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## **Notice of Data Breach**

August 11, 2021

To whom this may concern:

We are reaching out to inform you of a data breach that could impact New Hampshire residents. I, Margaret Nickens, am reaching out on behalf of Elm3 Financial Group. We are a wealth management, financial planning, and tax preparation firm based in Georgia. (You will find our contact information and address at the end of this email.) Our firm works with 2 residents that reside in your state, and those 2 residents could be impacted by the breach.

We believe that outside sources breached our server on June 23, 2021. Our investigation suggests that hackers gained access to our server by guessing the password used by an outside vendor to work on our computer system. We became aware of the breach on July 9 and immediately contacted relevant law enforcement agencies. We worked to identify the source of the leak, and once we did so, we ensured that outside access to our server was entirely shut down.

Since July 9, we have been working to investigate the extent of the breach, mitigate the impact of the breach, and prevent further breaches from occurring. Due to the nature of the law enforcement investigation, we waited to inform clients of the breach. After we obtained sufficient information regarding the breach, we informed our clients of the data breach via email notification on August 9, 2021. Please see the attached notification that was sent to clients. As you can see in the notification, we informed clients of the extent of the breach and advised them on the ways they can protect themselves from identity theft and fraud.

We have been unable to confirm the extent of the content exposed during the breach. However, if information was accessed, the exposed information could include names, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, bank account numbers used for tax refunds and payments, and drivers' licenses.

Beyond continuing to work with the FBI, the Elm3 team is taking significant steps to prevent future data breaches and to mitigate the impact of this data breach. For example, we are working with our information technology service provider to strengthen our data storage systems.

If you have any questions regarding this breach, you can reach out to me at



Sincerely,

*Margaret Nickens*, Data and Financial Analyst



*Planning for your future – Retirement | Social Security | Investment Management | Insurance | Income Taxes*

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## Notice of Data Breach

At Elm3, we take our clients' safety and security very seriously, and so I am writing today with a heavy heart and my sincerest apologies. On July 9, 2021, the Elm3 team became aware that our server was exposed to and breached by outside sources. Because our servers host private client information, we immediately contacted the FBI. Both our technology service provider and the FBI continue to investigate the extent of the data exposure.

### What happened?

Our investigation is still underway; however, we believe that outside sources breached our server on June 23, 2021. Our investigation suggests that hackers gained access to our server by guessing the password used by an outside vendor to work on our computer system. We became aware of the breach on July 9 and immediately contacted relevant law enforcement agencies. We worked to identify the source of the leak, and once we did so, we ensured that outside access to our server was entirely shut down. Since July 9, we have been working to investigate the extent of the breach, mitigate the impact of the breach, and prevent further breaches from occurring.

### What information was involved?

We have been unable to confirm the extent of the content exposed during the breach. However, if information was accessed, the exposed information could include names, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, bank account numbers used for tax refunds and payments, and drivers' licenses.

### What are we doing?

Beyond continuing to work with the FBI, the Elm3 team is taking significant steps to prevent future data breaches and to mitigate the impact of this data breach. To begin with, we are working with our information technology service provider to strengthen our data storage systems. Additionally, the Elm3 team is available to answer questions and assist you in any way that we can.

### What can you do?

As with any data breach, there are [a number of steps you can take to protect your identity and information](#). To begin with, you can contact the three credit bureaus and/or the Federal Trade Commission in order to obtain information about setting up fraud alerts and credit freezes. To set up a credit freeze for free, visit each of the credit bureaus' websites listed below. You will be asked to provide your full name, Social Security number, complete addresses for the past two years, and date of birth.

Experian  
Address: P.O. Box 9554 | Allen, TX 75013  
Phone Number: 1-888-397-3742  
Website: [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

Equifax



Address: P.O. Box 105069 | Atlanta, GA 30348  
Phone Number: 1-800-685-1111  
Website: [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

TransUnion  
Address: P.O. Box 160 | Woodlyn, PA 19094  
Phone Number: 1-888-909-8872  
Website: [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

Federal Trade Commission  
Address: 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW | Washington, DC 20580  
Phone Number: 1-877-438-4338.  
Website: [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov)

Due to the nature of the breach, we suggest that clients renumber bank account numbers used for tax refunds or payments. We also encourage you to remain vigilant about reviewing your account statements and monitoring your free credit reports. Should you choose to review your credit report more often or engage other identity theft protection services, you may be required to pay fees to one of the credit reporting agencies. If you believe you have been the victim of identity theft, you should contact the Federal Trade Commission and your state's Attorney General office.

**More Information**

The Elm3 team again offers our sincerest apologies. We are deeply saddened by the state of cybercrime and are working to protect our clients' security and privacy. Protecting your information and fostering a relationship built on trust remains our top priority. We understand and empathize with any feelings of vulnerability or insecurity that you may experience at this time. With that said, feel free to contact us with any of your questions or concerns.

Contact Us

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