

Financial News For Students – October 2011

Trick or Treat? Scholarship Scams

How do you know if the scholarship you are applying for is legit?

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has identified several scholarship groups that have proved to be scams. Along with this information, the FTC has posted patterns of fraudulent behavior on their website to aid students and families in their search for scholarships. To learn more, please visit: www.ftc.gov and then enter "scholarship scams" in the search bar.

Common taglines used by scholarship scams:

- The scholarship is GUARANTEED or your money back.
- You can't get this information anywhere else.
- We need your credit card or account number to hold this scholarship for you.
- We'll do all the work.
- Please send money to process your scholarship.
- *You've been selected* by a national foundation OR *You're a finalist* in a contest you never entered.

Scholarships and grants are FREE money. You should NEVER PAY to receive free money. Seek advice from a knowledgeable adult. Know where your FREE resources are located. Be aware of the warning signs for fraud. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

Reporting Scholarship Scams

If you suspect that you may be a victim of a scholarship scam or financial aid fraud, report it immediately to the following organizations:

U.S. Department of Education's Office of Inspector General

Hotline: 1-800-647-8733

E-mail: oig.hotline@ed.gov

Online Complaint Form: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/hotline.html>

Federal Trade Commission

Hotline: 1-877-382-4357

Online Complaint Form: <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>

To see if a particular scholarship organization has already been reported as a scam, please visit: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/scholarship/cases.shtm>

FREE Scholarship Searches

There are many free legitimate resources for scholarships within your federal, state, institutional, and local areas. To get you started, the following sites are available:

Scholarship Search Engines:

- FinAid on the Web: www.finaid.org
- The College Board:
www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/scholarships-and-aid/8936.html
- FastWeb: www.fastweb.com

Federal Agencies:

- U.S. Department of Education: www.studentaid.ed.gov
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.nhsc.hrsa.gov/
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: www.gibill.va.gov
- U.S. Department of Labor: www.careeronestop.org

State Agency:

- Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance:
www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org

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For more information about NyFF's products and services, please contact:

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