



Summer Employment Scams

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson

As the end of the school year approaches, many students scramble to find a summer job that will earn enough money to pay tuition and bills throughout the year. The Minnesota Attorney General's Office warns students to be aware of summer employment scams that may try to take advantage of you. Watch out for the following fraudulent employment solicitations that may appear on-campus or via email:

“Work from home! Earn thousands of dollars this summer without leaving home.”

Many students would welcome an offer to work from home for the wages these companies promise. Unfortunately, most work-at-home companies cheat students out of money by preying on their desire to make money quickly. Most work-at-home “opportunities” are designed to look like legitimate ways to make extra cash, but provide no valid employment.

Work-at-home companies often advertise on handmade signs seen along the road. On campuses, the companies may hang flyers in common areas or send unwanted email. The ads may tell students they will “earn \$2,500 a month without leaving home,” and instruct them to “send \$29.95 for details.” The old saying, “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is,” applies.

Many work-at-home ads don't tell students about the hidden costs or that there may be many hours of work required for no pay. Claims about making hundreds of dollars a week usually are just not true. Fraudulent work-at-home businesses usually set up fake names and post office boxes to begin business in a new area. By the time local law enforcement learns about the scheme, the company has already moved. The scammers are usually transient, moving from town to town, stealing students' money along the way.

“Get a Cruise Job! If you're looking for work that will allow you to travel the world and earn a living at the same time, give us a call.”

This tagline has appeared on college campuses for years. When students call, they are typically also told that the company will provide free meals, housing and transportation to the various ports of call.

Students should be aware that these companies do not actually offer jobs with cruise ships or land tour companies. They do not guarantee a job with such companies, and students are not likely to receive the earnings, benefits or types of jobs these companies say are available. Rather, companies request a \$50 payment, for which students receive a brochure listing names, addresses and brief descriptions of major cruise ship lines and land tour companies, as well as tips on working in the cruise ship industry. If you are interested in this type of work, contact the cruise company directly.

“Fishing industry. Earn up to \$3000-\$6000+ per month salmon fishing in Alaska! Room & Board! Transportation! No experience necessary!”

This employment scam also promises a summer of adventure with a huge financial pay-off. Students should know, however, that these companies also do not offer actual jobs in the Alaskan fishing industry, nor do they guarantee a job. Again, students are not likely to receive the earnings, benefits or types of jobs these solicitations claim are available. Companies typically request a \$50 deposit, for which students receive a brochure listing the names and addresses of Alaskan fishing companies, fish processing companies and canneries, as well as a description of working conditions in that industry. Again, if you are interested in this type of work, make sure you contact the company directly.

“Government Jobs! Work for the U.S. Post Office and other agencies.”

The lure of a hard-to-find, well-paying government job has enticed students to respond to this fraudulent advertisement. Companies tell job-hunters that they will provide a comprehensive listing of unpublished government jobs, but they require a credit card or checking account number to send the information. Unfortunately for most students, the information received—if any—is the same information that is publicly available at any governmental institution.

If you feel lured by the promise of a great-paying government job this summer, remember the advice issued by the Federal Trade Commission: Information about government jobs is always free, and guarantees of government jobs are always false.

Additional Resources

If you question whether an employment solicitation is a genuine opportunity or just another scam, you may wish to contact one of the following agencies for more information:

Federal Trade Commission
Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20580
Toll free: 1-877-382-4357
www.ftc.gov

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry
443 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 284-5005 or 1-800-342-5354
TTY: (651) 297-4198
www.doli.state.mn.us

Office of Minnesota Attorney General
Lori Swanson
1400 Bremer Tower
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 296-3353 or 1-800-657-3787
TTY: (651) 297-7206 or 1-800-366-4812
www.ag.state.mn.us

