



## Cashland mails refund offers to Ohio payday customers



By [Sheryl Harris, The Plain Dealer](#)

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Cashland this week offered refunds to 14,000 Ohioans it sued for past-due payday loans over the last four years.

Andrea Levy, Plain Dealer file

The refund program is expected to cost the company \$13.4 million, according to Cashland's owner, Cash America.

The company announced the refunds in December, immediately after the [9th District Court of Appeals ruled against Cashland](#) in a debt collection case that challenged the payday lender's interest rates.

Cash America spokeswoman Yolanda Walker said at the time that the Cashland refunds were prompted by a technical error the company discovered in its filings and were unrelated to the appellate court ruling.

A third-party claims administrator hired by Cash America mailed out claim forms and prepaid return envelopes on Monday.

The forms are being mailed to consumers Cashland sued in an Ohio court between Jan. 1, 2008, and Oct. 1, 2012. The refunds will include payments made after the suit was filed and any interest.

In addition to the refunds, Cash America said it would forgive any remaining loan debt, ask the court to vacate judgments against affected consumers and have negative information stemming from the debt collection case removed from consumers' credit reports. It is dismissing any pending cases during that time frame.

The company said it will not refile the debt collection cases.

Katherine Hollingsworth of Cleveland Legal Aid warned consumers, "It's a very broad, very general release." The release, she noted, asks consumers to sign away their rights before they know how much Cashland intends to return to them.

If consumers don't sign, they may forgo the refund, Hollingsworth said. If they do sign, they could be barred from going to court to challenge the interest rates that Cashland charged its customers.

Consumers acceptance of the refunds also could be complicated if they have been through bankruptcy or other legal issues. People who aren't sure whether to sign can contact legal aid for advice. The Cleveland office's intake number is 216-687-1900.

Last month, the 9th District Court of Appeals limited the interest rates Cashland could seek from borrowers it sued over unpaid loans. The court found that Cashland's annualized interest rates on payday loans exceeded rates allowed by state law.

The deadline for appealing the 9th District ruling is not yet up. Walker, the company spokeswoman, declined to discuss the case.

At least [one lawsuit](#) that seeks to represent all Cashland borrowers, not just those sued over debts, has been filed in Cincinnati since the 9th District issued its decision.

People who believe they are entitled to a refund from Cashland but who didn't receive a claims form can request one from the company at [voluntaryloanrefundprogram.com](http://voluntaryloanrefundprogram.com) or by calling 1-877-524-8480.

The deadline for returning the claims forms is March 8. The company expects to mail refunds by May 1.

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