



Department
of Commerce

News Release



John R. Kasich, Governor

Andre T. Porter, Director
Department of Commerce

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Contact: Michael Duchesne at (614) 644-9564
or Michael.Duchesne@com.state.oh.us

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND BBB WARN CONSUMERS AGAINST SENDING MONEY AS CONDITION OF OBTAINING LOAN OR APPLYING FOR JOB

The Ohio Department of Commerce and Better Business Bureau of Central Ohio warned Ohioans today to be on guard against online scammers pretending to offer loans or job opportunities and requiring up-front fees for processing, training or other expenses.

These “companies,” which typically solicit customers on websites using ever-changing fictitious names, may claim to have business addresses in Ohio, which often are nonexistent. The businesses are generally not registered with the Ohio Secretary of State’s Office or licensed by the Department of Commerce’s Division of Financial Institutions.

“Loans or job offers that require an upfront fee should raise a red flag for all Ohioans,” said Andre T. Porter, Director of the Ohio Department of Commerce. “Consumers should avoid sending money or providing personal financial information in connection with these offers.”

Director Porter offers the following tips to Ohioans:

- Always check to see if the financial service entity is licensed by the Division of Financial Institutions. Go to www.com.ohio.gov/fiin/elicence.aspx to learn if it is licensed or call the Consumer Affairs Hotline at (866) 278-0003.
- Never provide personal or financial information to a company that is not properly licensed, particularly your Social Security number or bank account information.
- Never send money in advance of receiving a personal loan or as a condition of making an application or receiving a job offer.

Recently, online scammers have instructed consumers to provide personal financial information to permit automated deposits into their bank accounts. Consumers are then directed by the scammers to withdraw and send funds to the online “company,” often to an address out of state, for the alleged expenses.

“Ohioans should regularly communicate with their banks or credit unions regarding unusual deposits or transactions,” said Charles J. Dolezal, Superintendent of the Ohio Division of Financial Institutions. “If a questionable deposit is later reversed, the consumer could be held responsible for the amount and encounter financial hardship.”

If Ohioans suspect unlicensed lending activity, they should report it to the Division of Financial Institutions Consumer Affairs by calling their hotline at (866) 278-0003.

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