disruptions, social-distancing requirements and travel restrictions put huge strains consumers and businesses, as the survey shows." State and local consumer agencies also dealt with a deluge of complaints last year about price-gouging and pandemic-related scams.

Thirty-four city, county and state consumer agencies, including the [LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs](#), from 18 states participated in the survey, which asked about the complaints they received last year, their biggest achievements, and new consumer protection laws enacted in their jurisdictions.

"Unique challenges have called for unique solutions and we are proud of the work we have done to provide even a little of bit of improvement for the lives of our 10 million consumers in LA County," said Rafael Carbajal, Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs. "We salute all of our fellow consumer agencies across the nation who are committed to protecting vulnerable consumers when they need it most, and who are putting in the work and developing new methods to help keep people's finances, jobs, and homes more safe and secure."



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Top Ten Nationwide Complaints in 2020

1. **Auto:** Misrepresentations in advertising or sales of new and used cars, deceptive financing practices, defective vehicles, faulty repairs, car leasing and rentals, towing disputes.
2. **Home Improvement/Construction:** Shoddy work, failure to start or complete the job, failure to have required licensing or registration.
3. **Landlord/Tenant:** Unhealthy or unsafe conditions, failure to make repairs or provide promised amenities, deposit and rent disputes, illegal eviction tactics.
4. **Credit/Debt:** Billing and fee disputes, mortgage problems, credit repair and debt relief services, predatory lending, illegal or abusive debt collection tactics.
5. **Services:** Misrepresentations, shoddy work, failure to have required licensing or registration, nonperformance.
6. **Utilities:** Complaints about gas, electric, water and cable billing and service.
7. **Retail Sales:** False advertising and other deceptive practices, defective merchandise, problems with rebates, coupons, gift cards and gift certificates, failure to deliver.
8. **Travel:** Misrepresentations about cost, amenities or other aspects of travel packages, failure to provide promised services, disputes about refunds.
9. **(Tie) Health Products/Services:** Misleading claims, unlicensed practitioners, failure to deliver, billing issues; **Internet Sales:** Misrepresentations or other deceptive practices, failure to deliver online purchases.
10. **(Tie) Pandemic:** price gouging, refunds for cancelled events and travel, financial issues, problems getting repairs and other services, "self-help" evictions, scams, and other complaints stemming from the pandemic; **Fraud:** Bogus sweepstakes and lotteries, work-at-home schemes, grant offers, fake check scams, imposter scams and other common frauds; **Household Goods:** Misrepresentations, failure to deliver, repair issues in connection with furniture and major appliances.

This ranking is based on the categories that appeared most frequently in the consumer agencies' "top ten" complaint lists. Collectively, the 34 agencies that participated in the survey handled **280,413 complaints** and **recovered or saved more than \$262,973,073** for consumers in 2020 through informal mediation, administrative action, and lawsuits.

In LA County, the top 10 complaint categories were: Landlord/Tenant; Retail Sales and Purchases; Price Gouging; Foreclosure Prevention; Real Estate Transactions and Scams; Wage Enforcement; Auto; Deceptive Legal Services; Elder Financial Abuse; and Financial and Credit Services.

The full national 2020 Consumer Complaint Survey Report is available [here](#).

[The Consumer Federation of America](#) is an association of more than 250 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) has served Los Angeles County since 1976. We serve consumers, businesses, and communities through education, advocacy, and complaint resolution. We work every day to educate consumers and small business owners about their rights and responsibilities, mediate disputes, and investigate consumer fraud complaints. We enforce the Minimum Wage and Rent Stabilization ordinances in unincorporated Los Angeles County. For more information, visit dcba.lacounty.gov.

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